



CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN

YOUR FIRE DISTRICT NEWS SOURCE

MARCH 25TH, 2023

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If you can't see yourself as a life-long learner, then please do us all a favor and retire.

THE CAPITAL CALENDAR:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

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

Thursday May 11th Meeting of the General Membership

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

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

August, No Meeting

Thursday September 14th, General Membership Meeting 7PM

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

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

December, No Meeting

Printable Calendar – See Last Page

It's March Already and Dues are Due!!

To date 62 **Fire Districts** have submitted renewal dues for 2023. Those fire districts that have not renewed that were members last year are: Coeymans Hollow, Hemstreet Park, Quaker Street, Glenville #7, Hoosick Falls Joint, Schodack Valley, Town of Mohawk, Selkirk, ~~Guilderland~~, North Creek, Speigletown, and Petersburg. We are looking forward to hearing from those districts plus any more in the Capital Area that wish to join.

To date most **business partners** have submitted renewals for 2023. Those business partners that have not renewed for 2023 yet are: Ballston Spa National Bank, Fox Pest Control, White Wolf Computer, Salt City Fire Equipment, and The D'Amato Law Group.

Long Way to Travel to Meetings? Join remotely using Zoom!

It's our desire that every member district have the opportunity to attend Capital Area meetings. We know we cover a large area, in 8 counties and beyond and wish to give all of our members a chance to participate in the general membership meetings. You have a voice and we would like to hear it. Join us at our next meeting either in person or via Zoom. The link will be sent via constant contact prior to each general membership meeting. Thank you for being a member and we hope you will join us.

CAFDA FALL WORKSHOP

Saturday, November 4th, 2023 8:00 AM Fall Workshop Location to be determined

ARE THERE SUBJECTS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE COVERED? LET US KNOW!

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

IF NOTHING ELSE READ THE ARTICLES PRECEDED BY **

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AFDCA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063

EMAIL: CAAOFD@GMAIL.COM

518-407-5020

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

CAPITAL SHORTS:

- The three Commissioner's training classes in Clifton Park, Averill Park and Berkshire were resounding successes. We wish to thank those fire districts that hosted the classes and provided food for the attendees. We will certainly be doing it again next year. Thank you also to instructor Greg Serio and all of the officers and directors who provided the help to accomplish these classes.
- 2023 Tax Savings Generated By New York's Volunteer Fire Service provided by FASNY downloadable HERE: <https://afdca.org/wp-admin/post.php?post=4898&action=edit&classic-editor>
- If you are interested in becoming a State Director to represent Region 1 for the next two years, please contact Tom Rinaldi or any of the Capital Area officers?
- Fire Department Breakfasts are back, Gansevoort Fire Department holds theirs on the 3rd Sunday of each month except for July and August. Clifton Park Fire Department is every other month with the next breakfast on the first Sunday of April. Pancake Breakfast with the Easter bunny Sunday April 2nd at the East Greenbush fire department 8 til noon.(If any other department would like to notify readers of their activities please let us know through the officers or directors.
- It is with deepest regret that the Fort Johnson Fire Department has to announce the very sad news that our much loved brother, father and grandfather, Assistant Chief Steve Harris passed away due to a previously suffered heart attack. Please keep his children and sister in your prayers as well as his brothers and sisters from Fort Johnson.

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

MUTUAL AID HELP REQUEST

- The Wilton Fire District is looking for policies regarding Driver Certification, send to Megan Washburn, District Administrator at mwashburn@wiltonfiredept.org. Thank you.
- The Arvin Hart Fire Co is looking to see if anyone has a witten swift water mutual aid agreement on top of their county mutual aid agreement, holding the other participants harmless? Reply to tom@rinaldi1.com

ON THE GRANTS FRONT:***Fire Prevention and Safety Grant (FP&S) is Open!***

The FP&S grant provides critical resources needed to support a wide array of fire prevention projects that improve the safety of the public and firefighters from fire and related hazards.

The application period is now open and is scheduled to close on March 31 at 5pm EST.

STATE ASSOCIATION NEWS:

WWW.AFDNYS.ORG



The Capital Area Fire Districts Association endorses Dave Denniston

The Capital Area Officers and Directors voted at the March 9th meeting to endorse Dave Denniston for 2nd Vice President of the State Association. Dave is in his fourth term as commissioner in the Virgil Fire District and have served on the AFDSNY Board of Directors for the past 8 years. During this period, he has participated in some great accomplishments, and have witnessed the challenges that the organization faces. Dave has also been endorsed by the Central NY and Monroe County Fire Districts Association for this position. We are confident that Dave will represent the member districts of the Capital Area well and work in the best interests of the association members.

2023 Annual Meeting & Leadership Summit Expo

Wednesday, May 17 - Saturday, May 20

Turning Stone Resort & Casino

5218 Patrick Road

Verona, Ne 13478

Annual Meeting & Leadership Summit Expo

[Click Here to Register](#)

A link to reserve your hotel room at the Turning Stone Resort & Casino will be included on your confirmation page and in your confirmation email. No call in reservations will be accepted.. 1 room per person

Anyone with hotel reservations in the AFDSNY block that is NOT registered for this event will be subject to your reservation being canceled by the host. Prior notice will be given when possible but is not guaranteed.

The Capital Area Association officers and directors are urging all fire districts who are members of the State Association to at least travel to Turning Stone on Friday Afternoon May 19th no later than 4PM to VOTE in favor of the By-law change which will allow future voting either in person or by Proxy. This would empower all of the members who pay dues to vote on the future of the State Association without having to travel, pay for and attend the annual conference. *If you pay dues to this not for profit Association, you should be enfranchised to vote!*

Fire Districts Announces a move back to a Fall Annual Meeting

The annual meeting in 2024 will be held on October 9-13th at the Crown Plaza-Desmond Hotel in Colonie NY.

TRAINING APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR ENTIRE BOARD/SECRETARY/TREASURER

Mark your calendar for November 4th 2023 for the Capital Area Fall Leadership Workshop, final location to be determined. If there are subjects that YOU think we should be covering, please let us know.



Coffee with Commissioners

Thursday April 6th at 7PM

Join us for another session of Coffee with Commissioners where we talk about how you as fire commissioners can protect the assets of your districts. Join Region 4 Director Dave Denniston as he talks about troubling new schemes arising to defraud fire districts.

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER: https://archcapgroup.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ffPm4KEgRR-Zf9Vv4Aa12Q

THE LATEST FROM ALBANY

From the 2024 Executive Budget Briefing Book

Improve Statewide Emergency Response Services.

- **Allow for Compensation Volunteer Firefighters.** The Executive Budget proposes legislation to allow municipalities and fire companies to pay volunteer firefighters modest compensation based on call response and still retain their volunteer status.
- **Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend.** The Executive Budget includes \$6.5 million to provide a State-funded stipend to volunteer firefighters who complete foundational training as well as funds for DHSES to administer the program and enhance their training capacity.
- **Create NY Emergency Services IP Network.** The Executive Budget includes \$20 million to assist counties in transitioning to Next Generation 911 via a fiberoptic cable network that would connect to a single Public Service Answering Point in each county
- **Amend Emergency Medical Services** This part would require the State Emergency Medical Services Council to advise the Commissioner of Health on issues related to EMS; establish a statewide comprehensive emergency medical services plan; establish mobile integrated healthcare program for ESM agencies; and establish a new process for the approval of EMS applications.
- **Emergency Medical Services (EMS):** The Executive proposes \$7.6 million to increase the EMS special revenue fund in addition to providing capital equipment resources to enhance the statewide fleet of EMS vehicles including ambulances and non-transport treatment vehicles.
- **Create the Transit-Oriented Development Act of 2023** This part would require local governments to authorize the construction of residential dwelling units within proximity to any non-seasonal rail station.
- **Authorize a Property Tax Exemption for Accessory Dwelling Units** This part would authorize municipalities to adopt a property tax exemption program for residential property owners to create one or more additional residential units on their property.
- **Prohibit Installation of Fossil Fuel Equipment and Building Systems** This part would prohibit the installation of fossil-fuel equipment and building systems in new building construction and establish building benchmarking requirements

The executive budget will be presented to the legislature; they will review it, come up with their budget and then the negotiations begin. The budget is supposed to be in place by April 1st. We'll see.

