



CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

YOUR FIRE DISTRICT NEWS SOURCE

MAY 4, 2024

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[Beginning our 10th year.](#)



CAPITAL SHORTS:

- *How did the 1st CAFDA Conference go? It was a splendid success for participants, presenters and vendors. Almost everything was “right” sized, what wasn’t we’ll work on for next year. The facility was excellent, the food was wonderful and there were smiles all around. I can’t thank the Officers and Directors enough for their boundless efforts, it went very smooth because of their contributions. I would also like to thank Ellen Martin, John Cuttita and Hope Meehan for their assistance at the Conference. The staff at Fort William Henry Hotel/Conference Center responded to our every need, which made our job much easier.*
Put it on your calendar for next year, April 10th, 11th and 12th of 2025, we will return to the FWH Hotel and Conference Center in Lake George, NY, bigger and better for all the fire departments and Vendors in the Capital Area and beyond.
- *****Read Dave Denniston’s important update in the OSHA Supplement at the End of This Bulletin!**
- **Action Alert on Page 3, Tell your congressional representative to vote YES on the AFG Grants**
- Congratulations to the Halfmoon-Waterford Fire District on their \$300,000 grant award to purchase new SCBA.
- Congratulations to Saratoga County Fire Coordinator Ed Tremblay on his retirement from County Government.
- **AN OSHA INFORMATION SUPPLEMENT HAS BEEN MOVED TO THE END OF THE BULLETIN AND PROVIDES ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND LINKS TO IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS. STAY INFORMED!!**
- Annual Financial Report (AFR formerly AUD) filing deadlines are 120 days after the end of the fiscal year, or **Monday April 29th 2024**. Extension requests can be submitted by the CFO in the [Annual Financial Reporting application](#) or in a letter signed by the CFO and emailed to AFRFILE@osc.ny.gov, faxed to (518) 486-3146 or mailed to Office of the State Comptroller, Data Management Unit, 110 State Street 12-8-C, Albany NY 12236. Fire Districts will also be required to report their statutory spending limit.
 - Although it might be late, file it anyway, if not filed it will be a negative comment on any audit conducted by OSC.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS AND RENEWALS FOR 2024

Ausable-Chesterfield-Keesville Fire District
Averill Park-Sand Lake Fire District #2
Ballston Lake Fire District #1
Berkshire Fire District
Berlin Fire District #1
Boght Community Fire District
Burnt Hills Fire District
Charlton Fire District #1

Chestertown Fire District
Clifton Park-Halfmoon Fire District #1
Coeymans Fire District
Coeymans Hollow Fire District #3
Delmar Fire District
Dutchess County Fire District Officers Assoc.
Eagle Mills Fire District #1
East Glensville Fire District #3

East Greenbush Fire District #1
East Greenbush Fire District #3
Elmwood Fire District
Fort Edward Joint Fire District
Fort Hunter Fire District/Alb Co
Fort Hunter Fire District/Mont Co
Glenville Fire District #5
Glenville Fire District #7
Glenville Hill Fire District #8
Glenham Fire District
Grafton Fire District
Greenfield Fire District
Guilderland Fire District
Halfmoon Fire District #1
Halfmoon-Waterford Fire District #1
Harmony Corners Fire District
Hemstreet Park Fire District #4
Hoags Corners Fire District
Hoosick Falls Joint Fire District
Hoosick Fire District
Jefferson Fire District
Johnsonville Fire District
Jonesville Fire District
Kiskatom Fire District
Knox Fire District
Latham Fire Department
Lewis Fire District
Mayfield Fire District #2
Melrose Fire District
Midway Fire District
Milton Fire District No. 1
Niskayuna Fire District #1
Niskayuna Fire District # 2
North Greenbush Fire District # 1
Northside Fire District
Northumberland Fire District #1
Perth Volunteer Fire Company
Petersburg Fire District #1

Pleasantdale Fire District #5
Plotterkill Fire District
Providence Fire District
Quaker Springs Fire District #1
Quaker Street Fire District # 1
Raymertown Fire District
Rexford Fire District
Rotterdam Fire District #1
Rotterdam Fire District #2
Rotterdam Fire District #3
Rotterdam Fire District #5
Rotterdam Fire District #6
Rotterdam Fire District #7
Sand Lake Fire District #3
Schodack Landing Fire District No. 1
Schodack Valley Fire District
Schuyler Heights Fire District
Selkirk Fire District
Slingerlands Fire District
South Schodack Fire District
Stanford Heights Fire District
Stillwater Fire District
Ticonderoga Joint Town/Village Joint Fire District
Town of Mohawk Fire District
Verdoy Fire District
Vischer Ferry Fire District
Warrensburg Fire District
Wells Fire District #1
West Athens Limestreet Fire District
West Crescent Fire District
West Glenville Fire District #6
West Sand Lake Fire District #1
Westmere Fire District
Wilton Fire District
Wright Fire District
89 Fire Districts as of May 1st, 2024
plus 2 additional Associate Members.

Have you sent in your Dues for 2024 yet??

CAFDA NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

WWW.CAFDA.NET

[General Membership Meetings - - In person and Zoom](#)

[Next General Membership Meeting, Thursday May 9th, dining at 6 Meeting at 7.](#)

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

[Thank you to the Clifton Park – Halfmoon Fire District for allowing us to use their facility for the CAFDA meetings.](#)

All correspondence & Capital Area Fire Districts Association Mailing Address should be directed to:

CAFDA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063 or EMAIL: SECRETARY@CAFDA.NET

Financial issues should be addressed to: TREASURER@CAFDA.NET

THE LATEST FROM THE STATE CAPITAL

THE SCORECARD IS BEING UPDATED EACH WEEK WHILE THE LEGISLATURE IS IN SESSION

What was included and what was omitted in the Final Budget, that will affect the Fire Service

- Extend videoconferencing authority for two years by including language to lower the in person requirements for all advisory boards until July 1, 2026
- To extend the suspension of the annual transfer of \$1.5 million from the Public Safety Communications Account to the Emergency Services Revolving Loan Fund for the State Fiscal Years of 2024-25 and 2025-26.
- Included Fire Service Training Stipend funding in the \$6.5M aid to localities funding, through DHSES.
- \$3.3M in aid to localities for grants to support fire investigations to include competitive grants to maintain assets and to increase fire prevention efforts, through DHSES.
- \$300K in aid to localities for Volunteer Firefighter recruitment and retention, through DHSES.
- \$1M in aid to localities for suicide prevention for first responders, \$2M for peer to peer training and mental health support for first responders all through OMH.
- Single Exit Building Proposal: Requiring the state fire prevention and building code council **to study and adopt** uniform fire prevention and building code standards to promote fire safety and accessibility in certain single-exit, single stairway multi-unit residential buildings.
- Accessory Dwelling Units: Providing a tax exemption on the increase in value of property resulting from the addition of an accessory dwelling unit. Ceates an incentive program for municipalities to legalize accessory dwelling units, to create an optional tax exemption for homeowners to create accessory dwelling units.

What was Omitted from the State Budget:

- The proposal to authorize New York City to develop a program to legalize certain basement and cellar dwellings.
- To increase the value of the volunteer firefighter and ambulance workers income tax credit to \$800 from the current \$200.
- Excluding fire extinguishers, fire alarms, smoke alarms, and carbon monoxide alarms from state sales taxes during the month of October.
- To require certification for distribution, assembly, reconditioning, sale of lithium-ion batteries and second-use lithium-ion batteries.
- The enactment of the Emergency Medical Services Essential Services Act and the autthoization of paramedic urgent care programs, to declare general ambulance services as an essential service, establish special districts for the financing and operation of general ambulance services, and provide for a statewide comprehensive emergency medical system plan.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: The budget is an insidious document that is massive, with many one-line initiatives plus many other one liners affecting all the active lobby groups trying to get theirs. Also realize there are three budget proposals, one from the Governor, one from the Assembly and one from the Senate, which have to be merged into one large document which has to be parsed very carefully to actually see what's in it. Some initiatives are brought forward to the final document and some don't make it.]

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

It is important to note that the "taxable status date" in most towns was March 1. See more information at: <https://fasny.com/resources/county-index-numbers/>

THE LATEST FROM WASHINGTON

MEMBERS OF THE NY CONGRESSIONAL FIRE SERVICE INSTITUTE

- [SENATOR KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND](#)
- [SENATOR CHARLES SCHUMER](#)

- [CONGRESSMAN ANDREW GARBARINO \(NY-2\)](#)
- [CONGRESSMAN ANTHONY D'ESPOSITO \(NY-4\)](#)
- [CONGRESSWOMAN NYDIA VELAZQUEZ \(NY-7\)](#)
- [CONGRESSWOMAN NICOLE MALLIOTAKIS \(NY-11\)](#)
- [CONGRESSMAN RITCHIE TORRES \(NY-15\)](#)
- [CONGRESSMAN PAT RYAN \(NY-18\)](#)
- [CONGRESSMAN PAUL TONKO \(NY-20\)](#)
- [CONGRESSWOMAN CLAUDIA TENNEY \(NY-24\)](#)
- [CONGRESSMAN BRIAN M. HIGGINS \(NY-26\)](#)



ACTION ALERT – TELL YOUR CONGRESSPERSON TO VOTE YES!!!

BIG NEWS! THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE VOTING ON S. 870, *THE FIRE GRANTS AND SAFETY ACT*, TO REAUTHORIZE AFG, SAFER AND THE U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION THE WEEK OF MAY 6. IT IS CRITICAL THAT YOU REACH OUT TO YOUR REPRESENTATIVE URGING THEM TO VOTE YES ON S. 870 AHEAD OF ITS CONSIDERATION.

IF CONGRESS DOES NOT PASS THIS BILL, AFG AND SAFER GRANTS WILL SHUT DOWN ON SEPTEMBER 30. PLEASE SAVE AFG AND SAFER BY USING THIS ACTION ALERT TO CONTACT YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS AND URGE THEM TO VOTE YES ON S. 870, *THE FIRE GRANTS AND SAFETY ACT*.

USE THIS LINK TO TELL YOUR REPRESENTATIVE TO VOTE YES:

<https://www.voterveice.net/NVFC/Campaigns/111584/Respond>

THE ATTORNEY’S OFFICE – HARD TO MAKE THIS UP!

Discharging Discipline: An Officer’s Guide To Employee Counseling

Trevor Frodge

Every fire officer wants to lead that perfect crew – the crew that always does the right thing, never causes issues, and never had any disciplinary problems. The problem with the perfect crew is that it doesn’t exist. Even for the best crews, there will likely be a disciplinary issue. Perhaps a firefighter will say something stupid on a run, or maybe they run a red light in the apparatus. It could be that a member shows up late to work, or maybe they get a little bit heated at the kitchen table about that other unit or the underperforming firefighter at the other station.

These types of issues occur in every firehouse across the country, but little time is actually devoted to training the fire officers who have to manage various administrative issues and discharge discipline. I’ve found that it is easy to follow the three Ds – Document, Discover and Discharge.

Before we dive into the general principles of discipline, followed by a review of the three Ds, it should be noted that each situation is different because we are all different. We are human beings, and as such, we are going to bring very human emotions and ideas to various situations. As officers, it would be amazing if we could just simply ride the right front seat of the rig, give size-ups and lead crews on the fireground all day long. And while we have those days, ***we also have the responsibility to lead our team and uphold our department’s standards, policies, rules and regulations – and to keep order in the firehouse.*** The company officer must be the constant leader, and it is what we tolerate that will ultimately shape the crew.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF DISCIPLINE

There are some general principles to discharging discipline that officers, especially new officers, should know:

- **Understand the overall purpose of the discipline process.** The process is not to simply yell or berate a subordinate for a decision that they made but rather ***to correct a behavior.*** For whatever reason, our firefighter has strayed from the normal course of action and violated some type of rule or standard. Yelling

does little to solve the problem. Therefore, ***discipline is always aimed at correcting the issue***, not to exude power over our firefighters.

- **Keep your emotions in check.** When officers react emotionally to a situation, it can be very easy to stop thinking strategically on how to correct the issue. Emotions are inevitable during a discipline process, but *when you as an officer are angry and upset, the strategic goal of correcting behavior turns more into a personal attack, leaving you as the officer open for liability and perhaps a hostile work environment claim.* Conversations are rarely productive when tempers flare, not to mention that points and counterpoints are missed. Simply put, ***when emotions are high, we stop listening***. Regardless of how angry or upset you are, you must control your emotions and calm down, consider the situation, and work the process.
- **Check your ego.** Just because you have been promoted does not make you automatically right. Ego can be a powerful motivator and an even greater destroyer. Discharging discipline requires empathy, which runs counterintuitive to arrogance and ego-driven behavior. *It is not the job of the company officer to humiliate or prove that they are better than anyone, but rather to show the offending firefighter the error of their ways and walk hand in hand to bring them back on track.*

Now let's dig into the three Ds – Document, Discover and Discharge.

