



CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN

YOUR FIRE DISTRICT NEWS SOURCE
SEPTEMBER 2ND, 2023

EDITOR - TOM RINALDI
tom@rinaldi1.com

Something for everyone in the Fire Service!!

CAPITAL AREA MEMBER ACTIVITIES:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

**All correspondence & Capital Area Fire Districts Association Mailing Address should be directed to: AFDCA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063
EMAIL: CAAOFD@GMAIL.COM**

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

CAFDA NEWS:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

[CAFDA is searching for a new Secretary](#)

CAFDA is searching for a Secretary for the Association. Contact any of the Officers or Directors to obtain details. In the meantime, Tony Hill will perform Secretarial duties. Contact Tony Hill or any of the Officers or Directors if you are interested.

Tony Hill is currently acting Secretary/Treasurer and can be reached at :

cafdatreasurer@gmail.com or caaofd@gmail.com , our mailing address is CAFDA PO Box 242, East Schodack, NY 12063

[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. 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 200 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, we currently have approximately 75+ signed up.

❖ Register now with Secretary Hill at caaofd@gmail.com

We Apologize for the Confusion but the PO Box numbers to return payment to the Treasurer were transposed, the correct number is PO Box 242. If it helps payment can be made at the door the night of the class.

****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 200 N. Main Street, Mechanicville (opposite the Price Chopper Plaza).

• Tuesday September 19th from 6PM to 9PM Limited to 100 attendees we currently have approximately 20 signed up.

• COST: members \$10, non-members \$20 checks can be mailed to Tony Hill at Box 242, East Schodack, NY 12063, or pay at the door. Reserve a seat at caaofd@gmail.com

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

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:

- Congratulations to the Stanford Heights Fire District on the construction of your new fire station, hope it all goes smooth.
- Our condolences to the members of the West Crescent Fire District/W.K. Mansfield Hose Company on the passing of life member and former Commissioner Robert Westcott.
- **Fire District Election Schedule and Budget Schedule on Last Page of Bulletin and is posted to our current website at afdca.org!**
- Have a safe Labor Day Holiday, and stay cool.

STATE ASSOCIATION NEWS:

WWW.AFDNYS.ORG

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

The State Association has announced that a Fall Conference for 2024 will be held at Turning Stone with a Sunday - Wednesday time frame October 20 – 23 in 2024.

- The September Board of Director's meeting is being held at the Desmond-Crown Plaza on September 14th – 16th.

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

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CAFDA Annual Fall Fire District Officers/Chiefs Workshop

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 Correct Coverage?
- Expert’s Panel, Attorneys, CPA, General Insurance, VFBL – What is your burning question?

The First CAFDA Conference Spring 2024

Coming in April 2024 the CAFDA Conference, a *local* three-day conference chocked full of information for Fire District Commissioners, Secretary’s, Treasurers and Chiefs. An affordable conference at a local destination in the Capital Area. Watch for more Information as planning progresses.



Upcoming Coffee with Commissioners

Saturday, September 23rd @9:00am Current Trends and Concerns

Click on Each Announced Date to Register

THE LATEST FROM ALBANY

New Legislation Introduced Over The Summer

- REQUIRES SOLAR FARMS TO CONSPICUOUSLY POST SAFETY DATA SHEETS IN AREAS THAT MAY BE ACCESSED BY EMERGENCY RESPONDERS IN THE CASE OF A FIRE OR OTHER EMERGENCY.
- ESTABLISHES THE FIRE STATION CONSTRUCTION GRANT PROGRAM AND THE FIRE STATION CONSTRUCTION FUND; MAKES AN APPROPRIATION THEREFOR. \$10 MILLION UPON ENACTMENT; SUBJECT TO PPROPRIATIONS WITHIN THE BUDGET PROCESS IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS.
- REQUIRES THE USE OF A FIREPROOF BLANKET, BAG OR CONTAINER WHEN CHARGING A BICYCLE WITH ELECTRIC ASSIST OR AN ELECTRIC SCOOTER; REQUIRES SELLERS OF SUCH VEHICLES TO INCLUDE A FIREPROOF BLANKET, BAG, OR CONTAINER WITH THE SALE OF EACH E-BIKE OR E-SCOOTER; ESTABLISHES FINES. *[QUESTION IS WHO IS GOING TO ENFORCE OR IS IT POST INCIDENT ENFORCEMENT]*

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.

****Ask Congress to Adequately Fund and Reauthorize AFG and SAFER**

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant programs provide direct assistance to local fire and EMS agencies to help them purchase equipment, training, and apparatus, as well as recruit and retain career and volunteer personnel. AFG and SAFER were funded at \$360 million in FY 2023. The House FY 2024 Homeland Security appropriations bill would fund these programs at \$360 million and the Senate bill would fund these programs at \$338 million. This decrease in funding is unacceptable.

Additionally, the AFG and SAFER programs' authorizations expire at the end of FY 2023 and these programs are scheduled to sunset at the end of FY2024. In April, the Senate passed S. 870 to reauthorize these programs and the U.S. Fire Administration through 2030 by a vote of 95 to 2. Please use this action alert to tell your Senators and Representatives to fund AFG and SAFER at a minimum of the \$360 million contained within the House's FY 2024 Homeland Security appropriations bill and reauthorize these programs as soon as possible.

CONTACT YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVE: <https://www.votervoice.net/NVFC/Campaigns/98446/Respond>
JUST FILL IN YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS AND HIT SEND MESSAGE AT THE BOTTOM, EASY!!

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Older Maryland Recruit Loses Age Discrimination Suit

Curt Varone

A lawsuit filed in 2021 by a 46-year-old recruit who was terminated from the Howard County Fire Department's fire academy in 2018, has been dismissed following a grant of summary judgment in favor of the county. Robert D. Whittaker, III, claimed he was the victim of age discrimination.

According to Whittaker, he was able to do the job and passed all the requirements for appointment to the department. However, he alleged his instructors believed he was too old to do the job and succeeded in washing him out of the academy. [The suit was filed under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act \(ADEA\)](#). Quoting from the US District Court for the District of Maryland ruling:

- The ADEA, which protects individuals who are 40 years of age or older, prohibits employers from "fail[ing] or refus[ing] to hire. . . any individual or otherwise discriminat[ing] against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's age."
- To succeed on an ADEA claim, plaintiffs "must prove by a preponderance of the evidence (which may be direct or circumstantial) that age was the 'but-for' cause of the challenged employer decision."
- To prove age discrimination by direct evidence, such as derogatory statements about age, the plaintiff must offer "evidence of conduct or statements that both reflect directly on the alleged discriminatory attitude and that bear directly on the contested employment decision."
- In the absence of direct evidence of discrimination, a plaintiff's claim is evaluated under the burden-shifting framework set forth in *McDonnell Douglas Corp. v. Green*, 411 U.S. 792 (1973).
- Pursuant to the *McDonnell Douglas* framework, plaintiff establishes a prima facie case of discriminatory termination by demonstrating that: "(1) he is a member of a protected group; (2) he suffered an adverse employment action; (3) he was meeting the employer's legitimate expectations at the time of the adverse employment action; and (4) the employer treated younger employees more favorably."
- After the plaintiff establishes a prima facie case, the burden shifts "to the employer to articulate some legitimate, nondiscriminatory reason for the employee's rejection."
- If the defendant offers a non-discriminatory reason for its actions, the burden returns to the plaintiff "to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that the legitimate reasons offered by the defendant were not its true reasons, but were a pretext for discrimination."
- Plaintiff contends that he can establish the elements of an age discrimination claim through both direct evidence and the *McDonnell Douglas* burden-shifting framework.
- Plaintiff offers two statements as direct evidence of age discrimination: (1) Captain Welsh's reference to Mr. Whittaker as "an old guy"; and (2) a November 15, 2019 Facebook post by Captain Merson in which Captain Merson criticized the hiring of a 51-year-old "rookie" firefighter in Milwaukee.