2023 Issues of United Concern – NYS Fire Service Alliance Legislative Initiatives

- **ENSURE VFBL PARITY WITH WORKERS COMPENSATION**
Bring the volunteer firefighters benefit law pay equal to worker's compensation/what career firefighters receive when injured in the line of duty.
Corresponding legislation: S.1340 (Brooks) / A.3597 (McMahon) (2021-2022 Session)
- **S4120 MAYER/A3992 OTIS---DESIGNATE EMS AS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE AND EXPAND THE BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO EMS PERSONNEL AND SET STANDARDS FOR EMS**
Recognizes EMS as an essential service, establishes a special district for the financing and operation of general ambulance services, expands access to health insurance and retirement benefits available to EMS providers.
- **ANALYZE FINDINGS FROM THE NYS DHSES RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TASK FORCE**
IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE ON:
(1) RECRUITMENT EFFORTS
(2) RETENTION EFFORTS

PUBLIC SAFETY AND BUILDING CODE COMPLIANCE ISSUES

- **S3458 SKOFUS/A2776 ZEBROWSKI---AMEND PENAL CODE TO ADD ENDANGERING THE WELFARE OF OCCUPANTS AND FIRST RESPONDERS**
- **S2986 KAVANAGH/A4430 ZEBROWSKI---RECOVERY OF 54-G FUNDING TO SUPPORT CODE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS**

Ensure state funds collected through dedicated fees on each fire policy written in the state go to support local code enforcement activities and not continue to be swept into State General Fund.

Corresponding legislation: S.6970-A (Kavanagh) / A.8802-A (Zebrowski) (2021-2022 Session)

- **S3531 SKOFUS---TIMELY ADOPTION OF UPDATED STATE FIRE AND BUILDING PREVENTION CODE**

Would require that a new building code as published by ICC would be adopted by the NYS Codes Council within specified time frame.

- **ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS** – Ensure the Executive and Legislative prioritization of provision of affordable housing stock through legalization of more residential space is executed in a manner that prioritizes occupant safety and the safety of first responders in emergencies. Ensure a focus on legalizing existing units as well as create new units; advocate for increasing access to housing for first responders as a recruitment and retention tool.

Corresponding legislation: To be determined.

- **LITHIUM-ION BATTERY SAFETY STANDARDS**

Ensure proper registration/permitting, research and standard development, repairing and regulation of products containing lithium-ion batteries, work with stakeholders to raise public awareness around best fire safety practices, and examine solutions proposed from decision makers and opine as a trusted public safety voice.

- **S324 OBERACKER---CONTINUE TO IMPROVE TAX BENEFITS FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**

Push to allow volunteer firefighters to receive both real property tax exemptions and income tax credit, while continuing to advocate for an income tax credit increase (has been at \$200 since its inception in 2006.) This credit would step increase tied to qualifying years of service up to \$2,500 for 10 or more consecutive qualifying years of service.

ALSO: A165 WOERNER AND S324 OBERACKER

- **A1999 HAWLEY---CANCER COVERAGE COST RELIEF**

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

- *occupational, and other information from firefighters on an ongoing basis to enable public health researchers to learn more about the causes of firefighter cancer in order to better treat and prevent it.*
- **The SIREN Grant**, which is run through the Department of Health and Human Services and helps public and private nonprofit EMS agencies that serve rural areas pay for equipment, training, and staffing.
- Housing Guaranteed Loan Program assists approved lenders in providing loans to low- and moderate- income households to build, rehabilitate, or improve a home in eligible rural areas. **This bill will allow volunteer firefighters to participate in the loan program even if their income exceeds the maximum allowable income level by up to \$18,000.** The Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Good Neighbor Next Door Sales Program *gives law enforcement officers, teachers, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians a 50-percent discount from the list price of a home located in a revitalization area.*

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

[View the final report of the NYS VFF Task Force HERE:](#)

<https://afdca.org/view-the-final-report-of-the-nys-vff-task-force/>



The report can also be downloaded from the Association’s website at [AFDCA.org](https://afdca.org)

[Volunteer Firefighters Save N.Y. Taxpayers Billions Annually, Study Finds](#)

Brendan J. Lyons

New York's more than 81,000 volunteer firefighters save taxpayers an estimated \$3.8 billion a year in wages and benefits at a time when their ranks are dwindling but recruitment efforts are being ramped up, according to a study released by the Firefighters Association of the State of New York.

"We're just trying to show what the value of volunteer service is to the citizens of New York," said John S. D'Alessandro, the organization's secretary and a commissioner with the Halfmoon-Waterford Fire District in Saratoga County.

D'Alessandro and other board members with the statewide association said the critical roles of volunteer emergency responders in most counties outside of New York City is often taken for granted and the study the

group commissioned is part of an effort to educate the public "on the significant role that the volunteers play and the value that they bring to the taxpayers."

The analysis by Resolution Economics, Inc., which has a staff of economists and policy analysts, sought to measure the economic value of volunteer fire departments across New York. The study also estimated the costs of transforming all-volunteer fire departments outside of New York City to paid departments, which it pegged at \$188 million a year in general operating costs and an additional \$83.8 million annually to maintain equipment and structures.

"Volunteer firefighters reduce municipal government expenses by eliminating the need to pay for career firefighter wages, benefits, and related costs," the study found. "Volunteer organizations engage in extensive fundraising, which avoids tax levies for purchasing, maintaining, and operating firefighting equipment. Municipalities do not need to spend funds on fire stations with living quarters or other structures, which saves them a full range of annual operating expenses such as administration and utility costs."

In December, Gov. Kathy Hochul signed a measure into law that allows taxing entities such as school districts and local government agencies to offer a 10 percent property tax credit to volunteer firefighters. But that also requires the recipient to choose between that tax benefit or a \$200 income tax credit that was enacted 23 years ago — a figure that has not been increased.

"Here it is 2023 and it's still at \$200," said Edward Tase Jr., president of the state firefighters association. "We'd like to see that increased to \$1,000. The cost of living has gone up drastically in the last 20 years."

Another barrier for extending tax benefits to volunteer firefighters is that their ranks include many younger members who still live with their parents or pay rent and do not own property.

Hochul announced in January that she would propose legislation to allow communities to pay "modest compensation" to eligible volunteer firefighters and use state funding to help cover costs associated with core training.

The governor's office said volunteer departments serve about 9 million New Yorkers — or roughly half the state's population. Most departments have reported a decrease in volunteers in recent years as calls for service increased nearly 30 percent between 1997 and 2000. That increase has triggered a significant uptick in mutual aid calls, in which departments must seek assistance from neighboring departments when battling fires or responding to other emergencies.

New York saw a 151 percent increase in mutual-aid calls between 2000 and 2020, compared to a national increase of 61 percent over the same period.

Tase has pledged to recruit 10,000 additional volunteers in firefighting and emergency responder ranks across the state in the next two years.

"That was my goal when I took the presidency in August last year," he said. "It's a long stretch but it can be done."

There are also a large number of volunteer firefighters who are over 50, and the ongoing recruitment efforts are seeking to offset the loss of active members who are leaving the ranks due to age.