DOCUMENT

One of the biggest drawbacks to the discipline process in many organizations is the lack of documentation. *If you counsel an employee, even informally for something, write it down.* This may seem counterintuitive to the brotherhood and sisterhood of the fire service, and I'll admit it even sounds somewhat sneaky. But the truth is, similar to an EMS patient care report, *if you don't write it down, it didn't happen*. Take for instance an example of a firefighter speeding while driving non-emergent. You tell the firefighter to slow down, they do, and then several shifts later they do it again. At what point does the discipline process progress? *The allegations of policy violations carry more weight when it shows that you have warned the firefighter two or three times before writing them up.*

Documentation can also be positive. When one of your firefighters does something well, write it down. If they perform an action that is above and beyond their normal job duties, such as going out of their way for public education or showing the truck, write it down. Perhaps they did a superb job on a run – write that down.

In this way we have a running document of positive and negative experiences that will help to shape our annual employee evaluations. The likelihood of anyone remembering what occurred at the beginning of the year versus the end of the year with all of the other stuff that occurs in the fire department is a heavy lift for any officer; therefore, the more you document, the more you have to reference.

Informal documentation does not have to go beyond the company officer's desk. A simple running word document or journal is all that is necessary to record conversations and a brief synopsis of the topic. It also serves as a layer of protection for the officer to show when and what was discussed if any legal issues were to ever arise.

DISCOVER

Once an offense has occurred, it is up to the company officer to do some digging into the alleged offense. The first step is to determine if a rule or policy was even broken. *In some organizations, the discipline process can fall flat because of a lack of documented policies and procedures. It would be very difficult, if not foolish, to write somebody up for a rule that doesn't exist.*

Simultaneously, you must gather the facts. If you witnessed the offense directly, write down what you observed. Note the date, time, other parties involved, and what was said or what occurred. This helps to keep emotions out of the decisions and to channel normal emotions such as frustration into a factual accounting. If there were witnesses to the offense, note that as well. Sources to check facts include run logs, time logs, schedules and dispatch notes. *Sometimes the offense is simply a rumor* – the proverbial firefighter A told firefighter B about what happened to firefighter C. This is where the officer has to dig deep and discover fact from fiction. Do not be lazy during the discovery time. Reflect on the offense and what you would do in a similar circumstance. Consider the firefighter's experience level, training, circumstances, and policies to make an informed and fair judgment.

You may have to do some research back on your existing documents to see if the firefighter has been breaking the same rules. This helps to establish a pattern of behavior that may be the cause of the issues. For instance, if you've documented that a firefighter has been late three times in the last six months, you'll want to know why. Perhaps the firefighter has a newborn child at home, or maybe they have a sick relative they are caring for. While the firefighter

should be at work on time and ready to go every shift, there could be a reasonable and human element as to why that isn't occurring. Similarly, if a firefighter is having angry outbursts at work, when normally they are a highly productive, responsible and respectable subordinate, that should cause you to ponder what is going on. Could they be going through marital or financial issues? Could there be stresses from the department or outside of the firehouse causing problems? Could the firefighter simply be burned out and need a reset?

DISCHARGE

Once all facts have been gathered and examined, it is your duty to discharge just and appropriate discipline. This is the least fun part about being a fire officer but it's one of the most important aspects of the job. Similar to parenting, no father or mother wants to discipline their kids, but eventually it is inevitable. It is how you react that your children, and your subordinates, will remember.

Most departments have some type of formal progressive discipline process. It is imperative that you understand that process and what authority you actually hold as a fire officer. For instance, company officers in my organization cannot suspend a firefighter; they can only recommend higher discipline to the chief officer to discharge. If you are unfamiliar with your discipline process, consult your policies and procedures or speak with a chief officer. Also, you must know what the discipline process looks like with collective bargaining agreements to ensure that you are not discharging discipline against the union contract.

Set up a time and place to discharge discipline. Call your employee into the office and have a private meeting. ***Remember, praise in public and discipline in private.*** Eliminate distractions such as emails and cell phone calls, and give your full attention to your firefighter. This is a sign of respect and goes a long way in achieving trust, collaboration and a willingness to correct poor performance or behavior.

You as the officer control the meeting. Identify the policies violated, how you reached your conclusions, and what you recommend. *Allow the firefighter to speak, but do not let them derail your judgment.* If there were extenuating circumstances, then that should have been uncovered in your discovery portion of your investigation.

Keep in mind that not all discipline has to involve written reprimands and suspensions, and that not all discipline has to be equal. A firefighter who is chronically late or is a sick time abuser should not be treated the same as a firefighter who overslept one time in 10 years. The punishment must be fair. Use good judgment and temper favoritism. If your best firefighter is late multiple times, then they are late multiple times and must be treated as such. [Read next: [Disciplining 'similarly situated' members in the fire service.](#)]

For "lesser" issues, one option for discipline is to assign a job that nobody wants to do. Scrubbing showers, dusting cobwebs or similarly "messy" jobs are good tools to motivate a firefighter to not re-offend. Another option is to assign a teaching topic to them based on what they did wrong. For instance, if a firefighter is habitually speeding when driving non-emergent, assign them to lead a company training on the vehicle operations policy. This is an effective tool to educate them on the policy while simultaneously being productive for everyone.

We want the best for our firefighters, and we are simply holding them to that standard. Ensure that they know the consequences for further poor performance and that progressive discipline can warrant suspensions, reassignments, demotions and perhaps termination in extreme circumstances. If you have a culture of trust built into your crew, then the likelihood of re-offense is low.

Conclude your discipline on a positive note. While nobody likes being disciplined, your firefighters should be affirmed that the purpose of discipline is to curtail poor performance and to correct bad behavior. End the meeting with a firm shake and agreement to be better. This is a relationship, in that the firefighter will follow the established rules and the officer will monitor their progress and the progress of other firefighters to ensure that rules are applied consistently and fairly.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Disciplining our firefighters is not a fun job but it is a necessary one. Our firefighters take on a tremendous responsibility every day, and sometimes they mess up. As officers we cannot fly off the handle at every inconvenience or minor screw up; we must remain a calm and consistent voice of reason. ***Pursue official discipline when it is necessary, and understand that discipline is not a power trip but rather an opportunity to coach, mentor and direct a firefighter back onto the correct path. That, in itself, is leadership.***

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

FIRE APPARATUS PURCHASING!

Fire Chief Considerations for Water Tankers

Joseph Murray

As fire chiefs, we have the ultimate responsibility in the decisions to purchase and to deploy water tankers. As such, it is important for the fire chief to be aware of how water tankers may affect fire department operations, firefighter safety, and the community at large. Chiefs must have a solid understanding of their community-specific needs as well as the risks associated with tanker use. It is important for the chief to ensure that proper training is conducted with drivers and that proper standard operating procedures are in place to reduce risk to the greatest extent possible. While not an all-inclusive list, this article discusses some of the main areas chiefs should take into account during decision-making processes related to acquiring and using a water tanker.

COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC NEEDS

Before a fire chief purchases a tanker, there are several factors to consider when determining what type and size will work best for the community. Besides the obvious budgetary constraints, chiefs must also consider the roadways and terrain on which a tanker will operate. Knowing your community's bridge weight limitations is essential. The only thing worse than being the fire chief who purchased a ladder truck that won't fit in the fire station is to be the chief who purchased a tanker that cannot cross bridges within the community. While that last statement was intended to be humorous, a quick Internet search will demonstrate that this happens more often than most believe. Understanding the terrain within your community is also important to know, as large tankers do not perform well in areas with steep hills or narrow winding roads. In these areas, a smaller design would be beneficial. Another important consideration when acquiring a tanker is its compatibility with your mutual-aid partners. Water shuttles generally work better when tankers of similar size are used. Fire chiefs should coordinate with mutual-aid partners to ensure tanker designs are the most effective. Every community is different and has its own unique challenges, and there are various tanker designs that impact how a tanker will perform. It is the chief's role to ensure that the tanker placed in service is the one best designed to meet the needs of the community.

UNDERSTAND THE RISKS

The most important concern for all fire chiefs is the safety and welfare of our firefighters. It is important that chiefs understand the risks associated with driving and operating water tankers. According to the United States Fire Administration's 2002 report, "Safe Operation of Tankers," it is suggested that while tankers only account for 3% of the total fire apparatus in the United States, they were responsible for more firefighter-response-related fatalities (22%) than any other type of fire apparatus over the previous two decades. The most common cause of tanker crashes is the vehicle's right-side wheels leaving the road surface because of excessive speed or other driver error. Often these crashes result in rollovers, which may be fatal or cause significant injuries. Water tankers are large and heavy vehicles that carry large amounts of water and can be difficult to maneuver and brake, especially on narrow or winding roads. The weight and shifting water can affect the stability and balance of these vehicles. Water shifts increase the risk of rollovers, collisions, or loss of control. Therefore, chiefs should ensure that drivers are properly trained and licensed to operate water tankers and that they follow all department standard operating procedures, speed limits, and traffic rules. Fire chiefs must also ensure that their tankers are equipped with adequate safety features such as seat belts, air bags, antilock brakes, and rollover protection systems.

CONVERTED VEHICLES

Using a water tanker that meets the requirements of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1900, Standard for Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Vehicles, Automotive Fire Apparatus, Wildland Fire Apparatus, and Automotive Ambulances, should be of utmost importance. While NFPA 1900 compliance will not completely eliminate every risk within its design, it will greatly reduce risk as it relates to some of the most significant design features that lead to tanker crashes. It is an unfortunate reality, however, that not every fire department can afford to purchase a custom manufactured tanker. *Many departments are forced to retrofit or convert other types of nonfire service designed*

tanker trucks such as military surplus vehicles, milk trucks, vacuum trucks, and petroleum tankers. **Unfortunately, often these converted vehicles or chassis are not designed for the weight of the water.** For example, a converted gasoline tanker was designed to support the weight of the gasoline it carried in a former life. As we know, a gallon of water weighs 8.33 pounds compared with a gallon of gasoline, which weighs 5.6 pounds. When multiplied by thousands of gallons, this weight difference can become a real concern, especially as it relates to braking distances and vehicle stability. *Another significant risk with using converted tanker trucks is that many are not properly baffled for fire department use. Milk trucks, for example, may not use baffling to reduce the chances of contamination.* Improper or absent baffling can result in fluid surge risks when the tank is less than full. These surges can make the tanker very difficult to control and unstable. Often, converted vehicles also have an extremely high center of gravity because of tank placement, which increases the chances of rollover. It is important to remember that the original truck was not designed to be used as a water tanker; thus, many of its components are not equipped to best handle its converted usage. It is best to avoid using converted tankers, as they may not be feasible for all departments. It is essential that conversions be completed and inspected by certified mechanics who specialize in heavy trucks.

MAINTENANCE

Maintenance is an essential part of keeping a tanker safe and operations-ready. Poor maintenance of a tanker can result in vehicle system failures that lead to crashes. Often, water tankers are overlooked when compared with the rest of the fleet. This is especially true with departments that have tankers that are not used as frequently as other types of apparatus. In many departments, tankers are the oldest vehicles in the fleet because of their lower use frequency or because of their cost to replace. As chiefs, we know the importance of getting the most service time out of our apparatus; however, age can have a significant effect on the safety of a tanker, even a tanker with low miles and low hours. Because of the weight of the water that tankers carry, metal fatigue can be significantly expedited. It is extremely important that tankers are placed on a regular inspection and maintenance program—even if they are not used often.

TRAINING

Fire chiefs must ensure proper training of firefighters tasked with driving and operating a water tanker. All firefighters should at minimum meet the recommendation of NFPA 1002, Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications. However, because of its uniqueness among typical fire apparatus, the water tanker also requires a specific set of skills and knowhow. Driving experience with other apparatus such as engines or ladder trucks is not sufficient. Focus training on the unique features of water tankers and their impact on their operation. Tanker drivers must have a good understanding of how the weight of the tanker will impact braking distances, how the flow of water within the tank may impact stability, and how the high center of gravity may pose a risk during turning. Fire chiefs should ensure that tanker operators and personnel receive adequate training and certification on these topics and that they participate in regular drills and exercises to maintain their skills and proficiency. All tanker drivers should undertake many hours of closed-course and over-the-road driving with another qualified driver to ensure proficiency before being allowed to respond to emergencies with a tanker.