- Even when viewed in the light most favorable to plaintiff, Captain Welsh’s comment is not direct evidence of age discrimination as there is no evidence that his comment was related to plaintiff’s termination. Accordingly, plaintiff has failed to generate a factual dispute that Captain Welsh’s remark is direct evidence of age discrimination.
- Captain Merson’s Facebook post does not refer to plaintiff or plaintiff’s termination, but rather concerns an article wholly unrelated to plaintiff. As noted above, Captain Merson’s post was made long after the decision to terminate plaintiff. Further, the fact that a comment refers to age is insufficient to establish direct evidence of discrimination.
- The McDonnell Douglas test requires plaintiff to demonstrate that: (1) plaintiff is over 40 years of age; (2) plaintiff was subjected to an adverse employment action; (3) plaintiff had satisfactory job performance at the time of the adverse action; and (4) that similarly situated employees outside the protected class received more favorable treatment.
- The parties do not dispute that plaintiff satisfies the first two elements of a prima facie case.
- As to the third element of a prima facie case, defendant contends that plaintiff cannot establish that he was meeting the Department’s legitimate expectations at the time of his termination because he lacked the skills necessary to become a firefighter, behaved in an insubordinate manner, quit tasks, and presented a risk to himself and other members of the Academy.
- The ADEA does not “require an employer to adopt a life of economic altruism and thereby immunize protected class members from discharge or demotion despite their poor performance.”
- Indeed, the role of the court is not to determine whether the employer’s decision to terminate plaintiff was sound, but rather the court’s “sole concern is whether the reason for which the defendant discharged the plaintiff was discriminatory.
- The court “does not sit as a kind of super-personnel department weighing the prudence of employment decisions made by firms charged with employment discrimination.”
- Plaintiff has failed to introduce sufficient evidence to generate a factual dispute that he was meeting defendant’s legitimate performance expectations at the time of his termination.
- As to the fourth element of the McDonnell Douglas test, plaintiff argues that he was treated less favorably than similarly situated younger trainees.
- Plaintiff identifies eight potential comparators.
- While plaintiff asserts that he was treated differently than others who struggled with ladder tasks, plaintiff has not offered any evidence that these comparators had issues in the other areas, as did plaintiff, such as insubordinate behavior or maze issues.
- Accordingly, plaintiff has failed to establish the existence of similarly situated non-members who were treated more favorably than plaintiff, the fourth element of the McDonnell Douglas test.
- ***Thus, plaintiff has failed to offer evidence to create a genuine factual dispute as to whether his employer discriminated against him on the basis of age. Accordingly, defendant’s Motion for Summary Judgment is granted.***

Photos From The Scene: Understanding Fire/EMS Department Records Retention

Curt Varone

Firefighters and paramedics often take images on calls. How long should such images be retained, and why?

Question: An employee on an EMS unit takes a picture of an injury such as a burn or some other severe trauma before bandaging to be able to show doctors at the hospital what is under the dressing. What is the appropriate way for the department to handle that picture now that it exists? Can it or should it simply be deleted, or must we collect and keep that picture even though the purpose and intent was fulfilled by the time the ambulance crew leaves the hospital?

Answer: There are two major considerations with regard to the retention of any imagery taken by fire and EMS personnel in the performance of their duties. The first pertains to evidentiary issues associated with the imagery; the second pertains to public records law. Both considerations are best addressed by having a policy to preserve every image taken in a secure archive.

Let's start with images as evidence. Firefighters respond to emergencies where people are killed and injured, and their property is destroyed. This reality means there is an inherent potential for litigation in much of what we do. [Spoliation](#) is the destruction or loss of evidence that is relevant to a legal proceeding. It has both criminal and civil consequences, both of which need to be avoided. When we possess evidence that we know, or should know, is relevant to a legal proceeding, the law imposes a duty on us to properly preserve it. Our failure to do so can be used against us in the event we are sued and can be disastrous for the outcome of the case.

For example, let's assume the medic takes a photo of a badly angulated fractured arm prior to splinting. The patient is packaged and transported. The image is shown to a doctor in the emergency department and then deleted. Should the patient later sue the fire department and/or the medic for malpractice, the loss of that image may prove to be a point of contention in the suit.

The medic may argue she had no reason to believe the photo was relevant to a legal proceeding, but the patient may claim the medic *should* have based on complaints the patient made while the arm was being splinted (questioning the medic's competency), and the excruciating pain the patient experienced. If the medic is found to have spoliated the photo, the jury may be instructed that they can infer *the medic deleted the image because it would have been hurtful to her case*. In other words, the jury may infer the medic deleted it because she was concerned it may show she was negligent.

The decision to delete imagery must be evaluated in hindsight, and that hindsight simply does not exist in the moments after the image is taken.

A more common example occurs when a fire apparatus is involved in a crash and firefighters take photos at the scene. Any time there is an accident involving fire apparatus, there is the potential for litigation.

The evidentiary relevance of a given photo may not be immediately apparent to a firefighter or medic at the time it is taken. For that reason, personnel must be trained not to delete incident-related imagery. The decision to delete imagery must be evaluated in hindsight, and that hindsight simply does not exist in the moments after the image is taken.

The other big consideration with regards to retaining digital imagery relates to public records concerns. All 50 states plus the federal government have laws that require agencies and individual employees who are in possession of public records to retain them for the duration of what is called the *record retention period*. Public records are typically defined as any document, correspondence, report or image created or received by a public employee in the course of his/her duties. Deleting a public record prior to the expiration of the record retention period—or refusing to produce a public record when lawfully ordered to do so—is a criminal offense in many jurisdictions, and a finable civil infraction in the others.

When spoliation-related concerns are coupled with a legal duty to retain public records, the scope of the problem becomes apparent. Fire departments need to require that all imagery taken or received in the course of business be retained and archived.

An area of confusion commonly arises with regards to EMS-related imagery. The fact that we retain an image for public records purposes does not mean the entire image will be released to the public; nor does the fact that an image contains medically confidential information mean it is exempt from public records law. The connection here is somewhat paradoxical.

Public records laws allow and/or require public agencies to redact certain types of information from a record prior to release. Medically confidential information and personal information (date of birth, Social Security number) are precisely the types of information that can be redacted from a public record when released. However, a public agency cannot withhold an entire public record simply because some parts of it contain protected information. As such, an image taken of a patient may constitute a public record, but portions of the photo may have to be redacted before it is released.