The study also examined response times for both urban and rural fire departments and, as expected, found that those organizations with fewer members took longer to respond to emergencies.

"The capacity of volunteer fire departments to ensure adequate fire protection coverage heavily relies on the availability of individuals who are willing and able to volunteer as firefighters," the study concluded. "The number of volunteers in a department significantly determines its ability to provide firefighting resources and respond to various types of other emergencies."

A COPY OF THE REPORT IS POSTED TO THE WEB SITE AND HERE AT: <https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/FASNY-Economic-Study-2023.pdf>

Gov. Mike Dewine Raises Recruitment, Wellness Support For Ohio First Responders By \$20M

The Morning Journal

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine announced March 15 that an additional \$20 million will be dedicated to supporting the recruitment and wellness needs of Ohio's first responders, including in Lorain, Erie, Cuyahoga and Huron counties.

The announcement brings the total amount of funding for the Ohio First Responder Recruitment, Retention, and Resilience Program to \$95 million, according to a news release.

DeWine created the program in May 2022 to support the wellness needs of law enforcement officers, dispatchers, firefighters, paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMTs), the release said.

"When it comes to public safety, we don't want our police officers, firefighters, and medics to be overworked and exhausted when they're responding to emergencies," said Governor DeWine. "Through this program, we're not only helping local first responders get support for their mental wellbeing, but we're also helping to ease the workload on current staff by funding new hires."

Out of the \$95 million, a total of \$61 million has been awarded to 237 first responder agencies to date. This total includes \$11.9 million for 29 agencies announced today as part of the grant program's sixth round. Grant awards for the remaining \$34 million will be announced in the coming months.

- Sheffield Lake police and fire departments will receive \$18,487 to purchase a mobile wellness app.
- North Olmsted police and fire departments will receive \$259,700 for a customized wellness education program and a part-time wellness coordinator.
- Olmsted Township Fire Department will receive \$18,095 for peer support and critical incident stress training for one person to become in-house trainer and overtime/backfill for staff person attending training.
- Rocky River Fire Department will receive \$65,756 for annual physical and wellness evaluations with one follow-up visit, peer support training for three staff and overtime/backfill for staff attending training.
- Sandusky Fire Department will receive \$11,063 for annual mental health evaluations.
- Sandusky Fire Department will receive \$506,594 to hire two and a half full time firefighters/paramedics for two years.
- Willard Fire and Rescue Department will receive \$39,144 for annual wellness reviews with a clinician for all first responders, three visits for crisis trauma counseling and a mobile wellness app.

The Real Reason Firefighters Quit: A Lack Of Respect

Mark Klaene

We have been seeing a decline in volunteer fire service personnel for several years. However, recent events have seen some resignations or walkouts on larger scales than we have seen previously:

- Entire Wash. city FD resigns in protest over mayor's actions, funding issues
- Entire Ohio volunteer fire department quits
- Video: Ill. FFs quit after once-convicted arsonist named fire chief

To better understand what is going on here, we need to look at people's motives for becoming a firefighter in the first place.

RESPECT AS A MOTIVATOR

We may like to believe that every firefighter's sole motive is the desire to serve the public. But the simple reality is many join the service for the badge, the excitement, the history or the adrenaline rush, to name just a few compelling reasons. And I should note that while career members have the added motive of salary, it isn't always the most important factor to them.

When looking at why a single individual leaves the fire service, it is often the loss or change of one or more of their motivational factors for joining in the first place. But these reasons seldom cause resignations on such a large scale. While mass resignations can be prompted by several factors, I have witnessed several such situations where it came down to a fundamental lack of respect.

It's important to underscore that respect isn't a given. Respect must be earned, and it must be maintained. It is also a two-way street; we must give respect in order to receive it. Respect isn't earned by putting on the gear or driving the big new flashy apparatus, and it isn't earned by simply walking in the door of the station. Giving respect means understanding others positions and viewpoints even when we disagree. It means recognizing others' position of authority, knowledge and experience. Mutual respect usually means you don't get what you want all the time. Sometimes you lose, sometimes you win, and often it just leads to something in the middle. Mutual respect doesn't mean you give up your authority, or you chose popularity over what is best. It does mean inclusion and consideration in the discussions.

SOURCES OF DISRESPECT

Disrespect can come from internal and/or external sources.

Internal disrespect: We sometimes fail to respect our fellow firefighters and officers, not recognizing their hardships or their abilities. Disrespect could come in the form of asking too much or not including each other in discussions and decisions.

This is the easiest for us to solve because it is in house. It is something that we ourselves are causing and should understand. All officers and other firefighters should have been there before and understand what we are all are going through.

The reason it often isn't corrected is because we fail to see it, or more likely, egos get in the way. I was told many years ago, "we can do great things if we don't care who gets credit for it."

External disrespect: Disrespect from external sources – local government, other fire agencies, law enforcement or our citizens – is harder to address. Often the root of the problem can be similar – ego or "turf battles."

Control is a divisive issue between fire and law enforcement agencies as well as elected officials. Training and working together on common issues as well as communication on and off scene are some of the best ways to develop mutual respect. Visit these agencies, find mutual agreement and issues, and work together to address them. Respect drives cooperation between others.

In my county, everything changed when a coordinator was hired to be the single point of communication among the fire service and outside agencies. This step effectively reduced chiefs to station captains. It took away their independence to deal with the state fire marshal, county commissioners, as well as the Bureau of Land Management and the USFS. They lost their ability to offer input for important decisions, missed feedback from these agencies and, in effect, lost their identity. While the intent was not to disrespect these chiefs, that was the end result they experienced. The first mass resignation came within a year. This situation unfortunately continues today and still causes many issues, including multiple resignations of junior and senior personnel.

Addressing external respect issues takes a lot of effort, and it is best done in groups, repeated constantly and consistently. Such issues can't be addressed just by a chief officer; everyone from the probationary firefighter to the chief must work on these issues every time we interact.

The solutions here are not easy, as turf battles seem to be ingrained in many agencies. The bottom line is these agencies serve a valuable purpose; they have a job to do just like us. But they have different priorities and perspective than us. It doesn't make wrong, just different. This doesn't mean we can't agree when necessary. If everyone always looks at what is best for our citizens as the primary goal, we will reach agreement.

DISRESPECT ONE OF US, DISRESPECT ALL OF US

When it seems like these issues can't be fixed, mass resignations or walkouts may appear to be the only way to get others' attention or to try to force our will. Unfortunately, such actions usually work against us in the long run.

Most firefighters no longer expect a "thank you" at every turn. However, they do expect recognition for their work and sacrifices. Many members of outside agencies have no concept of the training, work and sacrifices that firefighters experience. How many birthdays, graduations and school programs did we miss over the years? Firefighters want to feel valued and appreciated for their work.

And specific to volunteers, a sure way to kill a volunteer's motivation is to not use them. All firefighters go through a lot to get where they are, and they want to participate.

Disrespect one of us, and you disrespect all of us. We are a brotherhood and sisterhood. We are a team. Firefighting is bigger than the one. We train, operate and, in some cases live, sleep and eat together, and when disrespected, we all feel it.

Respect is a basic human need that is important to an individual's self-esteem. We must work at getting respect, and we must work at giving respect. Every firefighter, every time. It must be done on and off duty. In the station and out. We need to perform at our best, be kind, courteous, respectful of everyone we interact with. We need to be united and speak up, and we need to remember why we are here and who we serve.