PROTOCOL DEVELOPMENT

Because of tankers' uniqueness within a fire department's fleet, it is important to develop specific standard operating procedures (SOPs) for tanker operations. A fire department tanker SOP should outline the best practices and guidelines for driving and operating the tanker. *This SOP should outline what training and certifications personnel must obtain before they are allowed to drive and operate a tanker.* The tanker SOP should also discuss driving safety by requiring that drivers follow all traffic laws and safety rules while driving on public roads. Important to define is the use of warning lights and sirens. If the tanker is expected to respond emergently, the SOP should include requirements to use warning lights and sirens as appropriate to alert other drivers and pedestrians of their presence. It is also important to reference that water tanker drivers should maintain a safe speed and distance from other vehicles while driving on public roads. Drivers should avoid sharp turns, sudden stops, and abrupt maneuvers that could cause instability or the vehicle to roll over. **Water tankers are a unique type of fire apparatus that come with their own unique risks and challenges.** It is important for fire chiefs to understand these major areas of concern related to tankers, to ensure that the water tanker can be best used within their community. It is important that fire chiefs have a good understanding of the unique geographical and terrain features of their community to ensure the acquisition of the best type and variation of water tanker. Finally, fire chiefs should place great emphasis on the safety

of their firefighters, proper training, and clear protocol development and, when possible, avoid the use of converted vehicles.

PURCHASING

****Consortium Purchasing for Fire Apparatus**

Neil Sjostrom

Low bid. These two words can, for some, be the beginning of a purchasing process that's filled with frustration and disappointment, given the many variables that are involved in apparatus procurement.

I often am asked whether there is another way to procure fire apparatus without having to simply use "low bid." It wasn't until the last 5–10 years that the answer became a resounding and successful, "Yes," to those who seek a low-bid purchasing alternative by utilizing consortium purchasing processes.

Whether referred to as a "best-value," "consortium" or "cooperative" purchasing process, the end-goal is the same: for the fire department or purchaser to receive the best-quality apparatus, specified and designed exactly as the customer needs, for the best possible price that's available without using the standard public and low-bid response process. This all sounds like a wonderful idea, but how does it work, and how can you use it to your advantage?

STEP ONE

The first step to a successful consortium purchasing process is to find out what options are available in your state for purchasing outside of using a low-bid process. Here are three cooperative, or consortium, purchasing solutions that are available. However, there are numerous others, so this isn't an exhaustive listing:

- Sourcwell (formerly NJPA)— sourcwell-mn.gov
- HGACBuy— hgacbuy.org
- NASPO ValuePoint— naspovaluepoint.org

It always is important to check with your state and local officials for any laws that pertain to the use of purchasing consortiums to assure that you remain compliant throughout the buying process. Each consortium has a different process for how to purchase through its system. Some require membership, and some have fees that are associated with the membership. It is important to check with each consortium group, as well as with your department/city purchasing agent, because you already might be a member of one of these groups. It is common for municipalities to use these consortium purchasing programs for other large equipment items, such as dump trucks and construction equipment.

Several fire apparatus dealers throughout the country have seen their business transition to more than half of their sales resulting from consortium methods. This lends strong support to the process and the value that it provides to fire departments that acquire new apparatus. This also has provided benefits to the dealerships for how they structure sales support staff and how they focus their time.

Although this article doesn't discuss the individual department needs assessment process, the process is an important part of any buying situation. A full understanding of what you want and need helps you to better leverage your purchasing power, particularly when you utilize consortium purchasing methods.

STEP TWO

After you decide through which consortium you will purchase, you can reach out to the manufacturers from which you want to receive a proposal. That said, some customers simply solicit a single proposal from one original equipment manufacturer (OEM)/dealer, so they can purchase an apparatus that's consistent with their current fleet and needs of the department. Although this certainly is a viable option, working with more than one apparatus manufacturer (or dealer) helps to assure that you get the best value for your purchase while meeting your exact needs.

These changes to the purchasing process are altering the way that the traditional apparatus purchasing market operates. Fire apparatus dealers spend more time working one-on-one with fire departments to meet their exact needs prior to a formal price proposal and less time reading hundreds of pages of published specification documents and submitting price proposals with little or no contact with the customer. The days of random bidding are changing. This reduces frustration on both ends of the sale. The dealer sales staff doesn't feel like they are "chasing" their tails on dead-end project proposals, and the customer reduces the amount of time, effort and money that is put into an acquisition process by not having to read through noncompliant "low-ball" bids.

STEP THREE

After you select the OEM that you want to work with and contact its dealer, notify them that you will purchase through a consortium purchasing authority. They then can provide you with the base models that they have listed with the specific consortium for the type of apparatus that you're buying (aerial, engine, rescue, etc.).

Once you decide on a base model with the OEM/dealer, you can discuss which options you need, what modifications need to be made to the proposed apparatus and what the changes/additions will cost. It is important to note that, just because you use a consortium purchasing process, you don't have to purchase a watered-down, no-options apparatus that won't meet your department's needs. This transitions the apparatus buying process into a more open and transparent process that gives the customer the chance to evaluate a specific design feature and its cost before including it in a purchase.

For example, say a department wants to cover various chrome or shiny surfaces with a black paint or bed-liner material. Although this might be a desired option, the costs might be too high. By having this open dialogue, you can evaluate the specific cost/benefit of the option rather than burying it in the bid proposal and total price. Using the low-bid purchasing process creates problems when the lowest bid doesn't meet your desired specifications. However, this same scenario can happen when all bids are over budget and you have no real method of determining which features that are written into the specifications cause significant cost increases.

The consortium process is similar to purchasing a new car; you see all of the available options and how much they cost before you ever include them in your purchase, rather than trying to decipher hundreds of pages of complicated proposals with little or no understanding of how much a particular request in a specification might cost the department.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Although fire departments generally serve a similar mission, all are unique in how they respond and the tools and equipment that their apparatus need to have on them. These unique requirements translate into high cost when purchasing an apparatus, as every special or custom option that's added to a project increases the price because of extra engineering and production time. The more customization that's needed, the higher the end price. An open dialogue about specific customer needs with a dealer allows the OEM/dealer to provide valuable feedback on what options exist to meet the customer needs while avoiding the high costs that are associated with custom one-off solutions from a manufacturer.

Keep in mind, the industry produces thousands of apparatus per year, and each manufacturer has a large catalog of available, already-made solutions that solve a

department's problems. Using an already engineered solution to meet your needs saves time and money. Additionally, you could ask your dealer for contact information of another department that implemented the solution that you're evaluating to see whether they have any suggestions for improvement or advice about how implementation was on their apparatus. This allows for feedback from firefighters who might have found design flaws or specific improvements that you might want to incorporate.

In addition to the design needs of the department, you also can include feedback and requests from your maintenance departments. Some maintenance staff might have requests for using specific types of materials or locating commonly serviced options in easier-to-access locations. These types of requests can be discussed with the OEM/dealer for incorporation into your proposal, which helps to reduce long-term maintenance costs of your new purchase.

Another of the key benefits of the consortium process is that you can have these open dialogues with more than one OEM/dealer. This allows you to truly understand a final price proposal and assures that the finite details of your needs are represented in the proposal. This open dialogue allows the customer to receive updated drawings of the final apparatus and/or photographs of specific components to make sure that the end result is as desired. Through this process, some manufacturers even provide 3D drawings of components, to help a customer to better visualize a solution before a purchase is made and any metal is cut.

The consortium process allows you to work with your dealer(s) to determine a comprehensive apparatus configuration that meets your department's needs and that assures you that you are within your budget parameters. This will give you confidence that your new apparatus will meet the operational needs of your department when it arrives. Through the detailed consortium process, you will be able to take a proposal to your purchasing-approving

authority (city council, fire board, etc.) and articulate your research and the cost/benefit of the various options that you included in your project, to ensure that your new apparatus meets the needs of your community today and tomorrow.

NEW YORK STATE REQUIREMENTS FROM THE STATE COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE

There are three prerequisites that must be met in order for a procurement of apparatus, materials, equipment and supplies, and related installation, repair and maintenance services, to fall within this exception:

(1) The contract must have been let by the United States or any agency thereof, any state or any other political subdivision or district therein. Therefore, there must be an underlying contract let by one of the listed governmental entities. Contracts developed for use by local governments that are let by private parties (e.g., a private company, association or not-for-profit corporation is the party awarding the contract to the vendor), and not by the United States or any agency thereof, any state or any other political subdivision or district therein, would not fall within the exception. 3 The phrase “any state or other political subdivision or district therein” clearly includes other states, and political subdivisions in other states. In our view, it also includes New York State political subdivisions. Therefore, in addition to the current competitive bidding exception for certain purchases through contracts of New York State counties (County Law § 408-a; GML § 103 [3]), local governments also may purchase through qualifying contracts let by other New York State political subdivisions under this exception.

(2) The contract must have been made available for use by other governmental entities. This means that the other governmental entity has taken steps to make its contract available for New York local governments. In general, this would occur by inclusion in the contract let by the other entity of a clause extending the terms and conditions of the contract to other governmental entities. Unilateral offers by vendors to extend contract pricing and other terms and conditions would not fall within the exception.

(3) The contract must have been “let to the lowest responsible bidder or on the basis of best value in a manner consistent with this section.” The term “consistent with this section” refers to General Municipal Law § 103 (and related case law) applicable to New York State political subdivisions. The purchasing local government would need to obtain background information on the procedures used to let the contract and, as necessary, consult with its counsel, to determine whether this prerequisite is met. Additional guidance on complying with this prerequisite follows.

FIRE DISTRICT/COMPANY FINANCES!

****Annual Financial Report (AFR) Due to State Comptroller by April 29th**

Annual Financial Report (AFR formerly AUD) filing deadlines are 120 days after the end of the fiscal year, or Monday April 29th 2024. Extension requests can be submitted by the CFO in the [Annual Financial Reporting application](#) or in a letter signed by the CFO and emailed to AFRFILE@osc.ny.gov, faxed to (518) 486-3146 or mailed to Office of the State Comptroller, Data Management Unit, 110 State Street 12-8-C, Albany NY 12236. Fire Districts will also be required to report their statutory spending limit.

File it even if its late. This is a typical finding during an OSC audit and the audit will ask that up to date reports be filed.

Better late than never.

Ticonderoga Joint Town/Village Fire District – Board Oversight

BACKGROUND

The District provides fire protection services within the Town of Ticonderoga (Town) in Essex County. The elected five-member Board governs the District and is responsible for its overall financial management.

The Board-appointed Secretary- Treasurer is the chief fiscal officer and is responsible for receiving, distributing and accounting for District funds; maintaining accounting records; and preparing periodic financial reports.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

Determine whether the Ticonderoga Joint Town/Village Fire District (District) Board of Fire Commissioners (Board) monitored financial activity and ensured appropriate records and reports were maintained and filed timely.

KEY FINDINGS

While the Board monitored financial activity and ensured appropriate records were maintained, they did not ensure required annual audits were completed and annual update documents (AUD) were filed in a timely manner. (Starting in 2023, the AUD is referred to as the Annual Financial Report [AFR].) As a result:

- The 2018 independent annual audit of the District's records was completed 1,045 days late and as of October 31, 2023, audits for 2019 through 2022 were not completed and were already between 1,220 and 124 days late.
- AUDs were filed as many as 1,257 days late.

There was no independent verification that funds have been accounted for and transparency was diminished.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Ensure an annual independent audit of the District's accounting records is performed and filed within 180 days of the close of the fiscal year.**
- **File the District's required AUDs with our office within 60 days of the close of the fiscal year.**

FULL REPORT

<https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2024/pdf/ticonderoga-joint-town-village-fire-district-2023-182.pdf>



Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend Webinar

Date & Time Monday May 6, 2024 07:00 PM in Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend Program Webinar – what you need to know about the new law! Join FASNY General Counsel Tim Hannigan, FASNY Secretary John D'Alessandro, and a representative from the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control in a live discussion of the new law and how to implement it in your firehouse.

REGISTER AT THIS LINK: https://fasny.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_sJKvUur_RRkDaEbpGG3-QA#/registration

Message from Deputy State Fire Administrator Luci Labriola-Cuffe on the NYS Volunteer Firefighter Stipend Program

I am very pleased to announce the NYS Stipend Regulation is now final and the program information is now live on our website. OFPC is now accepting applications for the stipend monies for volunteer firefighters who have successfully completed (first time completion) one of the eligible courses on or after August 31, 2023.

Learn what you and your Chief's need to do to comply with this new program!!

Further information and documents found here:

<https://www.dhSES.ny.gov/new-york-state-volunteer-firefighter-stipend-program>

The final regulation can be found on the NYS Register starting on page 4:

<https://dos.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2024/03/030624.pdf>

If anyone has questions, please send them to OFPC-Stipend@dhSES.ny.gov

Thank you,

Luci

Luci Labriola-Cuffe, MPS-HS: PHP & CT

Deputy State Fire Administrator

Fiscal Oversight Responsibilities of the Governing Board

The governing board's oversight role can touch virtually every aspect of a local government's operations. This session will discuss some key functions including budget responsibilities, interim reporting, the audit of claims, and the annual audit requirements. We will also provide resources available to assist in these oversight activities.