This is no different than the public records aspect of a patient care report. A typical public records request for a PCR will result in the release of a document that is little more than a blank report with black boxes where virtually everything pertaining to the patient has been redacted. The same approach must be taken with imagery.

The determination of whether an image must be released to the public, and/or how much of the image must be released, should be made by attorneys familiar with the intricacies of public records laws. It should not be made by individual firefighters deleting images. The original unredacted images themselves should be retained.

All fire departments need a record retention policy to ensure compliance with both the evidentiary and public records concerns discussed above. The policy should explain the retention periods required by state law and have provisions

for what is commonly referred to as a “litigation hold.” A litigation hold is a way of flagging certain records for retention beyond the standard time limits because they may be relevant to a legal proceeding.

LGS-1 Records Common in Fire Districts (updated 2022)

<https://www.archives.nysed.gov/sites/archives/files/lgs-1-2022-firedistricts.pdf>

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:

****Developing Sops For Electric Vehicles Incidents**

Robert Rielage

Key factors fire departments should consider when developing procedures for EVs and other devices powered by lithium-ion batteries.

Electric vehicles (EVs) and other appliances powered by lithium-ion (li-ion) batteries are a growing concern for fire departments, not only across the United States but across the world. Since 2015, I have been following these issues here in the U.S. as well as in Europe and the Middle East, and I've been fortunate to present key findings at fire service conferences.

While I am not a scientist or engineer, I am a technician, tactician and, above all, an advocate for firefighter safety. This is why I advocate so strongly for departments to develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for these incidents.

While great organizations such as the UL's Fire Safety Research Institute and the NFPA are taking the lead in research and training, it has been difficult for many departments to translate that research into a practical SOP for their department. And with nearly 30,000 fire departments across the country, it would be impossible to develop a universal SOP that aligned with the unique needs of career, volunteer, rural and urban departments alike.

Nonetheless, there are some key components to consider when developing an SOP focused on EVs and other appliances powered by (li-ion) batteries. Take the ideas here and work them into an SOP for your department or county, then train, train train, so you are ready for your next (or first) EV fire.

LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES AND EVS

Li-ion batteries power a growing number of products in our lives, from computer notebooks to cell phones to power tools. But one of the fastest growing uses for these batteries is in EVs – not just electric cars but also electric scooters, bikes, motorcycles, wheelchairs as well as delivery and long-haul trucks.

Because of the number of li-ion batteries concentrated in EVs, the issue of fire control and extinguishment is highly concerning. Specifically, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Response Guide #147 describes lithium as containing flammable liquid electrolytes that can ignite at 302 degrees F, less than the ignition temperature for paper. Guide #125 further indicates that it generates hydrogen fluoride off-gas, which could be fatal. This means that firefighters need to wear positive pressure SCBA with full PPE, and that no responder should touch or walk through its debris field without these protections.

EV FIRES

EVs can have several hundred to several thousand individual li-ion batteries, each individual battery similar in size to an AA battery. The batteries are compacted into bundles of approximately 100 batteries. The issue: If one or more are physically damaged in a vehicle accident, overcharged, or defective when manufactured, the batteries can go into thermal runaway – a condition where the batteries overheat, producing a similar reaction in the other batteries within its bundle, ultimately starting a fire that spreads to other bundles within the vehicle.

EVs have two separate electrical systems: the 600-volt system that powers the drive train of the EV and a more standard 12-volt system that services the dash board instruments, air bags (SRS), lights, navigation and sound systems. For firefighter safety, both systems need to be de-energized, if possible, following a crash that does not involve a fire.

EV IDENTIFICATION

There is no universal emblem that identifies a vehicle as electric. The identity plate might be on the rear near a trunk or hatch lid, the front driver's side, or near the charging port that has a similar cover to that on the filling tank of a gasoline-powered vehicle. Hybrids, those that use li-ion batteries with a small gasoline engine, have a similar electric charging port.

Likewise, there is no universal location for the emergency disconnect for either the 600- or 12-volt systems. The best advice is to quickly find the driver or a passenger and confirm the vehicle is an EV and then look up that vehicle's Emergency Response Guide, whether on your phone or by requesting the dispatcher locate the ERG online and relay the information to you.

SOP SUGGESTIONS

When you are ready to develop a department SOP for EVs and other devices powered by li-ion batteries, consider including these directives:

- Wear full PPE and SCBA on *all* vehicle fires.
- Block traffic immediately – call for additional units to assist in blocking or add them automatically to any vehicle response on a highway.
- Require those not engaged in active firefighting to wear a high-visibility vest.
- Conduct an initial 360-degree size-up with a thermal imaging camera (TIC) to note any heat pattern or fire extension near the battery case – located either on the frame of the EV or on some models behind the back seat. Confirm the vehicle's power source (i.e., EV, CNG, Propane, gasoline).
- Set up an incident command system with at least an officer in charge and safety officer as additional eyes on the fire and traffic are needed safety factors.
- Determine your tactical priorities: fire, extrication, victim care.
- Approach the EV at a 45-degree angle until the vehicle is chocked/cribbed.
- Stabilize the vehicle with chocks or cribbing to avoid it moving. (EVs don't make much sound even when running.)
- Power down the EV from the information on that vehicle's ERG. Remember there are both the 600- and 12-volt systems that need to be de-energized.
- Understand your fire attack options, as ***letting the vehicle burn is often the best option*** or you risk the batteries constantly re-igniting. Extinguishment with water involves anywhere from 5,000 to 30,000 gallons of water, so securing a hydrant or several water tenders and dump tanks is essential. However, consider the potential of water contamination to nearby lakes or streams.
- *Consider an EV incident as not only a potential fire, extrication and victim care emergency, but also a hazmat response.*
- Have sufficient personnel and air management refill equipment on hand for crew rotation, traffic blocking and rehabilitation.
- Share information with the towing company that this is an EV with the possibility of re-ignition and the need to be separated by at least 50 feet from any other vehicles or combustibles, such as buildings.
- Perform gross decon needs at the scene, with all PPE needs later thoroughly decontaminated either in a washer/extractor or per the manufacturer's specifications before re-use.
- Consider having the PPE commercially cleaned and contact the vehicle's insurance carrier to agree to pay this expense. Borrow or rent clean PPE from the PPE manufacturer or another department in the interim.

PRODUCT OPTIONS

There are many devices, tactics and agents being marketed or advanced in the United States and Europe to handle EV incidents, some of which are expensive and/or inherently flawed. For example, one tactic is to immerse the vehicle in a container of salt water. However, as we saw after Hurricane Ian, the salt-water residue caused approximately 25 EVs, previously submerged in salt water by the storm, to ignite when they were moved weeks after the storm.

Before investing in any of these devices or tactics, wait for legitimate testing laboratories to confirm their legitimacy. In the meantime, check out Captain Patrick Durham's article "Electric vehicle fires: Where the waiting game wins."

OUR CHANGING FIRE SERVICE –CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES!