YOUR HUMAN RESOURCES

****Professionalism: The Lost Art of Human Interaction**

Salvatore J. Scarpa

What exactly is professionalism? Have you ever had an interaction with the wait staff at a restaurant that was less than stellar? Maybe they messed up your order or spilled your drink or, even worse, were just plain rude. Or have you ever stood in line a long time to get to a clerk who clearly couldn't care less about your wait or why you were there? Perhaps this (or a similar) experience soured your opinion of the restaurant or the place you visited and may impact whether you go there again.

These and similar experiences represent behavior that we might characterize as unprofessional. While some may find it difficult to define professionalism, we typically can readily recognize its absence. But this isn't really new or particularly groundbreaking information. Lack of professionalism can be seen in a variety of professions (and indeed government) for decades. Yet, it is seemingly perhaps more common today. And more troubling is its prevalence in the fire service.

This apparent decline (or lack) of professionalism in our society today is truly anecdotal on my part and not the result of a scientific study on the topic. Perhaps it's merely a personal observation. It just seems there is a general decline in the professional demeanor of our workforce today. You can read about it in the news or see it on television quite often.

What if the world around us is a little less kind or not quite as polished as we would like it to be or as it used to be in the "good 'ole days"? What's the big deal? People aren't dying. Nobody's losing any money. Is this really a problem? Is inappropriate behavior, general rudeness, lack of polish, or some similar observations really that big a deal? After all, aren't there bigger problems in the world?

While there are indeed 'bigger' problems in the world, nevertheless, this is indeed a problem. And it's perhaps more significant than it appears. But to understand why, let's first seek to define what it is we're talking about.

PROFESSIONALISM DEFINED

What is professionalism? There are a great many definitions here. A quick online search will reveal literally millions of "hits" on the term with hundreds of definitions from the public and private sector as well as academia.

I have my own definition of professionalism. My lens of professionalism is primarily associated with the public safety industry based on my years of public service. It may not work for you, but it is truly the basis of this article. I define professionalism as the nexus of capability, image, and delivery.

True professionals are masters of their trade—this is their capability. Intuitively, professionals are expected to have years of experience backed by training that is both rigorous (lending to its credibility) and ongoing (yielding continuous improvement and relevance in a changing environment). True professionals seek to understand all the nuances of their particular vocation and are therefore regarded (by proxy, in comparison to the rest of us) as subject matter experts.

As a middle-aged man who has not lived a particularly sheltered life, I've seen a lot in my time on this world. I got my first "real" (part time) job at age 16 and have worked ever since. But while I may be somewhat worldly, there's still a lot I don't know about. For example, over the past several years, I've been fortunate to have the opportunity to travel a fair amount. Getting on a plane a couple of times a month is not unusual for me. But I have no idea what it's like to be a pilot or a flight mechanic. I don't know the first thing about aeronautics. If I am forced into a cockpit, you had better make your peace with your maker.

Seriously, having an awareness of what it takes to fly is one thing. Being a credentialed pilot is quite another. My vague understanding of what it means to get from Point A to Point B via aircraft does not even begin to describe what professional pilots must grasp to function in that role. Their capability comes from rigorous training that is based on industry standards and tested at the highest level.

The image component of my definition is equally as critical but perhaps more subjective in nature. By that I mean what may be acceptable to you (and thereby deemed of a professional nature) may be different for me. Thus, the notion of a credible professional image is perhaps in the eye of the beholder.

For example, there is a certain segment of our society that frowns (sometimes harshly) on people with visible tattoos. Depending on what generational genre you belong to (boomer, X-er, Next-er, etc.), your opinion on the visibility of tattoos may be stronger or not. Older generations are traditionally less tolerant of the visibility of tattoos (forbidding them by policy) than perhaps younger generations (who may regulate them more loosely).

Now the reality is the tattoo itself really does not inhibit the ability of the wearer to perform a specific function. An electrician or a pipe fitter can either perform the job or not, irrespective of the tattoo. The same is true for a firefighter, law enforcement officer, or emergency medical technician. But the tattoo does have a bearing (albeit subjectively) on their image and thus whether we would describe the appearance of the wearer as professional or unprofessional. Again, some folks couldn't care less; others are more passionate about it.

Image has a lot to do with how we look, whether we present ourselves in public (and to our customers) as kempt or unkempt, sloppy or clean, well-groomed and well-dressed or disheveled. How would you rate a candidate who came in for a corporate interview in flip flops and board shorts? Would you immediately write him off as unprofessional and therefore unqualified? What if he aced the interview; does your opinion change?

Having the capability to provide a service with a positive image is critical for a professional. But if the actual delivery of the service is not executed appropriately, the perception of professionalism is lost. This can happen in one of two ways: faulty execution and dispassionate delivery. Let's look at each of these concepts.

Faulty execution is precisely what it sounds like—a haphazard or faulty execution of some service that the so-called "professional" should be capable of doing. In the restaurant business, it's the wrong food; in the logistics industry, it may be the receipt of a package that is damaged; in the airline industry, it's faulty equipment causing flight delays.

In the fire service, you'll often recognize it on emergency scenes. Sometimes this is the pile of spaghetti hose that wasn't stretched tangled in a heap at the front door of a house fire—by crews who should know how to do a simple stretch but for whatever reason wind up wasting time removing kinks and untangling crossed lines. Or a ladder company spends an inordinate amount of time raising a 35-foot ground ladder only to find the fly section collapse back because the pawls weren't secured. This simple error is usually the result of hasty execution and could wind up injuring firefighters.

Haphazard execution does not convey the image of a professional. In a world where everybody is watching (and recording), the fire service can ill afford to be seen as incapable of executing the very service we are charged with delivering. Moreover, in an environment where social and television media can rapidly damage your image and destroy your reputation, the fire service cannot afford to be the victim of faulty execution.

Equally as destructive to your community's perception of your reputation are members who provide service with dispassionate delivery. In other words, their actions, their words, and their mannerisms reflect a lack of compassion or care for *how* they provide service. This is often interpreted as rude or callous behavior on individual providers. This may be a paramedic with no bedside manner or a firefighter needlessly destroying a resident's remaining belongings after a house fire under the false pretext of overhaul.

COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

Over my career, I have come to realize that our communities we serve generally only truly want three things from their fire department: respond quickly, handle the problem, and have a little bit of compassion. That's it! That's all we really need to do. Now, honestly, that's oversimplifying it quite a bit. But, at the end of the day, that's what our communities are looking for.

Our communities want us to quickly arrive on scene after something happens. They generally don't understand the concept of reliability and what the ramifications are if an ambulance from their community is out assisting in another territory. How they generally interpret that is a longer wait time. Should we expect them to understand what it means to go to "level zero" with no ambulances available? Perhaps we should. But, in that moment, maybe that's not the time.

Show up quickly! That means get on the truck without delay, whether it's an emergent or nonemergent call for service. Just because you don't deem it an emergency doesn't mean the caller sees it that way.

A colleague and friend of mine whom I greatly admire told me this story. The fire crew was awakened to a call for service in the middle of the night. To the crew, it seemed like a very mundane call from a "frequent" elderly user of the system. The crew was grumbling all the way to the truck. Frustrated with their lack of professionalism, he stopped them in their

tracks on the way to the truck and asked them: “Is there anyone else in the city requiring our services at this very moment?” They paused, “No, Cap.” He replied, “Then let’s go and give this citizen our complete attention and best possible service.” How inspiring!

The community expects us to handle the problem no matter what it is! How many times have you been called to a residence or business for something that needed to be handled by the power company, the water service, a private contractor, or some other area of government? **The reality is a lot of times; our residents sometimes don’t know who to call. And in their “dire circumstance” they call us. What an honor!** The public looks to us—the fire service—to handle their problems. That means they trust us and recognize our propensity for getting things done (even if it’s outside our scope of service). Now, I’m not advocating we become a jack of all trades, but let’s respect the fact that we are regarded as capable of doing anything. And, for many emergencies, we had better be capable of doing just that. Remember, there is no 912!