DATE: 2024-01-24 LENGTH: 46:53 TAKE THIS ANYTIME AT THIS LINK: [On Demand Slide Show Presentation \[pdf\]](#)

Local Government and School Accountability Contact Information:

STEP INTO THE CHIEF'S OFFICE

****Understanding and Leading 'Gotcha' Employees**

Mike Clements

I recently had an encounter with a “gotcha” employee. I had just left an organizational meeting feeling reassured and good about what the group discussed, as well as the overall direction of the organization. Later, I mentioned the meeting to another employee who had attended and was shocked when this person shared a long list of things “others” weren’t satisfied with. It was like we had attended two completely different meetings.

This tendency to ignore the positives and fixate on the negatives is just one example of “gotcha” behavior. Maybe you have someone on your team who speaks up only to poke holes in others’ ideas. Maybe there’s a coworker who tries to disguise their tattling with “I’m just trying to make our team better” reasoning. Maybe a member is known for making snide comments to undermine others’ achievements. They seem to think it’s their job to catch every shortcoming and call out every mistake made by another employee or manager. Worst of all, they seem to take pleasure in it. “You didn’t cover that in your report.” (Gotcha!) “I see a problem with your plan.” (Gotcha!) “You forgot to take care of this task.” (Gotcha again!)

This behavior is not unique to the fire service, of course. But there are certain characteristics of our industry—the long stretches of down time between emergencies, and the tendency to attract people with a particular brand of wit and intelligence—that make it fertile ground for “gotcha” behavior. Most workplaces have at least a few “gotcha” employees. This behavior is often connected to managers, but people at every level can contribute to a “gotcha” culture. Many times, these are some of the smartest members of the group, but they have chosen to use their intelligence to play “gotcha” games rather than bringing up their concerns in a mature and respectful manner. Unfortunately, this behavior can spread like wildfire if you don’t nip it in the bud.

THE DANGERS OF ‘GOTCHA’

As you might expect, “gotcha” moments have a profoundly negative effect on the workplace. They cause disruption and turmoil, tear down the camaraderie of the team, and force employees to spend their time and energy covering their backsides—lest they be the next victim of a “gotcha” moment—instead of working to make the fire station or fire department better. ***It doesn’t take many “gotcha” employees to poison a culture. Good employees burn out, “quiet quit,” or leave.***

This behavior has consequences for the person displaying it, too. They spend all their time putting others down instead of focusing on their own work and careers. This causes them to miss out on countless moments that could be used for learning, connection, and supporting others. The driving force behind this article was not only witnessing this behavior (and—full disclosure—engaging in it myself at various times in my career), but watching crews miss the best days of *their* careers because they are too focused on playing “gotcha.”

Nobody wants to be around a coworker who is negative all the time—especially one who embarrasses them and exposes their mistakes. Eventually, “gotcha” employees become isolated and possibly disliked. They will feel hurt; after all, in their eyes, they were just doing their jobs by trying to point out cracks in the system. So, they’re likely to “punish” their “ungrateful” colleagues by doubling down on their “gotcha” behavior, perpetuating the cycle. Even if this person is respected by their peers for other reasons, they will always have the stigma of being a “gotcha” or perpetually negative employee.

WHY DO PEOPLE DO IT?

“Gotcha” employees usually don’t set out to alienate others and create dysfunction in their teams. It’s just that this behavior makes them feel valuable and smart. They believe they are seeing something others can’t. In fact, as I alluded to earlier, it’s been my experience that these are some of the smartest and most talented members of the team. These traits allow them to get a foothold with others and begin the “gotcha” cascade. Usually their behavior stems from a lack of engagement or a sense of not feeling valued. They view themselves as fulfilling an important function

on the team—it's up to them to lead the charge. They believe their superior intellect is the only solution for the organization's challenges, and if everyone would just do what they say, this place would be running like a top. I've noticed that "gotcha" people tend to gravitate toward others like themselves, so instead of seeing the harmful effects of their behavior, they're stuck in a self-congratulatory echo chamber. Anyone who is not on the "inside" or anyone who calls out the behavior is a target. The real problem then becomes the toxic synergy that's created: The "gotcha" employee can and will control the narrative and thinking of other subgroups in the organization. This becomes most problematic when they are working around new or easily influenced members.

HOW TO BREAK THE 'GOTCHA' HABIT

If we are constantly on the lookout for what's wrong in a workplace, we will always find the "fly in the ointment."

I'm not saying we should *never* focus on what needs to be fixed. We certainly should. But it would be far more beneficial for everyone if team members would work together to achieve goals and find solutions rather than tear down the efforts of others.

It's up to leaders to create these conditions. The way I see it, this is a two-part endeavor. First, we need to respond to "gotcha" moments the right way. Second, we need to create a culture in which "gotcha" behavior doesn't take root and thrive. Here are a few strategies for both.

WHEN A 'GOTCHA' MOMENT HAPPENS, DO THE FOLLOWING

Get to the root of the "gotcha." Some people tear others down because it makes them feel better about themselves. Look at the person and consider what might be going on. Were they recently passed over for a promotion? Have they recently made a mistake or been treated unfairly? In that case, they might be going on the defensive by trying to show others in an unflattering light. If it becomes clear that the employee is struggling, you might need to have a candid but kind conversation. Ask them what's going on and find out what, if anything, you can do to help them succeed.

Avoid a big "reaction." Sometimes a "gotcha" employee truly does have bad intentions. If the employee is trying to get a rise out of you, don't give it to them. You don't need to stoop to their level or give them the satisfaction of knowing they have rattled you. Do your best to rise above the "gotcha" and move on. Likewise, convey to others the importance of taking the high road.

Ask for specifics. Approach the "gotcha" moment with curiosity, not hostility. Ask, "Can you tell me more about the comment you made in front of the group? I'd like to know why you feel the way you do." This forces the person to point to facts and data rather than relying on generalities or any "story" they may be telling themselves about someone else's behavior or perceived flaws. Their perception may change when you ask them to drill down on specifics.

Validate the person's "catch" (up to a point). If someone points out an error you have made, take a moment to weigh the validity of their statement. Is there some truth to it? Is there something you can learn from it? Just because the message came from a "gotcha" employee—and, as leaders, we may not like the medium in which it was delivered—discounting this message would be a huge error. What might you do differently moving forward? You might say something like, "You know, that was a careless oversight. I really need to look over my emails to make sure I don't leave out something important." This can be tough to do. It takes humility, which can feel uncomfortable, but is ultimately a tool that builds trust between people.

CREATE A GOTCHA-FREE CULTURE

Assume good intent (and teach employees to do the same). Once someone gets a reputation for "gotcha" behaviors, it's easy to write them off for good. Try not to do this. Chances are the employee who points out people's shortcomings genuinely believes they are being helpful (even though it is not always welcomed or well received.) If you've been burnt by their behavior, try to give them grace. Remember, just because someone has behaved badly in the past doesn't mean they are incapable of growing and changing.

And on the flip side, remind "gotcha" employees (and *all* employees) that most people want to do a good job. Usually, when someone does make a mistake, they feel terrible about it. Normalize giving colleagues and leaders the benefit of the doubt. This doesn't mean you should overlook mistakes or sweep problems under the rug—just that you should treat others with empathy and respect when you address those things.

Ask yourself: Are my employees afraid to make mistakes? A "gotcha" culture can start at the top and trickle down to everyone else, so address your own tendencies first. Are you punitive when people forget details, make mistakes, or take the wrong course of action? If so, it's time to allow employees to be fallible human beings. Encourage people

to say, “I don’t know the answer right now. Let me get back to you,” or, “I think we went in the wrong direction, and here’s what I think needs to happen next,” without fear of punishment or being blamed and shamed. Psychological safety is important for many reasons, and lessening “gotcha” behavior is one of them.

Model transparency for the team. Make yours a culture where people (all people) own up to their mistakes. This is one best practice that must start at the top of the organization. Cloaking company errors in secrecy perpetuates a culture of blame and finger-pointing. If the organization makes a serious misstep, communicate it immediately to everyone on the team. Sharing the facts up front also prevents gossip and rumors from taking hold.

Be clear and concise with communication and teach others to do the same. Poor communication leads to mistakes, which leads to “gotchas” and finger-pointing. So, make being clear and concise a standard everyone aspires to. Model the behavior. Think carefully about what you want to convey before you communicate rather than winging it. Give clear instructions so employees know what is expected of them. Teach people to listen carefully and repeat back what they heard to ensure messages aren’t confused. Encourage people to ask if they don’t understand.

Look for the bright spots and use them to shift the culture. Training people to focus on what’s going well can change negative attitudes and shift the culture toward positivity. Create *good* “gotcha” moments in which you catch people doing something right. Storytelling is a powerful way to start this shift. Take a few minutes at your all-hands meeting to share about a member who went above and beyond. Give a shout-out to highlight exemplary service in e-mails or newsletters. Talk about the way your team made a positive impact on a person or family. A pat on the back goes a long way toward creating strong working relationships.

Everyone can take ownership of building a healthier culture free of “gotcha” behavior. No matter what your role is, you’ll be most impactful when you focus on collaboration and development instead of conflict and finger-pointing. Teach others to say “gotcha!” in a different way—by catching others doing good things. It may surprise you just how quickly the department’s culture shifts to a more positive place.

Finally, it is important to remember we are all on a journey. The 23-year-old firefighter will be a different person when they gain experience and mature. Admittedly, my own success in recognizing “gotcha” employees comes from my time as a “gotcha” employee. People can and do change if you create the right environment. Getting intentional about creating that environment is one of the greatest gifts you can give your team.

OUR CHANGING FIRE SERVICE –CHALLENGES & POSITIVE IDEAS!

POSITIVE IDEAS THAT MIGHT WORK FOR OTHERS:

Conn. Town Implements Virtual Reality Training For Firefighters, EMS Providers

Eric Bedner, Journal Inquirer

With a new generation of first responders and students growing up in a world of cutting-edge video games, a new tool takes virtual reality to the next level — to provide training and real-world scenarios to prepare them for potentially life-threatening situations.

The town and school district are partnering with East Hartford -based [VRSim](#) in the launch of VRNA EMS, a new training system for emergency medical technicians, police officers, firefighters, and schoolchildren that immerses users in a computer simulation.

Vernon is the first municipality in the country to use VRSim’s most recent technology, CEO and President Matthew Wallace said, but six more states are expected to join by the end of the month.

The training system, which compliments traditional textbooks and training exercises, provides a variety of simulations for first responders, such as heart attacks, burns, childbirth, lacerations, broken bones, and overdoses.

Along with first responders, ***Vernon intends to use the technology to help teach Rockville High School students in the allied health and fire technology programs.***

“I think the possibilities are endless,” Mayor Dan Champagne said. “Training and refresher training are important in any public safety organization and we are always in search of creative and innovative solutions to meet today’s ever-changing public safety challenges.”

Virtual reality training is already in use in Vernon schools, such as for virtual dissections, Superintendent Joseph Macary said, adding that “virtual technology systems are the next evolution of teaching for all learners.”

The roughly \$8,000 virtual reality unit consists of a small computer, headset, and handheld controllers that are currently located at Fire Station No. 1 on Hartford Turnpike but can easily be transported throughout town.

Town Administrator and Director of Emergency and Risk Management Michael Purcaro said that the town plans to partner with other communities in the future to conduct regional training for otherwise extremely costly exercises, such as mass casualty events.

“To be able to carry out such an exercise with multiple players in multiple places simultaneously would greatly enhance preparedness training across the region, state, and nation,” he said. “This game-changing technology exponentially enhances EMTs’ and emergency medical responders’ capabilities.”

One goal, Wallace said, is to make critical training more accessible to attract a skilled first responder workforce.

During a demonstration Wednesday at the fire station, the training simulation showed step-by-step what first responders should be doing when faced with certain situations.

The program provides real-time instruction and feedback for each action taken, such as going too fast or too slow when doing chest compressions during CPR in the cardiac arrest simulation. The data collected is then examined by the student and their teacher to determine what is done correctly and which areas need improvement.

Grading follows the same standards as the national EMS education standards, Wallace said.

“It’s like a modern apprenticeship,” he said. “It’s going to be on the front edge of education.”

*Wallace said that since the technology runs on WiFi, **it can be updated immediately**, noting that the next generation of first responders are growing up with burgeoning technology and are more used to it than others.*

First Due: Firefighter Training for High School Seniors

Frank Dellucky

In August 2022, Livingston Parish, LA, Fire Protection District #4 (LPFPD4), in collaboration with Walker High School, launched the Louisiana High School Firefighter Training Program. It’s the first training program of its kind in the state. The program trains and educates high school seniors who are interested in pursuing a career in firefighting or in serving as a volunteer firefighter.