OPPORTUNITIES:

[University Of Maryland Students Using Indoor Drones To Help Fire Crews](#)

VIDEO: Some University of Maryland students were in the spotlight Wednesday after winning more than \$150,000 in a national drone competition. What the team from the university's Autonomous Micro Air Vehicle Team has achieved is especially important to first responders, who turned out in big numbers Wednesday to take a look at the specialized drone students at the University's Clark School of Engineering created. The drone is designed to fly indoors and see through darkness, smoke and unbreathable air to search for victims and assess conditions. Former student Qingwen Wei, of Towson, Maryland, said the students have targeted a highly specialized market. "I don't think there are a lot of companies that are going directly for first responders and what they want," Wei said.

[On-Demand Webinar: A Comprehensive Guide To The Grants Process](#)

Grants are a great way for your department or agency to receive funding beyond the limits of your operational budget. Grants can bridge the gap between resources and needs, as well as help pay for equipment like radios, vehicles, training, or even provide funding for additional personnel. To be successful in winning grants, your agency needs to identify the right grants to pursue, write strong applications that state your case for needing grants funding, outline a transparent budget that reflects those needs, and follow best practices in writing and administering grants. This webinar provides valuable insight from the experts on the process of crafting a strong application, give concrete examples of mistakes to avoid, and offer best practices for a successful grant application.

In this webinar, you will learn:

- Best practices in researching grants
- What's in a budget?
- Common mistakes when applying for grants
- How to develop a competitive need statement
- Case study of a successful grant application

VIEW THE ON DEMAND WEBINAR AT THIS LINK:

https://www.firerescue1.com/fire-products/financial-services/articles/on-demand-webinar-a-comprehensive-guide-to-the-grants-process-hQzENMgEB6XvsqyW/?utm_source=top5webinars&utm_medium=email&utm_source=FireRescue1&utm_campaign=f3701c7499-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_08_29_05_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1d76c7ca1b-f3701c7499-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D-LeadForm

[The Annual Fallen Firefighters Memorial Ceremony](#)

The 26th Annual Fallen Firefighters Memorial Ceremony will be held on October 10, 2023, and will honor twenty-nine firefighters who gave their lives in the line of duty.

This ceremony is, and will always be, an event that is completely open to the public. All are welcome to attend.

Last year's ceremony was held on October 11, 2022 at the Empire State Plaza in Albany, NY. The ceremony honored eleven firefighters who gave their lives in the line of duty. You may [view the ceremony online](#).

[CHALLENGES:](#)

[Hawaii Power Utility Faults Firefighters For Second And Deadliest Wildfire](#)

Let the finger pointing continue!!

Hawaii's electric utility acknowledged its power lines started a wildfire on Maui but faulted county firefighters for declaring the blaze contained and leaving the scene, only to have a second wildfire break out nearby and become the deadliest in the U.S. in more than a century.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: A COMMUNITY LED BY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND ALL THE CONTRIBUTING PARTIES SHOULD HAVE WORKED TOGETHER IN ADVANCE OF THE FIRE WHEN THEY RECOGNIZED THE HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS! LESSON LEARNED, WORK TOGETHER TO ADDRESS A RECOGNIZED PROBLEM!]

[111-Year-Old Connecticut Volunteer Fire Company Becomes Inactive, Donates Station to Town](#)

Meghan Friedmann-New Haven Register

Given its declining enrollment — part of a nationwide trend of dwindling volunteer firefighter numbers — the organization is officially going inactive after 111 years. Its members hope that by donating their Whitney Avenue firehouse to the town, the company's legacy can live on.

Officials said the change will not affect service or response times; currently, **Hamden's volunteer firefighters only respond to brush fires, water disruption events and downed wires**, said fire Chief Jeffrey Naples.

Increasing call volumes mean **Hamden's needs typically are better met by career staff**, according to Naples. Because volunteers may need to drop what they are doing at home or at work to get to a fire scene, he said, their response times can be longer.

The building donation will, however, allow Hamden to continue to house career firefighters on northern Whitney Avenue; though it is owned by the volunteer company, town firefighters have long operated there as part of Engine 5. "Now we can ensure that we are not going to lose that location to house our career staff truck," Naples said, adding that Engine 5 serves 9,000 residents and responds to about 1,100 calls per year.

Still, some longtime members have found it difficult to say goodbye to Mt. Carmel's days of volunteer firefighting. "It's tough. It's very tough," said Dave Johnson, the secretary for the Mt. Carmel Volunteer Fire Co. "It really bothers me to think that, yeah, this institution that provided fire protection for Mt. Carmel, that was so much a part of our lives ... is going out of business."

In a way, volunteer fire companies are the vestige of a bygone era when most of the town's firefighting was done on a volunteer basis and the companies were critical to the social fabric of the town.

Volunteer owned-and-operated fire stations predated the town's career fire department, according to Johnson, who also serves as the historian for the town and the Hamden Fire Retirees Association.

The fire department wasn't a government agency in Hamden until 1925, at which point ***the town already had seven volunteer companies***, Johnson said.

Just two of those companies — the Mix District and Dunbar Hill volunteers — remain active.

The Mt. Carmel Volunteer Fire Co. was founded in 1912. Johnson joined in the 1966, he said, remembering the organization as a social hub with many members in their teens and 20s.

"It was a hangout, you know, we'd play cards with the paid guys," he said. "It was the place to be if you didn't have a date."

Many of the volunteer companies were still thriving in the 1980s, when Johnson estimated there were about 60 active volunteers across town. Johnson, who went on to become a career firefighter, was then serving as the Hamden Fire Department's training officer.

As new forms of entertainment emerged to occupy young adults' time, Johnson said, the companies' importance as social hubs declined.

Yet some members have stuck around for decades. Gilbert Spencer, who joined the Mt. Carmel volunteers in 1952, holds the record as the longest-serving continuous member of a volunteer fire company in Hamden, according to Johnson.

At Mt. Carmel, about 10 members still attend company meetings, Johnson said. But only one volunteer — Guarino — is able to respond to fires.

The company's current president and captain, Guarino said he joined in 2007, when the organization had "at least eight to 10 other active members, and the other two companies were somewhere around those numbers."

Over the past four years, the organization has really struggled with enrollment, according to Guarino, who said many members moved out of town or were hired by career departments.

Though the Mt. Carmel company engaged in recruitment efforts at town events, it had trouble attracting new volunteers, he said.

The physical demands of the job and the costs associated with training may deter potential recruits, he said.

"It's physically demanding and honestly, to go through the training if you're not going to do it as a career, it costs money," Guarino said.

Over the years, the training requirements for volunteer firefighters have become more extensive, according to Johnson. When he joined in 1966, he could have gone to a fire the same night, he said.

“That’s not the way it’s done today, and that’s not the way it should be done,” Johnson said, noting the training requirements represent an improvement and are important for safety reasons. But they also mean there are more impediments to becoming a volunteer firefighter.

Mayor Lauren Garrett said the COVID-19 pandemic also brought a sharp decline in volunteer enrollment.

“COVID really put kind of a damper on volunteer fire organizations,” she said. “A lot of it had to do with, you know, people didn’t want to come in contact with other people, obviously.”

During that time, volunteers also were not allowed to gather at the firehouses, Garrett said.

(Guarino said he does not think COVID-19 had a big impact on the Mt. Carmel Volunteer Fire Company, which he said was struggling prior to the pandemic.)