In the delivery of our service, when someone is having quite possibly the worst day of their life, our responsibility is to execute with compassion! A little compassion goes a long way. It’s not our responsibility to manage the myriad of tragic circumstances we encounter for days and weeks after an event. It’s difficult enough for us to manage our own reaction to these emergencies long after they happen. But in those few moments, when you are picking up a frail woman off the bathroom floor, or when you are holding someone’s hand who could potentially be taking their last breath, showing some compassion toward that individual and for their family is the very essence of what a true professional is.

Compassion allows our customers to recognize that we are human, and they often crave that human connection. In a world of automation and technology where you can spend hours navigating voice prompts on the telephone to try and get to an actual person, connecting with another person can be very impactful. Generally speaking, in the delivery of our services, that human touch with a little compassion can comfort a devastated homeowner or grieving mother.

The concept of professionalism in the fire service is not new. It has been part of the fabric of our service delivery for centuries. However, of late, it seems to be eroding away. **With so much to focus on in a dynamic environment, it’s easy to lose sight of the fact that we’re in the people business.** This profession demands capable firefighters deliver service effectively and with compassion in a manner that positively reflects on their personnel, their agency, and the best traditions of the fire service.

LET YOUR MEMBERS KNOW ABOUT THIS OPPORTUNITY!



VFIS Instructor-Level Program Emergency Vehicle Driver Training (EVDT)

EMS Vehicle Operation (EMSVO) Description **This program is a train-the-trainer program** which is designed to teach the necessary instructional methodology in order to successfully deliver the following programs within your own agency. Upon completion, an instructor kit will be provided.

Course Information

4/15/2023 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

4/16/2023 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM

Wynantskill Fire Department / NGFD#1 511 Church Street Wynantskill, NY 12198



EVDT 12-16hr Instructor Level PDF.pdf

Register online at www.vfis.com

Insured by VFIS \$0 for first 3 seats, \$60 for each additional Not insured by VFIS \$500 per seat

UL FSRI Fire Safety Academy – 1 Hour Web Based Course on Lithium Ion Batteries

This course focuses on foundational research about lithium-ion batteries, thermal runaway and how fire and explosion hazards can develop. The knowledge you gain in this course can help you identify the risks associated with lithium-ion battery products in your personal and professional life.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR THE NYSAFC 117TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE & FIRE 2023 EXPO!

June 14-17 • The Oncenter • Syracuse, NY With exhibits, fire and EMS classes, Hands-On Training, and networking events for personnel of all ranks, there's something for everyone at the premier fire industry, rescue, and EMS conference and expo in the Northeast!

CLASSROOM EDUCATION

More than **35 classes** will be presented by some of the most respected leaders in the industry from Wednesday – Saturday for Conference Full Term registrants. **EMS CME** classes will be delivered, and special training for **codes** personnel and **commissioners** will be available. The schedule of classes is coming soon!

ATTENDEE REGISTRATION

REGISTER IN ADVANCE or at the door! **New** – online registration is available for single registrants! Those registering groups must use the PDF form.

ONE DAY TICKETS (EXPO ONLY)

Pre-Registration: \$25 (per person, includes three tickets)

On-Site: \$10 (per person, per day)

FULL TERM REGISTRATION (EXPO & CLASSES)

NYS AFC Individual Member: \$100 (per person)

Non-Member: \$175 (per person)

NYSAFC 2023 Seminar Series, “Truck Skills Beyond the Textbooks”

Early in our firefighting orientation, we're taught basic skills and tactics from textbooks. In addition, we'll drill and be tested on many of these skills at fire academy buildings to attain our firefighting certifications. It's a good process, but our learning shouldn't stop there because we haven't been exposed to many of the situations we'll encounter at fires and emergencies. Plus, the buildings in the academy aren't conducive to allowing us to operate with tools to open the walls and ceilings, pull suspended ceilings, remove baseboard and window trim, or even cut open tongue and groove sheathed roofs. This [interactive lecture](#) strives to go beyond textbook learning and bring alive street skills, tips, and tactics of truck work in: portable ladders, overhaul, forcible entry, roof ventilation, tool use, and more.

Registration (per person):

\$35 – NYS AFC members

\$50 – non-members

Pre-registration encouraged.

Albany Co. 10/23/23, Fulton Co. 9/7/23, Rensselaer Co. 4/3/23, Saratoga Co. 10/24/23

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



VFIS Instructor-Level Program Emergency Vehicle Driver Training (EVDT) EMS Vehicle Operation (EMSVO)

Description This program is a train-the-trainer program which is designed to teach the necessary instructional methodology in order to successfully deliver the following programs. Upon completion, an instructor kit will be provided.

Course Information 3/11/2023 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM 3/12/2023 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM Empress Ambulance 740 Nepperhan Avenue Yonkers, NY 10703

Registration Insured by VFIS Not Insured by VFIS \$0 for first 3 seats, \$60 for each additional \$500

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>

Hands-On Training at FIRE 2023 in Syracuse Announced

Registration is open for Hands-On Training at the NYSAFC 117th Annual Conference & FIRE 2023 Expo! HOT will be delivered from Wednesday, June 14 – Friday, June 16 at the Syracuse Fire Department Training Center. Seven courses led by some of the nation's most knowledgeable and experienced instructors will be available: "Advanced Thermal Imaging Camera Ops," "Advanced Vehicle Extrication," "Aggressive Interior Fire Attack," "Fire Behavior On the Inside," "First-In Officers' Responsibilities," "Hoarder Fires," and "Truck Company Essentials."

[Learn More and Register At This Link...](https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/fire2023hot) <https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/fire2023hot>

OUR CHANGING FIRE SERVICE –CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES!

OPPORTUNITIES:

CHALLENGES:

HOT TOPIC - LIVING WITH LI-ION TECHNOLOGY

4 People Hurt In Queens House Fire; E-Bike Found Inside

Four people are injured following a fire in Woodside, Queens. The flames broke out shortly after 10 a.m. inside a two-story house on 64th Street between 50th and 51st avenues. Officials say an e-bike was discovered inside the home, but the cause of the fire remains under investigation. Three of the victims are said to be in serious condition.

FDNY: 1 Person Killed In Bronx Apartment Fire Caused By Lithium-Ion Battery

One person was killed in an apartment fire in the Bronx that was caused by a lithium-ion battery Saturday, officials said. The fire happened at an apartment building in the 2200 block of Olinville Avenue in the Allerton section around 4 p.m., according to the FDNY. The identity of the victim hasn't been released. Investigators determined the fire was accidentally caused by a lithium-ion battery, which can pose a severe hazard when modified or stored improperly, according to the FDNY. "If using a lithium-ion battery, follow the manufacturer's instructions for charging and storage," the FDNY posted on Twitter Sunday. "Always use the manufacturer's cord and power adapter made specifically for the device. If a battery overheats, discontinue use immediately."

Related: New York City Mayor To Sign Bills Aimed At Preventing Lithium-Ion Battery Fires

Mayor Eric Adams will sign five bills into law on Monday, aimed at preventing fires caused by lithium-ion batteries. Over the weekend, a man died in an apartment fire in the Bronx that investigators say was caused by a lithium-ion battery. The FDNY says the batteries have caused 33 fires across New York City this year. Three people have died and 42 others were injured. Congressman Ritchie Torres, who proposed the legislation earlier this month, said batteries that are safely manufactured and safely used are not causing these fires. But right now, there is barely any incentive for manufacturers to ensure that they are safe. "The scandal is not that the federal government is failing to regulate the safety of these batteries," Torres said.