“Developing this program is very personal to me,” Keesler Fly, who is LPFPD4’s chief of training, says. Fly started in the Junior Firefighter program at LPFPD4 when he was a high school sophomore.

The one-year program includes Firefighter I, Firefighter II certification, which includes vehicle extrication, hazardous materials awareness and hazardous materials operations. Classes are taught by internationally certified fire service instructors.

“Students receive both classroom and hands-on practical instruction,” Fly says. “In fact, they learn the same curriculum and are trained to the same international standard as if they were going through a firefighting academy.” Upon graduating, students have the necessary certifications to be hired as a career firefighter or as a volunteer firefighter.

The program is important, given that recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters as well as career firefighters, particularly in younger age groups, has been a great challenge for the department.

Full disclosure

Students fill out an application at their school. Applications are reviewed to ensure that the students meet the criteria of the program. Students are interviewed to ensure that they understand what’s involved and the full nature and complexity of program, including how it will tax them mentally and physically. The first class of five graduated in May 2023. Three students went to work at a career department right after graduation.

Recognizing personalities

This year’s class has nine students. The differences between the two classes were seen almost immediately.

Learning the personalities of the students is crucial to finding the right way to help the students to understand the content of instruction. Figuring out the right analogies for the right students is the trick. For example, in one case in which preplanning was being explained, one student didn’t quite get it. The instructor associated going to the prom with preplanning. Suddenly, the concept clicked for the student. Another time, offensive and defensive fire attacks were explained using comparisons to football.

Nuts and bolts

The students learn basic skills to thrive in a fire station, including how to mop, clean bathrooms and wash apparatus, and they learn responsibility. Class leaders and group leaders instruct regarding incident command and chain of command. Students learn that they get praised as a team and disciplined as a team.

Students make entries in log books in regard to everything that happens each day that class convenes. The department found that it can add more content and more certifications. For instance, having realized that more time is available in the second semester than the first semester, the program added ICS 100, ICS 200, ICS 700 and ICS 800 to the curriculum. This gives students the opportunity to obtain eight certifications prior to graduation. “We tried to incorporate pump operations in last year’s curriculum, but age limits for practical testing didn’t make it possible,” Fly says.

“Furthermore,” he adds, “we must abide by the school calendar, so there are off days that take away from lessons. Those days must be made up on other days.”

Growth ahead

So far, three fire/school districts in Louisiana are teaching the program. Numerous others are interested in starting programs.

“I see great things happening with this program, and I am proud of LPFPD4 and Walker High School for making this happen,” James Wascom, who is the fire chief of LPFPD4, says.

CHALLENGES:

Concord, NC, Firefighters Awakened by Alarms as Ladder Truck Catches Fire

Firefighters often tout the importance of smoke alarms and sprinklers. And, they made a difference early Thursday for five Concord firefighters when fire broke out in their station. Alerted by smoke alarms about 4 a.m., they managed to get the swift-water rescue truck and safety officer truck out of the firehouse, Then, they battled the flames. The fire originated in a reserve ladder truck, valued at about \$1.2 million.

\$1.8M Deficit Leads S.C. Town Officials To Consider Giving FD To County

SURFSIDE BEACH, S.C. — With a \$1.8 million deficit and a fire department that does not have enough staff to safely operate, Surfside Beach Town Council is considering turning its department over to Horry County. The main advantage of turning the fire department over to Horry County is that it has more resources than Surfside Beach. It would be able to bring in an ambulance to the fire department, which Surfside Beach does not currently have. Webster said citizens would likely not notice a change in service. The county will also try to retain the current fire staff, bringing them on as Horry County employees, Webster said.

Last year the town council approved funding for three additional positions, which were not filled, and this year, the fire department requested four more positions.

Surfside Beach town council denied the four positions and will put a hiring freeze on the three vacant spots because the town cannot pay for them, Town Administrator Gerry Vincent said. This puts Surfside Beach in a tricky spot, as it cannot safely run its fire department with six full-time staff.

Surfside Beach is in talks of allowing Horry County to take over firefighting duties although it’s not as easy as one may think. The town would need to pay Horry County taxes for firefighters. Taxes paid to Horry County would likely cost more than increasing taxes for more Surfside Beach firefighters, Councilman Kinken said.

Not increasing the number of firefighters could also cause insurance costs to increase due to liability.

The town’s current millage rate is 43 mils. The maximum limit of added millages in Surfside Beach is 10, Vincent said. The maximum increase could cover the requested seven firefighter positions but Vincent said he is not sure town council will increase millages to the maximum amount. “Raising taxes is the last thing you want to do politically,” Vincent said.

Conn. Legislators Look To Ban Chinese-Made Drones Used By Fire, Police Departments

Christopher Keating, Hartford Courant

Concerned about potential hacking, a key legislative committee voted Monday for a bill prohibiting Connecticut towns and state agencies from purchasing Chinese and Russian-made drones in the future.

The judiciary committee split largely along party lines with Democrats in favor of the provision and Republicans against it.

As the bill has been rewritten recently and is still undergoing revisions, the complete phaseout would apply to the state police by October 2026 and municipalities by October 2027. *First responders like police departments statewide*

have already spent an estimated \$1 million to \$2 million on drones, but they will eventually be replaced because the average lifespan is three to five years, officials said.

The problem, lawmakers said, is that the Chinese-made drones are generally cheaper, and Connecticut municipalities have been buying them because of the lower cost.

The issue came to light when the FBI and a federal entity known as the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency released warnings that the drones might be a security risk because they could collect video and photographs of water and sewer plants, emergency communications systems, and key infrastructure.

Senate majority leader Bob Duff, a Norwalk Democrat, has become a leader on the issue because he serves on the cybersecurity task force of the National Conference of State Legislatures. In the recent Congress where lawmakers remained deadlocked on most issues, *legislators passed a law last year that bans the use of foreign drones for the military and the U.S. government.*

“Most people are unaware of the risk that these foreign-made drones present in our communities,” Duff told The Courant in an interview Monday. “They don’t know. When people get drones, they go for the lowest price, and the lowest price is the Chinese drones — and that’s on purpose. But there is an inherent danger.”

Besides the federal ban, Connecticut would be following the lead of states like Florida, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Mississippi that have banned the devices.

Duff and Senate President Pro Tem Martin Looney of New Haven sent a letter recently to mayors and first selectmen to spread the word about the security risks regarding critical infrastructure.

“The Chinese drones issue is a very critical issue that this legislature needs to address,” said Rep. Doug Dubitsky, a conservative Republican who voted against the bill. “Having drones used by emergency responders that send information and video and critical information to our potential adversaries is something that we really need to address.”

Sen. John Kissel, the ranking Senate Republican on the judiciary committee, voted against the bill Monday and previously had voted against it on the general law committee.

The drone prohibitions “will have a huge financial impact on our municipalities,” Kissel said. “It will also imperil law enforcement’s ability to use these going forward for emergency situations, lost children, and the like. This bill needs an awful lot of work.”

Rep. Melissa Osborne, a Simsbury Democrat, voted for the bill Monday with many of her fellow Democrats.

“I share the concerns about the potential municipal cost and the fact that American drones just aren’t there yet,” Osborne told her colleagues. “That’s because we haven’t invested in them. For me, the overarching concern is that a potential bad actor in the international sphere seems to think that it’s important that they have the right to obtain the data from these drones. I may not be able to understand why that’s important, but if they think it’s important and they want it, I pretty much don’t want them to have it. I came down on the side of protecting our international and domestic security.”

A crucial point in the bill is that cities and towns could obtain a waiver that would allow the governor’s budget office, known as the state Office of Policy and Management, to drop the funding and purchase provisions under certain circumstances. The local police or fire chief would need to explain why the municipality needed to keep using the drone that had been banned.

Betsy Gara, executive director of the Council of Small Towns, which represents towns with fewer than 35,000 residents, said the bill represents a compromise.

“Clearly, protecting critical infrastructure from cyber threats is vital to the public health and safety of our communities,” Gara said. “At the same time, first responders have relied on drones as an effective tool in performing search and rescue operations, responding to fires, accidents, and other incidents. Many towns have invested thousands of dollars to purchase drones that have helped save lives.”

Gara added, “As amended, the bill strikes a good balance by phasing out the use of certain drones while providing a waiver process so that municipalities may continue to use drones under certain circumstances.”

The drone provision is part of a broader bill on consumer protections that is known as Senate Bill 3.

GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE

Previously, lawmakers debated the same bill in the general law committee, where Kissel and Osborne are both members.

State Rep. Rutigliano, a Trumbull Republican, said he was concerned about firefighters and police who are already using drones that were made in China.

“Nobody wants us to use Chinese-made drones,” Rutigliano said. “Hopefully, American technology will catch up. ... We don’t really make these in the United States yet.”

Democrats say that the data collected by first responders goes back to the Chinese company that made the drone.

Sen. Cathy Osten, a Sprague Democrat, told the general law committee that she was an interpreter in Chinese Mandarin when she served in the military. She noted that the bill does not take effect immediately because the new provisions could not be imposed overnight.

“I would love to see us never purchase anything else made in China,” Osten said. “Quite frankly, we should not be purchasing anything from the Chinese government. ... We have to address that our fire departments and police departments bought technology that we encouraged them to buy for public safety reasons. We can’t tell them tomorrow that they can’t use them anymore.”

VOLUNTEER/COMBINATION DEPARTMENTS

****How To Build A Combination Fire Department**

Chief Marc Bashoor

A lot has been espoused about the volunteer fire service, and more specifically, the decline in volunteerism we’ve seen in the past several years.

What began in many places as a self-sustaining insurance-subscription fire protection service has evolved into so much more today. The American fire service now protects nearly 350 million residents spread across 50 states and five territories (there are an additional nine territories with no population recorded).

What has also changed is the culture of volunteerism in general, which brings us to the topic at hand: building a combination fire department. While there are many trying to solve the problems of recruitment and retention, here I hope to offer some solutions to continue providing service when “going combination” is the decision.

PAYING FOR IT

Volunteer doesn’t mean *free*. As needs increased, the subscription fire service turned to fundraisers and has evolved to today’s environment of multi-million-dollar grants to build NFPA-compliant stations and purchase NFPA-compliant apparatus. But spaghetti nights, bingos and car washes will only take you so far. So, what will be your funding mechanism to pay salary and benefits for firefighters? It doesn’t seem too tough when you’re only paying for one, but the load grows exponentially as you add each firefighter and cover the many associated needs.

Whether it’s county, district, parish or any other municipal form of government, the fire chief will likely find him or herself working with one or more municipal leadership groups to determine an appropriate funding mechanism to pay for people – and stuff. I recently spoke to a volunteer chief in Pennsylvania who has to negotiate with more than 20 municipal entities to determine how they’ll fund their operations. They pay a few full-time firefighters, but despite the politics associated with more than 20 municipal governments, the fire department continues to carry the volunteer elected chief model. It is well past time for that department to make the switch to a combination organization.

Whatever your income – fundraisers, fees, taxes, assessments, subscriptions – the method likely will require some approval through the municipal (and maybe state) process. This is a long-haul discussion and not a process to take lightly, nor to try to do on your own. There’s plenty of help out there.

THE ANATOMY OF A COMBINATION DEPARTMENT

There is no cookie-cutter combination department. For a singular department with one or two stations, the evolution from all-volunteer to combination is usually a slow process, likely first hiring a day-time driver for at least one station. What drives the need to hire? The catalyst is often increasing failures to respond or some catastrophic incident. Maybe it was a citizen complaint or political pressure, or maybe it was a progressive volunteer chief who saw the need for help. Sometimes the department will later hire an additional firefighter for specific hours or use some creative means through grant opportunities to provide stipends or paid-per-call opportunities.

I have observed that many long-time volunteers feel threatened by the mere notion of paying firefighters, and in some cases will even resign as a result. To alleviate that threat, many volunteer departments soften the blow by calling

paid staff something else. I recently spoke to a New York State volunteer chief who told me that paid staff in the VFDs are not always identified by traditional service ranks – paid officers called “foreman” and paid firefighters called “engineers” or “maintenance” and similar terms. I understand the concept, baby steps maybe; however, I don’t think renaming firefighters, paid or volunteer, is a productive improvement for the community.

The number one challenge of any leader charged with the responsibility to “combine” a department is making sure the best possible service is being provided to the community. Within that challenge are many micro-challenges, including the need to “stop the bleed” of members leaving because they feel threatened. There are myriad incentives and some basic education that can help. As important as it is for people to acknowledge and accept help, volunteers want to continue to feel welcomed and needed. Fostering that atmosphere can sometimes be a challenge when paid firefighters are brought in, leaving the perception that some power has been taken away from the volunteers. The outlook *must* be about service to the community, not the power level of any group.