Guarino, who also volunteers with Hamden’s two other companies, said there are about 10 active members between them, including some newer recruits.

Those companies are looking to stay afloat by joining forces, he said.

“It’s sad. It’s a shame that there aren’t enough people that want to volunteer” for the Mt. Carmel company, Guarino said.

Its current members, however, believe their predecessors would have approved of their decision to give the firehouse to the town.

“We’re trying to do something for the legacy of the company, to keep our commitment going,” said Karl Olson, the company’s vice president.

The donation of the station is an example of the “public-spiritedness of our volunteers,” said Johnson. “It’s important that (community members) know that this is coming from our heart.”

PA Community Lifts Probation For Volunteer Fire Department After Missed Calls

Quincey Reese-Tribune-Review

The West Point Volunteer Fire Department will be taken off probation for the first time in more than two years following a unanimous **vote by the Hempfield supervisors** this week.

Hempfield fire Chief Anthony Kovacic recommended the move.

Kovacic said the department missed five calls over the last seven months. In the same time frame, some volunteers have responded to 20-25 calls, he said.

“We’ve been talking the last couple of months and working with (West Point), and I believe at this point in time, we’re to the point where we can look to lift that probation,” Kovacic said. “That situation is finally starting to correct itself.”

Kovacic commended the department for recruiting new members, increasing its training hours and maintaining a good relationship with Hempfield Station 2 — which is now a “sister company” to West Point, said Lt. Miles Webb Jr.

Continuing to recruit new members will be a focus of the department moving forward, Webb said.

The department recruited and trained four new members during the probation period. There are about eight to 10 active members, Webb said.

The department receives about 500 calls per year ranging from West Point to Greensburg to Dry Ridge, Webb said. **All departments are required to respond to 80% of the calls they receive.**

Another challenge of the probation was the loss of township funding. The township allocates \$16,000 to each volunteer fire department per year, Webb said, but this was withheld during the probation.

“We’re just glad that it’s finally been lifted,” he said. “It’s been a long two years.”

Township Secretary William Bretz said he hopes the department can recruit new members now that the “cloud” of probation has been lifted.

“I’d like to thank all those that have worked so hard for the last few years to get the West Point Volunteer Fire Department reinstated and off probation,” Bretz said. “This isn’t a destination but a milestone here, and the hard part will be to maintain the level of service that you have obtained here over the past many months.”

The department was put on probation in June 2021 due to resignation or transfer of three members, including the chief, and a failure to respond to 81 calls in the first half of the year.

A corrective action plan was put into place, but the department was kept on probation at the reassessment point in November 2021, citing low response rates and a decrease in volunteer firefighters.

From July to November 2021, the department responded to 11 of 137 calls.

Improvement was noticed by township officials in March 2022, but the probation was kept in place. From January to March 2022, the department responded to 33 out of 55 calls.

The High Park Volunteer Fire Department, which was put on probation in June 2022 due to personnel issues, was not discussed at the meeting.

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.

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>



3 Cancer prevention resources for firefighters

Cancer is gaining nationwide recognition as one of the most dangerous health and safety threats to firefighters—and for good reason. Your fire department's leadership team and members each play an important role in helping reduce the chance of cancer—and everyone can make a meaningful difference by continually evaluating best practices and instituting needed changes.

The latest + trending cancer prevention resources

on RESPONDER+HELP

- **How clean is clean?** Two major research efforts are addressing just that, including PPE cleaning procedures and the possible effects of cross-contamination. [Learn more>>>](#)
- **All U.S. firefighters are encouraged to join the National Firefighter Registry for Cancer**, including those with and without cancer and those who are active or retired, so that researchers can continue to learn about cancer and how to help prevent it. [Learn more>>>](#)
- **This sample SOG** can help your fire department implement cancer prevention best practices, including on-scene decontamination, respiratory protection, healthy habits and more. [Learn more>>>](#)

DOWNLOAD SAMPLE SOG AT THIS LINK: <https://www.responderhelp.com/media/2330/sog-sample-carcinogen-preventive-practices.docx>



QPR Suicide Prevention ESIP WEBINAR SERIES - -Question-Persuade-Refer

Sadly, we lose many members of the fire and EMS services to suicide every year. During our next ESIP webinar, Gerald Shalk joins us to review the QPR approach to suicide prevention so we may look after each other when one of us is in crisis.

Wednesday September 6th at 7:00PM

REGISTER HERE AT THIS LINK: <https://mcneilandcompany.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=03596f243a9d922954ebaf15e&id=fcac5edad3&e=781e9a2c81>

THE SAFETY OFFICER – TAKING CARE OF OUR MEMBERS!

IN 2023 WE HAVE SADLY EXPERIENCED 55 FIRE FIGHTER LODD'S

*According to FirefighterCloseCalls.com**

In 2022 we experienced 101 LODDs reported nationally.!

You Just Never Know!

- Captain/Flight Paramedic Terryson Jackson died in the crash of a Broward County Sheriff's fire-rescue helicopter in Pompano Beach Florida.
- 50-Year-old Firefighter Anthony DeSimone, a 23-year North Haven Fire Department veteran died after suffering a medical emergency after completing a 38-hour shift.
- Chicago Fire Department lieutenant Kevin Ward, 59 has died from injuries he received while fighting a basement fire in a residence on Aug.11.
- Bergen County N.J., Fire Marshal Bryan Hennig died early Saturday morning, ***less than two weeks*** after he was brought home to continue his "fierce and courageous" fight with cancer, Hennig was suddenly diagnosed with liver cancer about five weeks ago, he was 62.
- Two Rossville, Texas firefighters were injured, one critically, ***when their fire engine blew a tire and rolled over***. One of the firefighters was taken airlifted to a hospital in critical condition. The other firefighter was transported to a hospital with unknown injuries. An official on the scene said the fire engine rolled over twice.

How To Safely Operate Firefighting Tenders

Robert Avsec

These unwieldy beasts make up a large percentage of apparatus crashes; follow these sound safety procedures to tame that beast and keep firefighters safe.

I remember the instructor in my first rural water supply class telling us, "An efficient rural water supply [using tenders] is accomplished through rapid loading at the fill site and rapid unloading at the dump site. ***You don't do it by driving fast between those two points.***"

Words to live by, not to die by.

The U.S. Fire Administration delivered a report on firefighter fatality statistics in the United States for the past 37 years up to 2013. Each year during that time, fire service line of duty deaths resulting from vehicle collisions while responding to or returning from emergency calls averaged around 25% of all LODDs. In 2013, two of those nine deaths (22%) involved a fire department tender. For the 12-year period (1990 to 2001) USFA studied, approximately 22% of fire apparatus collision fatalities occurred in tenders. That's more fatalities involving tenders than pumpers and aerial apparatus combined. USFA estimated at that time that tenders only accounted for 3% of all fire apparatus in the United States. Shortly thereafter, USFA published a report, "[Safe Operations of Fire Tankers](#)." That report provides comprehensive information on the causes and prevention of fire department tender crashes. Here's a synopsis of what was in that report.

HUMAN FACTORS

The report indicated insufficient training as a problem and suggested mandatory training for tender drivers. Extensive training must be done before a firefighter is allowed to drive the tanker on public roadways.