The first bill provides an informational campaign educating the public on fire risks posed by powered mobility devices and how to mitigate those risks.

The second bill will prohibit the sale, lease, or rental of powered mobility devices, such as e-bikes and electric scooters, and storage batteries for these devices, that fail to meet recognized safety standards.

The third bill will require the FDNY to submit five reports relating to fire risks and powered mobility devices, such as e-bikes and electric scooters. Reports will include data on fires during the previous year caused by these devices and recommendations for changes to changes to the administrative code to further decrease fire risk.

The fourth bill will require the DCWP, in consultation with the FDNY, to publish materials that provide guidance on safe use and storage of powered mobility devices.

The fifth bill will prohibit the assembly or reconditioning of lithium-ion batteries using cells removed from used storage batteries and prohibit the sale of a lithium-ion batteries that use cells removed from used storage batteries.

NY School Closed by Fire Blamed on Computer Tablets

Classes are canceled Monday at Emmet Belknap Intermediate School in Lockport after a fire Sunday afternoon caused an estimated \$300,000 in damage. The fire started among computer tablets that were charging, according to the City of Lockport Fire Department. At least four classrooms were directly affected by fire, smoke or water. Investigators led by Assistant Chief Jon Frederickson found the remains of 18 computer tablets, stacked together in groups of three to five units and charging in Room 210. Investigators said that air flow around the tablets was restricted, causing their batteries to overheat and catch fire.

PURCHASING APPARATUS

Apparatus Purchasing: Apathy in Procurement and Specs

Bill Adams

“It’s not like the good ole days” is a statement often made by former as well as older and experienced members of both the fire service and the fire apparatus industry

It is debatable whether the statement expresses appreciation and fondness of times past or is disparaging of the current state of affairs. The earlier is admirable; the latter is discouraging. The statement is worth examining, especially in the realm of writing specifications and purchasing fire apparatus. This narration is a personal observation of the industry and fire service and is not influenced by or beholden to purchasers, manufacturers, vendors, and advertisers. Some apparatus purchasing committee (APC) members do not exhibit the same degree of enthusiasm when serving on a committee as did their predecessors. Perhaps they are less educated; don’t have the time; or just aren’t interested in the process of writing, understanding, and evaluating fire apparatus specifications. Being educated is being well informed and knowledgeable of both the product and the process of purchasing fire apparatus. Apathy is displaying a lack of concern or interest, which is a disappointing trait. It is an injustice to the taxpayers who are funding a new purchase. More importantly, it is a disservice to the firefighters who must staff the apparatus. There ought to be logical reasoning behind the lack of eagerness in belonging to an APC and an unwillingness to become learned in the technical nuts and bolts of fire apparatus construction. **Demonstrating apathy is not unique to either the career or volunteer side.** No such accusation is inferred. Reasons might best be found if a fire department does an objective analysis of how its APC is chosen and how specifications are formulated. Such a self-evaluation could also help in determining the effectiveness of an APC’s performance. Merely backing a new rig into the barn that is painted the proper color and has the name spelled correctly is not an indication that the APC has done an exemplary job—or even an adequate one. That determination often takes some “in-service” time.

COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION

Commentators do not have the right to proclaim there must be a specific number of people who should comprise an APC. Likewise, APC members’ areas of expertise, levels of experience, and years on the job should not be stipulated—recommended maybe, but not stipulated; there are too many variables. It is best to provide examples of APC organization criteria for readers to evaluate. The makeup of APCs in career departments is often determined by the size of the organization. Those with large fleets of apparatus may have designated personnel whose primary, and possibly only, responsibility is apparatus procurement. Some are very good at it. It’s their job—they’re paid to do it. Large career

departments have been known to rotate personnel throughout an organization to gain experience in administrative functions as well as operational firefighting. Such rotation may be mandatory and, in some instances, a requirement for advancement. Career entities are not immune from having an assigned APC member who may be more interested in becoming an incident commander or is content to drive a pumper rather than purchase one. APC membership in volunteer departments is not usually as regulated and well defined as on the career side. Very small entities might only purchase a new rig every decade; consequently, members may lack purchasing experience. In some departments, the fire chief appoints the APC. In others, the head of the civil (administrative) side, such as the president, will appoint one. Bear in mind, purchasing procedures in volunteer departments most often follow written bylaws. If procurement policies were written a hundred years ago, it might be time to revisit them before buying a new rig

QUALIFICATIONS

In some volunteer organizations, the loudest and most vocal members are often selected to serve on the APC. Being boisterous and outspoken is not necessarily a resume enhancer. The most aggressive and experienced interior firefighter in the company may not have a clue, nor care, what happens under the hood. At the same time, not every member on the civil side may be an active firefighter. It's commonplace for older members who are no longer active to contribute to an organization by serving in administrative roles. **One of the most important, but often neglected, aspects of apparatus procurement is the participation of active line firefighters.** The amount of allowable input by line firefighters can vary from organization to organization. It is unfathomable that the people who operate and ride on the apparatus, and who must access and reload the equipment carried, may not have much say in laying out the rig. Those who do not have the ability to express their recommendations in a written specification format should not be deprived of the opportunity to verbally articulate the same to those who do. Experience has an immeasurable value.

AUTHORITY HAVING JURISDICTION

National Fire Protection Association 1901, Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus, uses 25 words to define the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). Its Appendix A uses another 133 words to further explain what the first 25 said. In this article, the **AHJ is the entity responsible for specifying, ordering, and paying for a fire truck.** Except for independent (self-funding) volunteer fire departments, political subdivisions such as cities, towns, and fire districts do the actual purchasing. They usually task the fire department to write the technical specifications for a new rig. In turn, the department establishes an APC, which does all the work. Most AHJs oversee the process solely to ensure conformance with legal bidding requirements and fiscal responsibility. A common exception is fire districts where its elected officials, usually called the Board of Fire Commissioners, may still be, or once were, firefighters. They have a tendency to keep intimately involved, some to the point of serving on an APC. It is not unheard of for a board in its entirety to act as the APC. That could be analogous to the fox guarding the henhouse. It is immaterial who physically writes the purchasing specification. The AHJ "owns" the document. It is responsible for the actual purchase as well as any resulting liability as a result of doing so.

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

IN 2022 WE HAVE SADLY EXPERIENCED *12 + 2=14 FIRE FIGHTER LODD'S

*According to FirefighterCloseCalls.com**

In 2022 we experienced 101 LODDs reported nationally.!

National Vol Fire Council FIRST RESPONDER HELPLINE AVAILABLE FOR MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Firefighting and emergency response are stressful, and the holidays can bring added pressures. The [NVFC First Responder Helpline](#) is here for you. NVFC members and their household families can call for assistance with work-life-volunteer challenges, including stress management, relationships, financial concerns, addiction, and more. [Register for this webinar](#) to learn more about the Helpline. If you are unable to purchase an NVFC membership for yourself or someone else who needs the Helpline, use [this form](#) to receive a complimentary membership.

YOU JUST NEVER KNOW...