I’ve never seen a successful combination system succeed with an all-or-nothing approach. While it must be about service, there is a shared empowerment to accomplish goals. The department still needs volunteers, and the volunteers need help getting the apparatus out the door – both “sides” need each other.

FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE

I’ve worked in three different states in systems that were, at least at one time, all-volunteer:

Mineral County, West Virginia: This is the one that remains all-volunteer today, providing service out of 10 stations.

Prince George’s County, Maryland: PGFD entered the combination environment under a County Charter in 1970 and remains an evolving combination department today.

What was originally 40-plus independent volunteer 501(c)(3)s before charter, remained independent *administratively* after charter. After charter, the 501(c)(3) fire department operations were wrapped under the county fire chief. Sounds simple, right? Of course not! PGFD, one of the largest combination fire/EMS systems in the United States, is the quintessential combination department experiment, now 54 years in the making.

Highlands County, Florida: The area’s 10 volunteer chiefs got together and petitioned the county commissioners for help as volunteerism declined. This ultimately resulted in a professional study that provided options as well as a report that provided a blueprint to implement the study.

I had the unique opportunity to start this process after the elected officials had decided to move forward with hiring paid firefighters. With the elected official mandate at hand, we needed to get the community to approve a level of funding to pay for the plan, which included these core recommendations:

- Establish a county fire chief
- Hire paid firefighters
- Work to bring apparatus into NFPA compliance
- Work to bring facilities up to 24-hour occupation status and into NFPA compliance
- Combine fire and EMS (which was all county-employee-paid)

While the county had a previously established a working group as the study was being conducted, this group was terminated as a fire department working group was stood up. This group, which would be the avenue to implement the approved changes, included this lineup:

- Each volunteer chief
- An EMS representative
- The new county public safety director/fire chief

Delivering regular updates to the County Administration and elected officials was crucial to ensuring transparency and accountability to the plan (and the people). Unfortunately, the product of any municipal relationship, especially one where the “boss” is hired from the outside, will face certain hurdles. For example, it was my experience that certain connected volunteers and paid EMS folks were keeping their own connections to the elected officials alive and well. Balancing this dynamic is never easy for a leader, especially when you’re trying to establish a new organization while helping 13 others to stay afloat.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EXPERIENCE

The best advice I can give someone in these shoes is to understand several basic principles:

- **Operate from a plan, not an idea.**

- **Understand that you will never make everyone happy.** You're likely shifting some power and making progress, while "fighting the fights" and ensuring that service delivery is improving.
- **Do what's right for the community,** for your people and for the organization – JDTRT.
- **Resist the urge to be the bull in the china shop.** You may need to be a bull, just keep it in the arena.
- **Focus on individual steps you can succeed at daily.**
- **Establish a regular rotation of internal and external constituent monthly meetings – and stick to them.**

As you look to build this new combination department, make sure you provide any and all support possible to those volunteer stations that continue to sustain themselves. While they may be benefiting from the new county income, that doesn't mean that paid staffing has to be thrown in the station just because. Use a strategic approach to staffing that focuses more on safety than just getting fire trucks out the door.

Pick locations that have higher call volumes and may have lower volunteer participation. Make sure there is sufficient PPE and radios to equip any newly hired firefighters, while still maintaining capacity for volunteers. Make sure the facility can sustain 24-hour living. Let's face it, it's a home as much as it's a firehouse! Be prepared in advance to support not only your volunteers but the staffing you hire as well.

As you hire, if the IAFF is involved, you'll have additional dynamics to manage – all opportunities to succeed, if you let them succeed. Much like parenting a family, a chief with volunteer and union members working side by side will have family feuds to deal with – that's part of human nature within us all.

FINAL THOUGHTS

You have a mission and a plan. ***Moving from an all-volunteer system to a combination department is not a process for faint-of-heart, uneducated or inexperienced leaders.***

My last bits of advice, if you really want to succeed:

- Less talking and more listening
- Respect your people and your community
- Move forward with the plan – take positive and informed action

Remember, the train cars will not combine and move forward on their own, whether your stoker (firefighter) is paid or volunteer, someone has to shovel the coal!

TRAINING FOR YOUR MEMBERS AND OFFICERS: PLEASE PASS IT ON!!

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL – TRAINING TIMES – COURSES/WEBINARS/EVENTS

LINK TO THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM: https://virtualclassroom.nvfc.org/featured_courses



Presents: Managing Combination Departments Webinar

May 29, 2024 02:00 PM

JOIN THE WEBINAR AT THIS LINK:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_QIW4aPGCRRIhPmUtRR2Lfg#/registration



Advancements in Utility-Scale Battery Energy Storage Safety Features, Standards, and Practices

June 5th, 2024 at 2:00PM

JOIN THE WEBINAR AT THIS LINK:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mp0FqjoSSpaROU1KL7iyXA#/registration



Volunteer Recruitment for the Emergency Services

Many fire and EMS departments across the nation are struggling to find new members. This course, led by instructors Matthew Aalto and Jeff Cash, discusses the challenges of recruiting volunteers, presents valuable

research collected as part of the NVFC's Make Me A Firefighter campaign, and offers ideas to help overcome recruiting challenges. **Take it free *for a limited time in the NVFC Virtual Classroom.***

FOLLOW THIS LINK: <https://virtualclassroom.nvfc.org/products/volunteer-recruitment-for-the-emergency-services>



OSHA 1910.156 Update – Taking Action ESIP WEBINAR SERIES

In this webinar, we will dive deeper into the proposed OSHA standard 1910.156 to help you understand what changes your organization will see and help you build a plan. We will discuss how to formulate and file public comments to have your voices heard. This webinar will build off of the past OSHA webinars but can be viewed as a stand-alone high-level overview.

DATE: WEDNESDAY 5/8/2024 TIME: 7:00 PM EST

REGISTER AT THIS LINK:

<https://mcneilandcompany.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=03596f243a9d922954ebaf15e&id=b078522bea&e=781e9a2c81>

Plus:-----

2024 EVOC Train the Trainer Courses
Now Scheduled!

This course is intended to prepare a qualified instructor to provide high quality training to their agency membership in the safe operation of vehicles in response and non-response modes. We discuss the operation of emergency vehicles, personal vehicles and special vehicles when operating on behalf of their agency.

2024 Dates:
These times are all Eastern Standard Time

January 8th: 3:00pm <i>FIRE</i> 7:00pm <i>EMS</i>	Topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risk Management• Intersection Safety• Response Driving• Defensive Driving• Discussion regarding the hazards and challenges of vehicle operations. <p>We also prepare the instructor candidate in teaching how to perform a complete maintenance inspection and having students perform safe driving skills practice.</p>
April 8th: 3:00pm <i>EMS</i> 7:00pm <i>FIRE</i>	
July 15th: 3:00pm <i>FIRE</i> 7:00pm <i>EMS</i>	
October 7th: 3:00pm <i>EMS</i> 7:00pm <i>FIRE</i>	

Pricing:
ESIP Insureds: Free
Non- ESIP Insured: \$200 per student

Register Here!

For questions about this course or other Risk Management offerings:
Call: 1 800 822 3747 ext. 176
Email: RiskManagement@mcneilandcompany.com

SCAN ME

2024 SEMINAR SERIES
"Searching – The Offensive and Defensive"

With Lieutenant Mike Scotto, Fire Department City of New York

Searching tactics are primarily thought of as an offensive action – moving in, checking behind doors, in closets, and numerous other areas. As we search, our concerns are focused on the search. Defensive tactics involve our escape plans, which are needed as we complete our search, but more importantly under extreme or emergency conditions. To make these tactics work, we must always have our strategy front and center. Both sides of the coin are in play all the time. In this three-hour program, students will examine strategy and tactics to gain a more concise understanding of the training necessary for search.

REGISTRATION FEES:

\$35 – NYSAFC members • **\$50** – non-members (per person)

Pre-registration is encouraged. New – online group registration is available for fire departments!

REGISTER HERE:

https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001QZWPfjYZRP6tAYnVrgg36Z_YE6vp89dymWfQQD1d7q4ZRwVDbNdE8ByVmF5_856f_UrB-yGihYJigwEPzCbQfCvEoeEALHRXrk_M-dbDWBYRtKiko1vLice_oi1AFseMKfN01xTmCmiyzyMwYur-39p1T1V2_yCHo2C2F1_fJn94LviwwZ3Aag==&c=AmhECO6uFruSlwrKRKspNlivj3NWEIzhZOrf3KrfnUls83Dp1Q1JdQ==&ch=AqMwftSnQqSSjoeldoQJ-cfc_GyhBFLqV23YaEp7HU-kr9WoEr9kSg==

7:00pm STARTING TIME

- Fulton (Tuesday, September 10)**
- Otsego (Wednesday, September 25)**
- Rensselaer (Tuesday, October 29)**



NYSAFC Hands on Series

FIRE BEHAVIOR ON THE INSIDE

- **Schenectady County – October 19-20**, East Glenville Fire District #3 REGISTRATION:
<https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/firebehavior>

FLASHOVER

- **Saratoga County – September 14-15**, Jonesville Fire District, REGISTRATION:
<https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/flashover>



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>

FF HEALTH AND SAFETY – TAKING CARE OF OUR MEMBERS!

IN 2024 WE HAVE EXPERIENCED 24 UNFORTUNATE FIRE FIGHTER LODD'S

According to FirefighterCloseCalls.com & U.S. Fire Administration

In 2023 we experienced 82 LODDs reported nationally.!

YOU NEVER KNOW!

- Hillcrest North Carolina, Fire Chief Michael Scott was assisting with vehicle washing and maintenance when he fell from the fire apparatus and suffered a head injury. He has since been seen by medical staff, and is being transferred out to a specialty facility.
- Firefighter James C. Ward collapsed April 20th while working with a crew to extinguish a wildland fire that broke out in Scott County according to the Virginia Department of Forestry.
- 59-year-old Montana Firefighter John Raisler suffered a heart attack while preparing for a wildfire pack test.
- 40-year-old Chief Zeb Smith died at a house fire in Fritch Texas. He and his firefighters had been battling wildfires the previous week which destroyed 500 structures.
- A Bluewell West Virginia volunteer FF was injured at an intersection crash which sent the fire department vehicle into a nearby building. The crash did not result in any life-threatening injuries.

- Milledgeville Tennessee Fire Chief Leland Alexander died from injuries he received in a 2023 fire apparatus crash. Alexander was driving a pumper/tanker on Dec. 1 to a fire hydrant during a thunderstorm to refill water for a fire that had erupted the previous night, the apparatus went off the road and he was transported to the hospital. Although he initially returned home, complications led to his readmission, revealing an infection and internal bleeding. Alexander succumbed to his injuries on April 27, 2024

NIOSH Issues Guidance After Training Death of CA FF

A Santa Cruz County firefighter recruit died last year while participating in a training exercise.

Despite resuscitative efforts by staff at the Ben Lomond Training Center, Recruit Firefighter Daniel Lamothe, 38, died. On Feb. 19, Lamonthe was in his seventh week of a 19-week academy engaged in firefighter safety and survival training when he collapsed, according to a NIOSH report released Friday.

"The Recruit told the instructors he was "freaking" because he was having difficulty finding the way out. The instructors reassured him he was ok and told him to relax and breathe as they helped him find the opening to the bottom level and exit. With the assistance of the instructors, the Recruit was in a sitting position with his legs in the opening to the first level, he lowered his SCBA in front of him and proceeded through the opening towards the maze exit. However, as he transitioned through the opening, he became unresponsive and slumped to the ground on the first level," investigators wrote.

NIOSH investigators made several recommendations to reduce the risk of sudden death among firefighters training at this, and other fire departments across the country.

- Key Recommendation #1: Implement a systematic risk assessment for training programs in accordance with NFPA standards.
- Key Recommendation #2: Implement procedures for safe exit in accordance with NFPA 1500 Standards as the 3rd story maze's sole access by exterior ladder did not allow for rapid evacuation in a medical emergency situation.
- Key Recommendation #3: Consider implementing physiological monitoring system to protect firefighter health.
- Key Recommendation #4: Fire training facilities shall appoint a safety officer to review the planned exercises and actively observe all training activities in accordance with NFPA Standards.

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



Fire Departments and Safety Advocates Encouraged to Participate in Home Sprinkler Week Digital Campaign

In every community, home fires are a severe threat to residents as well as responding firefighters. **Homes account for 78 percent of all civilian fire deaths. Today, this problem is intensified by the fact that homes with modern furnishings, open spaces, unprotected lightweight wood construction and emerging technology such as lithium-ion batteries, make home fires deadly in two minutes or less.** To confront this stubborn public safety burden, fire departments and safety advocates across North America will team up **May 12-18** for Home Fire Sprinkler Week. Together, they will amplify the message that fire sprinklers stop a fire from becoming deadly, protecting residents and firefighters.