It also recommends refresher training on a regular basis according the requirements of NFPA 1451: Standard for a Fire and Emergency Services Vehicle Operations Training Program (2013 Edition), and NFPA 1500: Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program (2013 Edition).

Tender operators should receive practice time driving the tender on a variety of weather and road conditions. This practice time should also include driving during daylight and nighttime conditions.

The report also recommends always operating a tender at a safe and reasonable speed. Never exceed the posted speed limit when driving under nonemergency response conditions.

Posted speed limit signs prior to curves in the road are based upon automobile traffic on a dry road surface; a tender should never be operated at or above that posted speed limit.

Another issue is lack of familiarity with the response district and the roads within it. A driver's level of familiarity with the various routes within their response district and associated hazards like dangerous curves, bridges with weight limitations, etc., has a direct impact on safe vehicle response.

DRIVING SURFACES

Keep all of the wheels on the primary road surface at all times. A common cause of tender crashes is when the tender's right-side wheels drift off the edge of the road.

If this happens, do not try to bring the apparatus back onto the road surface at a high speed. Slow the apparatus to 20 mph or less before trying to bring the wheels back onto the road.

Avoid poorly constructed or unpaved roads whenever possible. It may be safer (and faster) to take a paved route that is longer than the shorter unpaved route. If such an option does not exist, the tender operator should significantly slow down and proceed with extreme caution.

Require operators to come to a complete stop at all intersections containing a stop sign or red traffic light in your direction of travel. Nearly all intersection vehicle crashes can be prevented if a driver brings their vehicle to a complete stop when faced with the signal to do so.

Require that all personnel are seated and belted whenever the apparatus is in motion. A significant percentage of tender crashes involve the vehicle rolling over and the occupants being ejected. The chance of serious injury or death is greatly increased when the occupant is thrown from the vehicle.

UNWIELDY BEAST

Tenders are not primary-response units, like engines or aerial apparatus, that are critical to the initial stages of managing the fire incident. Rather, for the majority of incidents to which they respond, tenders are key support units whose primary function is to establish and maintain an adequate and continuous water supply.

Provide guidance and direction to your personnel on when tenders may respond under emergency conditions (lights and sirens operating) and when they shall not.

Even a tender that is specified and built from the ground up as a tender can be an unwieldy beast on the road, and operators should treat it as such. If your department is operating a retrofitted tender, you should strongly consider restricting its operation to non-emergency response.

Minimum staffing for a tender should be the operator and another firefighter. The firefighter riding shotgun is a co-operator and should be the only person operating warning devices and handling radio transmissions. They should also provide a second set of eyes to assist the operator in identifying potential hazards during the response phase.

The co-operator should have full authority to alert the operator if they feel that the tender is being operated at an unsafe speed and the operator should be required to acknowledge that alert and slow down.

Travel with the water tank either completely empty or completely full. This minimizes the effects of liquid surge within the tank. Don't rely on tank baffles to prevent such surges.

NFPA 1500 requires the use of ground guides for backing, regardless of whether the apparatus is equipped with back-view cameras or other backing safety equipment. One ground guide should be equipped with a portable radio in the event that they need to contact the driver during the backing operation.

DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE

All new tenders shall comply with the requirements of NFPA 1901 including the chapters on general requirements; chassis and vehicle components; low-voltage electrical systems and warning devices; driving and crew areas; body, compartments and equipment mounting; and mobile water supply fire apparatus.

Vehicles that have been retrofitted to be tenders, from milk or fuel delivery trucks, are overly represented in tender crash statistics. Serious accidents have been attributed to poorly designed, retrofitted or homebuilt tankers.

Departments should make every effort to only have tenders in service that are specifically engineered and designed for fire department operations according to the requirements of NFPA 1901.

All tenders should be weighed completely full and that weight should be posted (in pounds and tons) on a plaque on the vehicle's dashboard. This will help the driver to determine if it is safe to drive the vehicle on a road or bridge that has posted weight restrictions. Ensure that all tenders are equipped with audible back-up alarms to alert others in the area that the tender is backing up.

Many mechanical failures that lead to crashes can be prevented if the apparatus is inspected and maintained on a regular basis. Guidelines for establishing proper maintenance programs can be found in NFPA 1911: Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Testing, and Retirement of In-Service Automotive Fire Apparatus.

I strongly encourage you to read the entire report, Safe Operations of Fire Tankers [Tenders] and use it to develop good policy and procedure for your personnel regarding the operation of the tender(s) in your fleet.

You would also be wise to make reading the report a prerequisite for becoming a tender operator. And, I would include the report's use in refresher training for incumbent tender operators as well.

DISTRICT FINANCES

****How To Prevent Embezzlement In The Fire Department**

Keith Padgett

The fire chief receives an e-mail from the finance director asking if he has time to meet this week to discuss an issue within the department. While finding it a bit out of the ordinary that the finance director didn't identify the topic of the meeting, the chief reluctantly sets up a meeting, assuming it's a budget issue that requires attention.

But the meeting turns out to be something far different – something the chief didn't expect in the least.

A fire department investigation has revealed several instances of financial mishandling and embezzlement. Specifically, it has been discovered that over the past seven months, one of the chief's administrative assistants has been using a department credit card to purchase personal items at a local convenience store – groceries, alcohol and gasoline to name a few.

The chief is shocked, as he had known the employee for years and had no clue that this was happening. The assistant was responsible for all credit card statements and their reconciliation. The discovery is a huge blow to the department, and will require further investigation, public disclosure and personnel termination.

Unfortunately, this situation happens far too often at public safety agencies. Fire chiefs have been tasked with overseeing the department, and an incident like this can severely erode the public's trust in administration, leading to criticism and skepticism about how taxpayer funds are being managed.

PREVENTING EMBEZZLEMENT

What can we do to prevent fire department embezzlement? Several steps must be implemented to help an organization stay focused on the mission of serving the public and keeping their trust.

To start, a culture of transparency should be established at every level of the department. Encourage a culture where honesty, integrity and accountability are highly valued. This should be the high standard that is maintained in everything the organization does, from loading hose to making equipment purchases for the department. We must also recognize and reward ethical behavior and enforce consequences for unethical conduct.

With this as our foundation, the following are additional steps that can help prevent fire department embezzlement:

1. **Establish policies:** Establishing clear and well-documented financial policies and procedures is essential. These strong financial controls will assist the department in managing funds while maintaining that honesty and integrity.