- A Milwaukee (WI) firefighter Jeff Rothmeier was seriously injured Saturday at the scene of a fire when he fell from a ladder. Rothmeier suffered a concussion, memory loss, a bruised lung, a spinal fracture, and 10 broken ribs
- Montgomery Co. New York: Second Assistant Chief Steve "Bullwinkle" Haskin Harris, 56, died on Feb. 13 after suffering a medical emergency the day before, according to the [U.S. Fire Administration](#). Harris was at a Super Bowl party at Fort Johnson Volunteer Fire Company's (FJVFC) Station 1 when he and other crewmembers on duty tuned out for a mutual aid fire. Harris drove his vehicle to get a fire engine from another station since the engine for Station 1 was out of service. While at Station 2, a fellow firefighter noticed that Harris was experiencing shortness of breath. Both headed toward the structure fire. Harris was not driving. His condition deteriorated quickly, the other firefighter noticed, and they stopped at Station 1 instead of the fire. EMS providers transported Harris to St. Mary's Hospital, where he went into cardiac arrest. Hospital staffers restored Harris' heartbeat, and he was in critical but stable condition when he was transported to Albany Medical Center for further treatment. He later went into multisystem organ failure at the medical center and died that morning. Harris served in the fire service for 40 years, according to the USFA. He is survived by his children and sister.
- More at: <https://www.firefighterclosecalls.com/>

Reference Material for Use in a Line of Duty Death

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

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 IN THE NEWS FROM THE US FIRE ADMINISTRATION	
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	28+0 = 28
Last fire death 3/4/23 Spring Valley, Rockland Co. Female 29, Male 34, 4, 27, 13	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	47+1 = 48
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	374 + 33 = 407
Top Three State with the most 1&2 Family Deaths	1 NY = 28 [LAST MONTH WAS REPORTED WRONG]
	2 PA & TN = 23
	3 MD = 21
There has been a total of 0668 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.

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Peyton Morse's Parents File Second Lawsuit Over Son's Death

By News 7 Staff

The parents of Watertown firefighter Peyton Morse have filed a second lawsuit over the 2021 death of their son. This time they're suing five instructors at the New York State Academy of Fire Science in Montour Falls, where their son suffered a medical emergency and later died.

Last month, David and Stacy Morse filed a lawsuit against the state of New York and blamed its Division of Homeland Security, Office of Fire Prevention and Control, and academy instructors for Peyton's death.

The most recent lawsuit names the instructors who were there when their son was overcome.

The legal action accuses the five of causing Peyton's death through their "negligence, carelessness, and breach of duty."

In March of 2021, Morse was doing a mask evolution - training with breathing apparatus on his back and face, and going through a box to represent a confined space.

He suffered a medical event during the exercise. He died 9 days later.

A 2021 state investigation of the incident revealed 3 recruits heard Morse say he couldn't breathe. But 2 fire instructors said they only heard Morse say he was stuck. Two other instructors told investigators they didn't hear a thing.

The state's investigation placed no blame on instructors or the state fire academy.

The lawsuit against the instructors claims they were negligent because they failed to provide proper instruction and supervision, ignored Peyton's pleas for help and requests to exit the training exercise, and failed to provide immediate medical care.

Peyton's parents are suing both the state and the instructors for an unspecified amount of money.

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:

****It's Just Not That Difficult To Do The Right Thing**

Chief Marc Bashoor

How hard is it to just do the right thing (JDTRT)?

From the driver I see applying makeup while doing 75 on the interstate, to the police officers not wearing high-visibility vests on an interstate scene the same day that both a trooper and a firefighter were struck, to countless inappropriate social media postings, to, lastly, my observations throughout the construction of my new house – *without* residential sprinklers.

It's been a week of reflection where I find myself repeating the question, "How hard is it?"

SOCIAL MEDIA: 'DAYS OF OUR [FIREFIGHTING] LIVES'

In rural Pennsylvania, someone posted a local fire chief's lengthy admonishment to five county commissioners referencing a fire station being "out of service." It's clear there's more to the story in that, "... At the outset of the disagreement between [the] Township and the station, which led to them being put out of service, the residents were told nothing would change." The chief tells the compelling story of a 19-minute response from 7.9 miles away to a structure fire that ended up injuring two of his firefighters. The "closed" station was nine-tenth of a mile from the structure, which, if in service, would have been able to have a roughly 17-minute jump on the fire, reducing the fire damage and likely avoiding the collapse that injured firefighters.

The admonishment goes on to state that, "The Township is currently exploring the feasibility of a regional fire department." That's a novel concept. The post continues on, and on... and then I read the rub: "My stance is that we already have a regional department (through mutual aid) with everyone still in control of their own affairs and identity." Now, my purpose today is NOT an attack on Pennsylvania, those commissioners or this particular fire company whatsoever – they're just an example made public by social media. While it's no secret that Pennsylvania has more volunteer departments than any other state and that relationships have been aptly described as a "hot mess," the reality is we see volunteer AND paid examples of similar hot messes across the country. I've said this before, and I'm

acknowledging it here again – NONE of us is perfect, nor do we have ALL the perfect answers – hence, here we are, trying to make it better.

Our citizens care about ONE thing when they need us – service. When it comes down to it, our delivery of service shouldn't be impacted by the who-controls-whose-affairs issue. SERVICE doesn't know first dues, jurisdictional borders, fire department disagreements or political squabbles. The ONLY thing service should involve is the closest appropriate resources being sent to the scene.

SPRINKLER SOUND-OFF

Too often, we are bombarded by silly and sometimes reckless distractions that impact our delivery of service. Sometimes, as in the residential sprinkler discussion, those "distractions are keenly engineered decisions by an industry to discourage – OK, IGNORE – the positive impacts of life-saving technology. Although residential sprinklers have consistently shown that we could reduce fire deaths by 85% or more, the homebuilders' associations have convinced builders that residential sprinklers are a bad thing. ***What's more, the political lobby against sprinklers is surprisingly strong, albeit misguided from my perspective. Only two states, California and Maryland, and the District of Columbia have been able to pass universal residential sprinkler legislation.***

How hard is it to see the need for more action on residential sprinklers?

According to the National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA), there is *some* good news in that there are more than 400 local codes across the country taking different levels of approach at residential sprinklers. That's 400 different ways of looking at it, and I submit that the Maryland, California and D.C. examples prove we could succeed with a much more manageable 51 ways of looking at sprinklers.

PERFECTING MINOR DETAILS

In a separate social media discussion recently, a retiree friend of mine, Tom Schwartz, and I were discussing George Alston, now 85 years old and still helping out with Tom's homeowners' association duties. Alston was a self-described "farm boy from Virginia" who became a Westminster dog show winner. Alston would go on to be a nationally recognized handler-trainer, teaching thousands of young people annually. Five of his students went on to win "Best in Show" at the WKC Dog Show, and 15 others won their group at WKC.

In a 2018 interview, Alston tells the story of his upbringing and how he learned that, "you win by actions and not by your words." He was relating how other people who didn't believe in him and/or didn't understand the industry would tease and bully him: "People would say, 'You can't win this, you can't win that.' I wasn't supposed to win a lot of things." He attributes his and his students' success to the requirements of hard work, and he instilled the notion in others that, "great things are accomplished only by the perfection of minor details."

Therein lies the lesson: Whether in our personal or professional lives, it will not be hard to accomplish great things if we can perfect the minor details. We have to stop treating our fire departments and the fire service like a new science experiment and go about the business of making things better for Grandma Jones. NIST and UL will help us when we need the science experiment help; however, we do *not* need NIST or UL for most of what we do day to day in terms of just doing the right thing.

CALL TO ACTION: SPRINKLERS AND MORE!

Whether it's the basics of hoseline and ladder training or the complexities of politics and residential sprinkler legislation, WE hold the keys to the "minor details" noted above. Tom related his personal training mantra that emphasized his enforcement of the "minor" details in engine company training – show up, secure water supply, pull an attack line, get to the stairwell, then do it over and over again ... then do it again. ***Performance enhancement of the minor details through repetitive training would ultimately accomplish great things on the fireground.***

While we have great advocacy groups (e.g., NFSA and NFPA) working on residential sprinklers, ***we as fire chiefs need to embrace and champion residential sprinklers across the United States.*** While some are afraid of the politics of it, I've talked to way too many volunteer chiefs who have repeatedly admitted that they can't bring themselves to push for sprinklers because they feel like they'll lose membership to the reduction in "big fires." It's 2023. WE have to find little ways to positively influence the politics, and we cannot continue to allow the loss-of-membership-mentality – whether covertly or overtly – to be acceptable in any way shape or form. It won't be rocket science: We KNOW what we need to know. It will be an accumulation of minor details that will combine to accomplish great things with sprinkler installations.