The [Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition \(HFSC\) digital campaign](#) focuses on the home fire problem and the need for better understanding of the life safety benefits of installed home fire sprinklers. Every day there is a different theme and content for social media and websites that focus on key facts about home fire sprinklers. The messages are sized for various social media, so it is easy to share with little time and effort. Everyone is encouraged to visit the website every day during the week and share messages.

“Educating and increasing awareness about home fire sprinklers can be a challenge,” said Lorraine Carli, NFPA vice president of Outreach and Advocacy and president of the HFSC. “What thwarts progress is lacking public awareness, rampant myths and the influence of special interests. More than one million homes are built each year, and less than 10% are protected with fire sprinklers. Homes without fire sprinklers counters the goals of community risk reduction. During Home Fire Sprinkler Week, we work together to increase awareness,” Carli said.

Participants in Home Fire Sprinkler Week can take advantage of the free resources of the new [HFSC Studio](#) to create a wide range of educational materials for their fire sprinkler community outreach initiatives.

With this new, easy-to-use online tool, fire departments can design their own flyers, posters, and social media cards; share messages through their social media platforms; and print customized materials to distribute at community events, such as home shows and open houses, and during Fire Sprinkler Week and Fire Prevention Week.

Fire safety advocates know, and every year national fire data reinforces, installed fire sprinklers reduce home fire injuries, deaths and property loss. “That’s why all national building codes require sprinklers in new construction,” Carli says. “As a result, every new home built without fire sprinklers is by definition substandard. Today’s homebuyers are savvy about safety and when they learn about fire sprinklers, they want them. The virtual reality, digital and other Home Fire Sprinkler Week resources underscore not just that we can do better; they underscore exactly how to do better.”

UNATTENDED COOKING LEADS TO UNINTENDED FIRES

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: Our fire problem would not be 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	22
Last fire death 4/15/24 Madison, Madison Co. 65yo Male	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	47
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	519
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA/42
	#2 TX/31
	#3 NC/30
There has been a total of 0871 civilian home fire fatalities in 2024	
There were a total of 2127 residential fire fatalities reported in 2023 in the US media.	
Both the states of Maryland and California require sprinklers in residential dwellings	

LIVING WITH THE NEW GREEN TECHNOLOGY

Conn. Firefighters Quickly Extinguish Solar Panel Fire

Josh LaBella, New Haven Register

Fire crews put out a blaze on the roof of a home on Easy Street recently. In a post on Facebook, the Milford Fire Department said firefighters were sent to Easy Street at 12:28 p.m., where arriving companies found solar panels on the front side of a single-family house were on fire. "Companies quickly disconnected all electrical services to the panels," the department said. "Knowing there could still be power to the panels, crews exercised extreme caution in extinguishing the fire." Officials said the house and attic were checked for extension, but crews stopped the fire before it could spread into the house. They said no injuries were reported.

HAPPENING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Gansevoort Fire Company Breakfast

Sunday May 19th and Sunday June 16th Father's Day from 8am to 11am

LAUGH OUT LOUD

My new car has a button for everything. There is even one that says "rear wiper", I'm still too afraid to try it though!!

&

Learn from your parent's mistakes, use birth control.

CAFDA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

2024 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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The Capital Area Association represents any fire district that wishes to join CAFDA. Fire District Officials include Commissioners, Treasurers, and Deputy Treasurers. Secretaries and Chiefs are also invited to participate!

Please advise your secretaries that all correspondence should be mailed to:

CAFDA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063

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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.CAFDA.net

[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.CAFDA.NET

We invite our business partners to submit educational information to be included in this Bulletin for district commissioners and chief officers

If you have information on new products you wish to showcase or is educational and informative for fire districts, please submit it and we will use it in this Bulletin under the appropriate heading.

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Specializing in Fire Service Financing

The Capital Bulletin is reaching well over 500+ 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 AN INDIVIDUAL 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 CAFDA.NET website. Individual membership fee will be \$50 annually, fire district association fees will be \$300 annually. Download THE APPLICATION available on the home page at CAFDA.NET

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION (CAFDA)

Would you like to join Capital Area Fire Districts Association along with 76 members in 10 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 or Other County or Regional Associations \$300 annually.

Business Partners: \$100.00 annual member fee

If You, Your Fire District or Department is not a Member of CAFDA You Can be?

Individuals can be members of CAFDA. The annual membership fee is \$50, which will provide you access to this Bulletin, attendance at meetings and social gatherings. Provides networking with other fire district officials and a source of the constant barrage of information related to today's fire service.

FOR A MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR A BUSINESS PARTNER APPLICATION GO TO THE FOLLOWING LINK:

<https://cafda.net/membership-info/>

THE CAFDA CALENDAR

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 (As of 1/3/2024 - Subject to Change)				
Day/Date	Time	Type	Location	Notes
2024				
Thursday, April 25 - Saturday April 27, 2024	Per Schedule	CAFDA Conference	Fort William Henry Conference Center	Lake George
Thursday, May 9, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Thursday, June 13, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Thursday, July 11, 2024	7:00 PM	Board of Directors Meeting	Clifton Park	
Friday, August 9, 2024	1:00 PM	Membership Activity	Saratoga Race Course	NYRA Day at the Races!
AUGUST	NO MEETING			
Thursday, September 12, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Thursday, October 10, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officers/Director Nominations
Saturday, November 2, 2024	8:00 AM	Fall Workshop	Verdoy	
Thursday, November 14, 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

OSHA INFORMATION SUPPLEMENT

NEWEST INFORMATION ALWAYS AT THE TOP

Important update from Dave Denniston...Please Read...Please Act!!

Extremely important status update. May 1, 2024: My friends through the hard work and dedication of several individuals and our friends in Congress, I am happy to report that we have put an initial knock on this fire and we ARE being heard. Having said that, ***we have a long hard fight ahead.***

OSHA has now agreed to extend the comment period. Only 45 days, but it is a start. They have also agreed to in-person hearings. Virtual format, but it is a start. There will also be an additional written comment period after the hearings. It's a start.

We have our seat at the table! We can now roll up our sleeves and eat this beast one bite at a time, or we can dribble gravy down the front of our shirts and look like idiots hoping someone else will do it for us, the choice is yours.

This fire will quickly rekindle if we fail to do some immediate salvage and overhaul.

1) We need to flood the portal! You need to read the rule and make meaningful comments. What is doable, what needs to be tweaked? You NEED to tell YOUR story. What will the cost be? What is not possible? Where are the pain points? What can and can't you do? June 21st is not far away. WE NEED YOUR HELP NOW!

2) We need to take a serious look at how we do business. We are doing stupid and dangerous things. The days of the "wild west" fire department are behind us. The days of misplaced pride, tradition, and sacred cows are over. Period. What can each of us do today to reduce injuries and deaths? Here is a novel idea, stop at negative right of way intersections. Stop driving these million-dollar rigs like they are stock cars. They are not! Grow the hell up and understand that. Sorry, I'll get off the soap box, but much more on that later.

3) *One message was clear from Congress and our state officials over the last 90 days. We heard over and over how we need to look at our structure. We need to offer alternatives and suggestions. We are not delivering fire service in a completely effective manner. I am not talking about closing firehouses and hiring all paid people. However, we do need to look at cases where we have 10 separate entities in one small town. Folks this is not effective, efficient, or sustainable. It's time to wake up and smell the coffee.*

4) We need to have uncomfortable conversations. We need to think outside of the way we have always done it. We need to, oh my god he is going to say it, "CHANGE".

Here we are kids. We raised our voices, and we were heard! This thing, however, is not going away. Be part of the solution. Roll up your sleeves and climb on board. Those just sitting in the corner throwing grenades are NOT the answer. We have gotten to this point, we are being heard, but we have so much work to do in a short period of time. We have never turned our backs and walked away from a fire, don't walk away from this.

I hope you will join me in taking the next steps. If you're not willing to help, do us all a favor. Pop open a beer and go join your local cornhole league. Have fun and enjoy life.

If you truly call yourself a firefighter, let's get in there and tackle this beast together. We have way too much invested to not finish this project!

Are you in? I am 110% invested. Are you willing to help? Please share with others.

More States Coming On Board!

Its important to note that we are finally seeing some breakthrough with other states being aware of the proposed changes to the Standard and moving toward comment; including South Carolina, Maine, Illinois, Michigan, and Texas.

The following is an excellent read and something to ponder:

POSITION PAPER AND FORMAL RESPONSE TO OSHA FROM THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE FIREFIGHTER'S ASSOCIATION: CLICK THE LINK HERE:

<https://cafda.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Final-Draft-SC-FF-Assoc-OSHA-Response-Letter.docx>



OSHA NEEDS TO HEAR FROM YOU REGARDING THEIR PROPOSED EMERGENCY RESPONSE STANDARD

On February 5, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to modernize the agency’s “Fire Brigades” standard with a proposed new “Emergency Response Standard.” This NPRM’s publication triggered the beginning of a public comment period that is scheduled to conclude June 21, 2024.

Anyone, organization or individual, is encouraged to [submit comments](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/02/05/2023-28203/emergency-response-standard) (https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/02/05/2023-28203/emergency-response-standard) to OSHA during this this public comment period (ignore the May 6 deadline as it has been extended to June 21). Reading through the NPRM, it is clear OSHA does not have an accurate understanding of the nation’s volunteer fire service and there are several new requirements that would be very burdensome, and in many cases impossible, for volunteer fire departments to comply with in this proposed standard. Nothing in this proposed standard is final at this stage, and now is your opportunity to explain to OSHA what you believe should be changed in the proposed standard and why.

As of April 22, there have been 692 comments submitted to OSHA regarding the proposed Emergency Response Standard; however, many of these comments are ineffective and will likely not do anything to encourage OSHA to change this proposed standard. The reason for this is many of the submitted comments are form letters or simply state that the proposed standard is too burdensome with no information or context explaining why.

To be effective, your comments need to explain to OSHA exactly what provisions in the proposed standard are too burdensome and why. Your comments should also describe your department to OSHA: How many people are in your department? What’s your budget? What’s the area you serve like? Do you have the funds to comply with this proposed standard? Do you have the staffing to comply with this proposed standard? How would your area be negatively impacted if your department had to shut down due to this standard? Does your department rely on fundraising for much of your income? If so, how many pancake breakfasts, raffles, or spaghetti dinners would you need to hold to comply with this proposed standard? Would your municipality be able to assist you in covering the costs of this proposed standard? If not, why? What alternatives to this proposed standard should OSHA consider to improve the safety of volunteer departments? Is your department a nonprofit department?

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) understands that this NPRM is long and very time consuming to understand, that is why we have assembled a [comment guide](https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/NVFC-Comment-Guide-OSHA-Standard.pdf) (chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/NVFC-Comment-Guide-OSHA-Standard.pdf) and accompanying [outline](https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/OSHA-Emergency-Response-Outline.pdf) (chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/OSHA-Emergency-Response-Outline.pdf) to provide you with guidance on how to draft effective comments. The comment guide also contains links to other helpful resources like a [Roundtable Talk](#) the NVFC did regarding the proposed Emergency Response Standard.

Additionally, the NVFC is in the process of drafting our own comments on OSHA’s proposed Emergency Response Standard. Please fill out [this survey](#) so we can submit the most informed comments possible to OSHA.

[Template to present to your County Board of Supervisors: A Resolution Advocating Against OSHA Reforms for NYS Firefighters](#)

Make the corrections and replacement where you see the blue text.

<https://cafda.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Draft-OSHA-Reform-County-Resolution-20240417.doc>

[Federal Legislation Introduced Mandating a Phased In Approach](#)

A BILL

To amend the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 to clarify the clarify the process that the Secretary shall use in promulgating and implementing regulations containing more than five individual directives and govern fire or emergency services.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Emergency Response Standard Implementation Reform Act of 2024.”

SEC. 2. PHASED IN IMPLEMENTATION OF STANDARDS WITH FIVE OR MORE DIRECTIVES GOVERNING FIRE OR EMERGENCY SERVICES.

Section 655(b) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. § 655) is amended –

(1) By designating paragraph (5) as subparagraph (5)(A);

(2) By inserting, in paragraph (5), after subparagraph (A), as so designated, the following:

“(B) In promulgating any standards amending five or more sections of a regulation governing fire or emergency services, the Secretary shall utilize a phased-in implementation of such standards, based on prioritization schedule of such sections issued by the Secretary, under which the effective date of each successive section of a regulation shall not take effect until at least 180 days after the effective date that such previous standard took effect. Further, and in furtherance of the above, the Secretary shall conduct an assessment of the systems and resources in place at federal, state and local government levels, including funding programs, to determine the level of preparedness of subject agencies to comply with any such promulgations, and shall base the prioritization schedule provided for herein upon the finding of such assessment.”