2. **Sign agreements:** Have employees sign agreements that they understand the purchasing card policy and will adhere to it. This holds them accountable for their usage and demonstrates the importance of this financial responsibility.
3. **Provide training:** Ensure members are trained on the organization's policies and procedures. Training should cover fraud prevention, financial integrity and, importantly, the consequences of embezzlement within the department. Education is the most important element when dealing with any form of financial matters.
4. **Establish a code of conduct:** Establish a code of conduct that clearly identifies the expectations for members related to financial integrity.
5. **Set the example:** Strong leadership sets a good example by demonstrating good ethical behavior and financial responsibility.
6. **Monitor financial activity:** Company officers, assistant chiefs, administrative personnel and, of course, the fire chief, should actively monitor financial activities and enforce adherence. There should be zero variance from established policies at any time.
7. **Separate finance:** Consider separation of responsibilities within the area of a financial division of the department. Assign different individuals who are responsible for authorizing, recording and reconciling financial transactions. This ensures that no single person has complete control over the financial process, producing a built-in check-and-balance system.
8. **Invest in software:** Invest in reliable accounting and financial management software that provides real-time monitoring and tracking of financial activities. Many organizations have systems like this in place. This technology provides a new level of financial accountability.
9. **Require receipts:** If the department is not currently doing so, start mandating that members provide receipts for every credit card purchase or any other type of transaction. Discourage purchase reimbursements if possible. Reimbursements should only be made upon submission of proper documentation, including an itemized receipt detailing exactly what was purchased and from whom.
10. **Hold audits:** Consider conducting regular scheduled and surprise audits to keep employees alert and to discourage potential embezzlement. The audits should be conducted by someone outside of the department to maintain objectivity. The financial director may be able to provide someone who can help with this.

PRIORITIZE PUBLIC TRUST

By implementing these measures, the fire department can significantly reduce the risk of embezzlement and financial misconduct, promoting a transparent and accountable organization.

The public trust should be number one in every organization, so we must continue to monitor and update financial policies and procedures to address any issues that may appear.

LIVING WITH NEW GREEN TECHNOLOGY - - HOT TOPIC!

New Device Aims To Help Arizona Firefighters Battle Electric Vehicle Fires

VIDEO: One of the biggest challenges of putting out an electric vehicle (EV) fire is trying to get inside the battery to flood the battery. "They're very difficult to put out," said Avondale Fire Department Battalion Chief Garry Siler. Now, there is a new device that punctures holes in an EV's battery, and floods it with water. "It goes right through it. It's pretty amazing," said Battalion Chief Siler. Arizona-based Velocity Fire Equipment is calling the device the BEST (Battery Extinguishing System Technology) system. Fire crews would push the device under where the car battery would be, and then, using air pressure, they jam the piercing nozzle through the bottom, and flood it with water. "It's a lot of pressure. About 600 psi that comes out of that piercing nozzle," said Michael Todd with Velocity Fire Equipment.

Video Link: <https://www.fox10phoenix.com/news/new-device-aims-to-help-firefighters-battle-electric-vehicle-fires>

Fla. Ffs Warn Evs Soaked By Saltwater From Hurricane Can Go Up In Flames

Hurricane Idalia ripped through Florida's Nature Coast, leaving a path of destruction behind. But, as the floodwaters recede, there is a new risk threatening owners of electric vehicles.

Two Tesla cars, one in Palm Harbor and another in Pinellas Park, seemed to spontaneously combust after becoming flooded with saltwater during the hurricane, Florida officials said.

On Aug. 30, Palm Harbor Fire Rescue responded to a Tesla on fire in Dunedin, according to the department's Facebook post.

The car had become flooded with saltwater during the storm surge following Hurricane Idalia.

In Pinellas Park, on Aug. 31, a Tesla owner called a tow truck to move his flooded car, the Pinellas Park Police Department told WTSP. When the car was on the back of the truck, it suddenly burst into flames, leaving behind a charred frame when the fire was finally subdued, the outlet reported. "If you own a hybrid or electric vehicle that has come into contact with saltwater due to recent flooding within the last 24 hours, it is crucial to relocate the vehicle from your garage without delay," Palm Harbor Fire Rescue said in the post. Firefighters said exposure from saltwater can trigger spontaneous combustion of lithium-ion batteries, used in electric cars, but **also found in some golf carts and electric scooters**. "Don't drive these through water. PHFR crews have seen numerous residents out in carts and children on scooters riding through the water," Palm Harbor Fire Rescue said.

In September 2022, Hurricane Ian brought massive flooding to Florida's west coast. In the weeks following the saltwater surge, there were 12 reports of electric vehicle fires in Collier and Lee counties, according to the U.S. Fire Administration. One of those fires grew so severe it burned down two houses on Sanibel Island, the administration said.

AWARE OF THE RISKS

Tesla is aware of the potential fire risks following saltwater flooding in its vehicles and provides information about flooding on its website. "Tesla wants to ensure you have the information you need to should there be a risk of vehicle submersion or if your vehicle experiences submersion in water," the company says. "If you notice fire, smoke, audible popping/hissing or heating coming from your vehicle, step away and immediately contact your local first responders." **Tesla also recommends moving any submerged car at least 50 feet away from all structures or combustible materials for fear a fire would spread.**

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	52+0 = 52 [3 weeks running]
Last fire death 8/2 Bronx, Bronx Co	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	103+5 = 108
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	874 + 7 = 881
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	1 PA = 58
	2 NY = 52
	3 OH = 47
There has been a total of 1423 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.

****Content Change Highlights for NFPA 1901 and 1906 for 2024**

WATER FORDING Manufacturers will be required to state the height of the lowest portion of the air intake system that is not sealed (open to water intrusion) in the operator manual.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE ACCOMMODATION The old standards were written before the advent of electric vehicles and included requirements that were not appropriate for EVs. Chapters were rewritten in a way that makes a distinction between electric propulsion and internal combustion engine propulsion. Certain unique EV safety requirements were added as well. Requirements for batteries now make a distinction between high voltage and low voltage batteries.

REQUIREMENTS BY APPARATUS TYPE The old standards had unique chapters for the requirements of unique apparatus types such as pumper, initial attack, mobile water supply, etc. These requirements were combined into a single chapter with a master table that indicates requirements by type. *Most of the loose equipment requirements including ground ladders, hose, and nozzles are no longer required, but instead have been moved to the annex as suggestions only.*

STRUCTURAL AND WILDLAND CHAPTERS COMBINED In past revisions the apparatus committee made an effort to have 1901 (structural) and 1906 (wildland) chapters match one another wherever possible. When these chapters were combined into a single document it was clear that there was a significant amount of duplication of text. These chapters were therefore combined. For those features where there is a difference the text will call for the feature to apply only to "Structural" or "Wildland" apparatus as appropriate.

NIGHT MODE FOR WARNING LIGHTS The committee debated extensively the need for a mode that would reduce the intensity of warning lights for nighttime operation. It became clear that the high intensity of most current warning lights is not required by the standard at all but is a result of competitive pressures within the lighting industry. The minimum intensity standards are already appropriate for nighttime operation. Guidelines for warning light night mode features have been added to the annex.

BACKUP CAMERA A rear view camera is now required on all apparatus.

LOW VOLTAGE BATTERY CHARGERS Battery chargers that are permanently installed on the apparatus will need to be tested prior to delivery. The test requirements were pulled directly from the annual test required by NFPA 1911.

SEATING The new standard is more specific about providing adequate room for occupants. A distinction is made between a seat that is intended to be occupied on every response, and those seats that are provided for occasional use. The purchaser must be intentional about seating configurations and consider more carefully how they plan to staff the cab.

CLEAN CAB Clean cab features are not required in the new standard, but guidance is provided in the annex for those wishing to adopt clean cab procedures.

EQUIPMENT AND LADDER RACKS The equipment rack section was revised to provide requirements for both automatic and manual racks with an eye to ergonomics of deployment.