Similar to the breadth of sprinkler studies and available information, there are *many* studies on lighting and vehicle conspicuity, and we in the fire service are fortunate to have another great advocacy group – the Emergency Responder Safety Institute (ERSI) – working with fire departments and allied agencies to train and improve our on-scene posture, all the while working the politics of roadway safety at the federal level and enforcement at the local level. As fire chiefs, we can work with industry partners like ERSI and HAAS Alert to activate traffic alerting software that is already installed in most of our apparatus. And we can enforce the minor details, live high-visibility vests for ALL of our responders when operating on a roadway.

NEXT STEPS

Years of research and experience shows us the right thing to do for all of these issues – distracted driving, high-visibility vests, residential sprinklers, social media and fire department organization. Where common sense doesn't seem to have filled in, it will be through our repetitive training and in perfecting the minor details that we will end up accomplishing great things.

Truly, it just isn't that hard to do the right thing.

THE LIGHTER SIDE!

Being a little older, I'm very fortunate to have someone call and check on me a couple of times a day. She's from India and is very concerned about my car's warranty.

CLASSIFIED

Position Announcement Greenfield Fire District

The Greenfield Fire District is looking for a professional and highly-motivated person to perform custodial services and maintenance of fire district buildings, grounds and equipment. Must have good communication skills, the ability to manage several projects simultaneously, and be flexible with work hours when necessary. Prior experience preferred and all candidates must have clean driver's license. Employment application and job description can be found on the district website at www.greenfieldfd.org.

Please send application, cover letter & resume to Joyce Petkus, District Administrator via email at Jpetkus@greenfieldfd.org or regular mail to Greenfield Fire District, P.O. Box 103 Greenfield Center, NY 12833 no later than Friday, March 17, 2023.

Position Announcement West Crescent Fire District



NEW POSTING

The West Crescent Fire District is looking for a professional and highly motivated person to perform custodial services and to maintain fire district buildings, grounds and equipment. Must have good communication skills, the ability to manage several projects simultaneously, be flexible with work hours when necessary. Prior experience preferred and all candidates must have clean driver's license. Employment application and job description can be found on the district website at www.westcrescentfire.com or by emailing Fire District Secretary Arthur Hunsinger at wcfldsec@nycap.rr.com
Please send application, cover letter & resume to Arthur Hunsinger via email at wcfldsec@nycap.rr.com

Position Announcement Station Keeper/Maintenance Person

Full Time (40 hours/week) hourly position, commensurate with experience. Benefits available (health and disability insurance, vacation, sick days, holidays, retirement).

Qualifications/Requirements:

- Minimum High School diploma or equivalent
- Relevant work or experience
- Pass District Physical, able to lift objects weighing 70 lbs.
- Preference given to those candidates at least 21 years of age
- Ability to understand and carry out instructions.
- Ability to deal with the public and work successfully with other employees and members of the Fire Department
- Familiarity with equipment found in fire stations.
- Experience with cleaning and light building maintenance.
- Ability to perform minor mechanical repairs.
- Initiative, resourcefulness and good judgement.
- Basic computer knowledge for data entry.
- Hold a valid NYS vehicle operator's license. A CDL-B license will be required within six (6) months of employment, to include Air Brake Endorsement. Driver's license will be enrolled in the NYS License Event Notification Service. License acceptable to Fire District's insurance carrier • Background check for Arson Conviction and Sex Offender Registry.
- Preference may be given to an active SCBA qualified member in a local fire department.
- Need to be CPR/AED Certified

General Statement of Duties and Responsibilities:

- Performs work under the general direction of the Building Committee Chairman and Fire District Secretary, as directed by the Board of Fire Commissioners
- Maintain Fire District buildings, grounds and equipment.
- Provide custodial type services at District Office and firehouse
- Other duties as assigned and approved by the Board of Fire Commissioners
- Within one (1) year of hire date, must be a qualified driver and pump operator on all District vehicles. (Training will be permitted on District time).

Examples of Work to be performed:

- Mowing and trimming of lawns, pruning and mulching, rake and remove leaves/debris as necessary.
- Custodial type services including but not limited to: mopping, vacuuming, washing, scrubbing, cleaning windows, buffing, carpet cleaning, and garbage removal.
- Paint interior/exterior of buildings as needed; power wash exterior buildings as necessary.
- Responsible for maintenance and upkeep of vehicles and equipment provided by the Board of Fire Commissioners to complete duties.
- Assist in the coordination of fire apparatus and equipment. Clean, fuel, maintain and transport apparatus and equipment as necessary.
- Assist in coordination of various equipment testing (i.e. hose, ladder, pump).
- Create written correspondence, generate maintenance records as necessary, enter data into fire district software and create reports as needed.

OFFICERS OF THE CAPITAL AREA ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS

2023 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President: Tom Rinaldi, Commissioner Stillwater/Saratoga
1st VP: John Meehan, Commissioner West Crescent/Saratoga
2nd VP: Art Hunsinger, Commissioner Clifton Park Halfmoon/Saratoga

Board of Directors: Les Bonesteel Commissioner Burnt Hills/Saratoga, Tom Wood Commissioner Northumberland/Saratoga, Joyce Petkus Treasurer Greenfield/Saratoga, Ed Woehrle Commissioner Niskayuna #1/Schenectady and Mike Podolec Commissioner West Glenville/Schenectady

Secretary/Treasurer: Tony Hill

Sargent at Arms: Tom Wood

Chaplain: Fred Richards

Legal Council: Greg Serio

The Capital Area Association represents fire district officials from the fire districts in Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Warren, Washington, Saratoga, Fulton and Montgomery Counties

Fire District Officials include Commissioners, Treasurers, Secretaries and Chief

All are invited to participate in all of the Capital Area Activities

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

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

What are the duties and responsibilities of a Commissioner?

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

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

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

PLEASE SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT US!!

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.

LEGAL SERVICES

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Jack Clark, Fire District Attorney
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The Capital Bulletin is reaching well over 400+ fire district members and now other members of the fire service on a regular basis. Since the Capital Area Association covers an area the size of Connecticut it is difficult to meet in person to exchange information and ideas.

This is a service of the Capital Area Association through the effort of Tom Rinaldi who can be reached at tom@rinaldi1.com for comments or content contributions are always welcome.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS OF THE CAPITAL AREA

Would you like to join the Association of Fire Districts of the Capital Area and join 75 members in 8 counties? Both fire protection districts and Village departments are eligible for membership.

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

To take effect January 2023:

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

Business Partners: \$100.00 annual member fee



**association of fire districts
OF THE
CAPITAL AREA, INC.**

2023 Events Calendar

Date	Time	Type	Location
Thursday, April 6, 2023	7:00 PM	Board Meeting	Clifton Park
Thursday, May 11, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
Thursday, June 8, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
Thursday, July 13, 2023	7:00 PM	Board Meeting	Clifton Park
Thursday, September 14, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
October 2023	NO MEETING		
Thursday, October 12, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
Saturday, November 4, 2023	8:00 AM	Fall Workshop	TBD
Thursday, November 9, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
December 2023	NO MEETING		
Saturday, January 6, 2024	9:00 AM	Organizational Meeting	TBD

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