REAR CHEVRON STRIPING The requirement for rear chevron striping is retained, but the color requirement is now optional.

HOSE REEL REWIND Any hose reel with more than 100 feet of hose must include a powered rewind function

AERIAL STABILIZER PAD SIZE The maximum aerial stabilizer pad pressure allowed has been increased from 75 psi to 100 psi. *This may reduce the size of the stabilizer pads depending on the weight of the apparatus.*

AERIAL LOAD CHART DEFINED Every aerial device has a load chart but the requirements for the load chart have never been defined. The new standard requires the following minimum information:

- Rated capacity through the range of motion of the device
- Rated vertical height
- Rated horizontal reach
- Rated water flow (if applicable)
- Rated wind speed

THE LIGHTER SIDE!

My wife cheerfully made me coffee this morning without asking and winked at me when she handed me the cup. I've never been more scared of a drink in all my life!!

CLASSIFIED SECTION

FIRE DISTRICT TREASURER VACANCY

PAID POSITION

MIDWAY FIRE DISTRICT

The Fire District is soliciting letters of interest and resumes for the Treasurer position. The term of service for this appointed position is normally for an annual term commencing on January 1 but an unexpected vacancy required filling this position as soon as possible. Those interested in being considered for this position should submit their name and any resume or summary of qualifications to Michael Cerone, Board of Fire Commissioners, mcerone@aol.com General Requirements. The treasurer must have basic bookkeeping skills and familiarity with double entry accounting. Experience and a working knowledge of Quick Books accounting software also required for this position. Attendance at all meetings of the Board of Fire Commissioners is required (currently 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 PM) but much of the work of this job is accomplished during regular hours or whenever the treasurer prefers. The treasurer must be familiar with computers and use email. Familiarity with Word and Excel is also required.

A detailed position description for this job may be obtained upon request. mcerone@aol.com

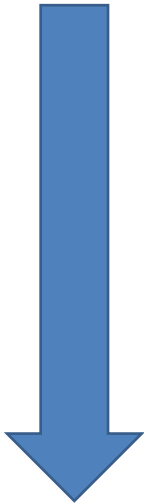
There will be a criminal background check made upon the selected candidate prior to finalization of hire.

Remember it is preferred by state law that fire district treasurers live within the fire district they are working for!!

Latham Fire Department, Full and Part Time Positions Available

Deadline September 8th

See Below





LATHAM FIRE DEPARTMENT

*"The Oldest Volunteer Fire Company Serving the Town of Colonie"
Organized 1910*

August 25, 2023

Vacancy Announcement

The Latham Fire Department is currently accepting applications for the positions of Part-Time and Full-Time Firefighter. The starting salary per the negotiated contract is \$18.00 per hour with benefits for Full-Time employees. The work schedule is Monday through Friday, 6AM – 6PM.

Candidates must be 21 years of age or older and possess a valid NYS driver's license.

Residency Requirement:

- Applicants, at the time of employment, must reside in one of the following counties to be considered eligible for employment: Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, or Schoharie.

Pre-Requisite Coursework:

- Valid NYS Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) – Basic
- At the time of interview, candidates must provide proof of completion from the NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) – Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) or equivalent for the following courses:
 - Firefighter 1 (BEFO and IFO)
 - Firefighter 2
 - Firefighter Survival or FFS: Self Rescue
 - FAST
- If a candidate has not completed Firefighter Survival/Self Rescue or FAST, but is currently enrolled, this may be considered.

Terms:

- Please transmit your stated interest, current resume, application, and copies of all other relevant course work to the Latham Fire Department Administrative Assistant at heather.williams@lathamfd.org no later than September 8, 2023.
- There is no established or guaranteed number of scheduled hours per week for the part-time employment opportunity.

226 Old Loudon Road Latham, NY 12110 • www.lathamfd.org • Phone 518-785-1283 Fax 518-783-5066

Association of Fire Districts-Capital Area

August 26, 2023

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 Glensville/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

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.

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.

Membership Audit

CAFDA, currently has **79-member Fire Districts** in Albany, Schenectady, Fulton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Warren, Washington and Saratoga Counties.

We currently have **21 fire districts that are NOT currently members**, they are: Berne, Delmar, Elsmere and McKownville in Albany County; West Charlton in Saratoga County; Glensville #2, Rotterdam #4 and Duaneburg in Schenectady County; Northville Joint in Fulton County; Bolton, Luzern-Hadley, North Creek and Pottersville in Warren County; and Best Luther, East Schodack, Schodack Center, Schodack Landing, Eastern Pittstown, Nassau #1 and Stephentown in Rensselaer County.

Are we missing anyone? Sometimes there is confusion between the State Association and regional associations such as CAFDA. CAFDA is not a branch or subsidiary of the State Association, we are not in each other reporting chain or organizational structure.

We exist solely as a not for profit for the benefit of the member fire districts.

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

PLEASE SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT US!!

Business Partner Applications Available At: WWW.AFDCA.ORG

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.

LEGAL SERVICES

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Gregory Serio, Partner
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Albany, NY 12210
518.426.3800
Email: gserio@dlgny.com
damatolawgroup.com

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Jack Clark, Fire District Attorney
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Ducharmeclark.com

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Veteran Owned Business

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.

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

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

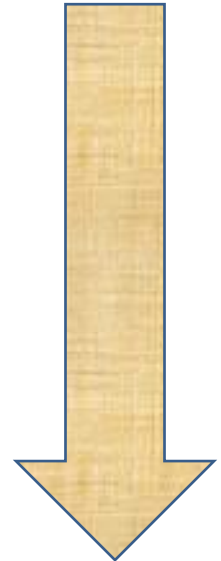
\$400,001 to \$600,000: \$200

\$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, at 6pm, meetings begin promptly at 7PM

Capital Area Meetings/Seminars/Trainings/Conference Dates (Subject to Change & Updated 7/14/2023)				
Day/Date	Time	Type	Location	Notes
2023				
AUGUST				
NO MEETING				
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
Monday, January 22, 2024	6:00 PM	Secretary Training	TBD	Snowdate - Tuesday, January 23, 2023
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			
Saturday, March 2, 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, April 11, 2024	7:00 PM	Board of Directors Meeting	Clifton Park	
Thur- Sat April 24,25,26/2024		CAFDA Conference	Lake George, NY	
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				
Friday, August 9, 2024	11:00 AM	DAY AT THE RACES	Saratoga Race Course	Officers, Directors, Vendors
SEPTEMBER				
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
Saturday, November 2, 2024	8:00 AM	Fall Workshop	TBD	
Thursday, November 7, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officer/Director Elections
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](#)

There was previous difficulty in opening this document, it should be corrected.

Click on this link, or go to our website at afdca.org

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Fire-District-Budget-Schedule.pdf>

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

There was previous difficulty in opening this document, it should be corrected.

Click on this link, or go to our website at afdca.org

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Fire-District-Elections-Schedule-2023.pdf>

Also Both are Available on the legacy 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
Safety and Health Bureau

There is NO CHARGE for this event!

Seating is **LIMITED**

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by emailing caaofd@gmail.com

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



NOTE THE PO BOX SHOULD BE 242 NOT 424 PAY AT THE DOOR IF NECESSARY



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 242
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**