Hopefully this will be passed quickly by the House and the Senate, but the speed of legislation in Washington lately will make a snail blush!



ESIP Emergency Services Insurance Program

We have received several requests for a 30,000-foot view of what would be required for an AHJ to comply with the proposed 1910.156 standard. We've put together a FAQs & Fact Sheet that helps break down all of the information into bite-sized chunks. While this list is not comprehensive, it is our best understanding of what would be required under the standard if adopted, as written, today.

DOWNLOAD HERE: https://www.afdsny.org/docs/OSHA_1910.156_Fact_Sheet.pdf

FASNY Urges Members to Take Action!

April, 2024

Dear FASNY Member,

I wanted to provide you with an update regarding the proposed rulemaking by the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) impacting the fire service. While a primary concern of the fire service is always firefighter health and safety, many aspects of this proposed rule would put additional stress on both volunteer and career departments to comply. Worse, in some case it would be impossible to achieve compliance.

FASNY has been very active in responding to this rulemaking. In addition to working with other fire service associations, we have filed preliminary comments with OSHA. We have also reached out to our Federal representatives and are scheduled to meet with several of them at the end of the month. Due to our efforts with other organizations, OSHA has granted an extension to the comment period until June 21. **It is imperative** that your department review the proposed rule and file a comment as to how it would affect them. Comments can be filed at:

<https://www.regulations.gov/docket/OSHA-2007-0073/document>

Our goal is to make this rulemaking effective but achievable. If departments cannot meet this new standard then it is just words on paper. If this is the case, it could wind up reducing firefighter health and safety and cause many current members of the fire service to leave.

We will continue our efforts, but we need your help. The only way the rule that is finally adopted will benefit the fire service is if we all provide input now.

Fraternally,

Edward Tase Jr.

President

LINK TO FILE COMMENT HERE: <https://firefightersassociationofthestateofnewyork.cmail19.com/t/y-l-xutuhiy-ikjuyhjliy-j/>

--The heart of the proposed regulation is here: [Section 1910.156, Emergency Response \(osha.gov\)](https://www.osha-slc.gov/1910.156-emergency-response)

SIGN THE PETITION, GET YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO SIGN THE PETITION

The purpose of the petition is to gain a seat at the table for a negotiated Standard, please sign the petition, get each of your Board members to sign and each of your members and your member's family members, the goal is more than 10,000 signatures.



<https://www.change.org/p/call-to-action-osh-1910-156> :LINK TO THE PETITION AT CHANGE.ORG:

[NOTICE: Once you sign the petition the Change.org site directs you to their website asking for donations, the donations do not benefit this petition, it benefits the Change.org platform and you could be fooled into donating each month read carefully!!!]

Meeting with NYS-DOL/PESH

Dave Denniston Writes: We had a great meeting with PESH at the end of last week. They are willing to work with us, but admit that their hands are tied some. The NY PESH Officials have stated we have to get in front of OSHA and get a seat at the table. They could not stress enough that the head of OSHA needs to know our names and concerns. I have also been contacted by one of our congressional friends that said they are behind us, but we have to get in front of OSHA and a seat at the table. They fear legal options are our only other remedy. NVFC is looking at that angle now.

I have attached my comment to OSHA that will be submitted today. **Along with this one we are going to have an online petition with a goal of 50K signatures.** More details to follow. **SEE DAVE'S LETTER AT THIS LINK** :[<https://cafda.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/OSHA-1910.156-REQUEST-FOR-ACTION-1.docx>]

Lee and I will be doing a more detailed bulleted dive of the specifics of 29CFR 1910.156 on Thursday night at 7 PM. The good news, as of this morning Zoom has us up to 1000 log in capacity. Over half of that is registered now, but let's fill it up. Most webinars have a about 60% hit ratio. These OHSA ones have been exceeding that hit ratio which is awesome. Please share the registration link with your email lists and organizations. There is also a link for one more geared to Ohio in a couple weeks.

This is being run as a ESIP webinar on **Thursday 4/4 at 7pm**. Here is the registration link, **PLEASE SHARE:**

https://archcapgroup.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9GtqnblySa-WTKil-F5Sqw

Tom Miller and I are doing a similar webinar on **Wednesday Dec. 10th for the Ohio State Firefighters**. All are welcome to that one if the date is better. That one is a little more geared to a state where the volunteers are not "employees" but the main message is the same.

Register for OHIO Webinar Here: https://archcapgroup.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ae-TdGcUR3SDQJzuEaG_aQ

We cannot stress enough, our message is not that we oppose changes, and that in fact the fire service needs to embrace this and make serious changes in how we do business for firefighter safety. This has been our message since day 1, and some continue to ignore it. We need change and we need to do better for our people. What we do want is a seat at the table and some simple tweaks in the logistics of how this should be delivered, so it is in fact usable and will save lives and reduce injuries. WE CAN DO BETTER! There are still folks out there claiming we are trying to kill this thing. That could not be further from the truth, and we need to make sure that message is heard loud and clear.

OSHA IS EXTENDING THE PERIOD FOR SUBMITTING COMMENTS BY 45 DAYS (Until June 21st) TO ALLOW STAKEHOLDERS INTERESTED IN THE NPRM ON EMERGENCY RESPONSE ADDITIONAL TIME TO REVIEW THE NPRM AND COLLECT INFORMATION AND DATA NECESSARY FOR COMMENT.

WRITTEN COMMENTS: You may submit comments and attachments, identified by Docket No. OSHA–2007–0073, electronically at www.regulations.gov, which is the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Follow the online instructions for making electronic submissions. The Federal e-Rulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov is the only way to submit comments on this NPRM. Instructions: All submissions must include the agency's name and the docket number for

Some Facts About the NFPA Standards Adopted as Part of The OSHA Emergency Response Standard

7 Page analysis of the NFPA Standards Included in the Proposed Emergency Response Standard

- [NFPA 1910/2024 \(263 page document\)](#)

Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Refurbishment, Testing and Retirement of In-Service Emergency Vehicles and Marine Firefighting Vessels.

- This standard defines the minimum requirements for establishing inspection, maintenance, refurbishment, retirement and testing program for in-service emergency vehicles and marine firefighting vessels.
- This standard shall provide minimum requirements for marine firefighting vessels.
- This standard also identifies the minimum job performance requirements (JPRs) for emergency vehicle technicians.
- The purpose of this standard is to specify the minimum requirements for the construction of new marine firefighting vessels or for the conversions of existing vessels to become marine firefighting vessels and...
- To specify the minimum JPRs for service as an emergency vehicle technician.
- 106 additional reference standards
- This standard establishes a check list of items to be checked and maintained by the personnel placed in charge of said equipment.

- [NFPA1001 \(35 page document\)](#)

Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications

This standard identified the minimum job performance requirements for FF 1 & FF 2 professional qualifications. [references 9 additional standards]

List of skills needed in Chapter 4 also refer to Table C.1 *Overview of JPRs for Fire Fighters*.

- AHJ shall have written policies and procedures in compliance with the standard and distributed to all, with instructions on execution.
- *Prior to entering training to meet the requirements of Chapters 4 & 5 of this standard the candidate shall meet the following requirements:*
- *Minimum educational requirements established by the AHJ*
- *Age requirements established by the AHJ*
- *Medical requirements of NFPA 1582 (106 page document) (this standard clearly references a career FF setting, job duties and performance)*

- [NFPA1407 \(23 page document\)](#)

Standard for Training Fire Service Rapid Intervention Crews

This standard specifies the basic training procedures for fire service personnel to conduct firefighter rapid intervention operations as specified in 1710 and 1720. [references at least 7 additional NFPA standards, in part.]

- Program shall be developed for all suppression personnel
- Written policies which shall address entry level requirements for crew members, training objectives, basic skills, equipment and training evolutions contained in the standard.
- Comprehensive training program
- Requirements for instructors
- Training shall be documented
- All RIC leaders shall be minimal Fire Officer 1
- AHJ shall have written policies and procedures in compliance with the standard and distributed to all, with instructions on execution.

- [NFPA 1002 \(30 page document\)](#)

Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications

- Outlines requisite skills and knowledge
- References in part 16 other NFPA standards.
- AHJ shall have written policies and procedures in compliance with the standard and distributed to all, with instructions on execution.
- **While not specifically stated, is it the intent that this standard applies to volunteer fire Drivers, it is not stated in the Scope nor in the Explanatory Material.**

- [NFPA 1021 \(41 page document\)](#)

Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications

- References 10 other NFPA Standards in part.
- 17 Pages of requirements
- Requisite skills and knowledge for Fire Officer 1 through Fire Officer 4
- **While not specifically stated, is it the intent that this standard applies to volunteer fire Officers, it is not stated in the Scope nor in the Explanatory Material.**

- [NFPA 1140 \(124 page document\)](#)

Standard for Wildland Fire Protection

Purpose is to specify the minimum requirements for fire protection and emergency services infrastructure in wildland, rural and suburban areas; wildland fire management practices and policies; methods of assessing wildland fire ignition hazards and job performance requirements for wildland fire positions.

- 44 pages of requirements
- 30 referenced NFPA publications in part, plus 12 ASTM standards in part, plus others.
- **While not specifically stated, is it the intent that this standard applies to volunteer fire fighters who *occasional* respond to wildland fires, it is not stated in the Scope nor in the Explanatory Material.**

- [NFPA 1006 \(171 page document\)](#)

Standard for Technical Rescue Personnel Professional Qualifications

- This standard references in part 10 additional NFPA Standards.
- The Scope of this Standard identifies the minimum job performance requirements for technical rescue personnel. The intent is to ensure that individuals serving as technical rescue personnel are qualified.
- There are 92 pages of requirements including several specialty rescue scenarios.
- **While not specifically stated, is it the intent that this standard applies to volunteer fire fighters who *occasional* respond to Technical Rescues, it is not stated in the Scope nor in the Explanatory Material. Would those occasional volunteers have to be trained to the entire standard or to a portion of the standard?**

- [NFPA 1005 \(28 page document\)](#)

Standard for Professional Qualifications for Marine Fire Fighting for Land Based Fire Fighters

- The purpose is to specify the minimum job performance requirements for Land-Based Fire Fighters operating at marine fire-fighting incidents.
- There are an additional 7 NFPA standards reference in part.
- There are 11 pages of requisite skills.
- To meet the requirements for Marine Fire Fighter, the Fire Fighter II shall meet the JPRs in Sections 4.1 through 4.5 of this standard and the requirements defined in Chapter 5 of NFPA 1001 or Chapters 5 & 6 of NFPA 1081
- **While not specifically stated, is it the intent that this standard applies to volunteer fire fighters who *occasional* respond to Marine Fires, it is not stated in the Scope nor in the Explanatory Material. Would those occasional volunteers have to be trained to the entire standard or to a portion of the standard?**

- [NFPA 1951 \(68 page document\)](#)

Standard on Protective Ensembles for Technical Rescue Incidents

Scope: minimum design, performance, testing and certification requirements for technical rescue protective ensembles for use by emergency services personnel during technical rescue incidents.

Shall also specify the minimum requirements for various elements of the technical rescue protective ensembles, including garments, helmets, gloves, footwear and eye and face protection.

This standard shall apply to the design, manufacturing, testing and certification of new technical rescue protective ensembles and new ensemble elements. i.e. for the manufacturer of such equipment.

Deals with: certification, inspection and testing, annual verification of product compliance, manufacturers' QA program.

- References 44 other technical documents.

The job of the AHJ is to perform a risk assessment to identify the hazards present and to determine the suitability of protective ensembles specified by this standard.

The AHJ would need to create a matrix and document the evaluation of such equipment.

- [NFPA 1952 \(76 page document\)](#)

Standard on Surface Water Operations Protective Clothing and Equipment

Scope: Shall specify the minimum design, performance, testing and certification requirement for protective clothing and equipment items, including full body suits, helmets, gloves, footwear and personal flotation devices designed to provide limited protection from physical, environmental, thermal and certain common chemical and biological hazards for emergency services personnel during surface water operations.

Purpose: to **establish minimum levels of protection** for emergency services personnel assigned to or involved in surface water and rescue operations or other surface water incident operations.

- References 38 additional technical standards

Mostly for the manufacturer of such equipment, **the job of the AHJ is to perform a risk assessment to identify the hazards present and to determine the suitability of protective ensembles specified by this standard. The AHJ would need to create a matrix and document the evaluation of such equipment.**

- [FPA 1953 \(59 page document\)](#)

Standard on Protective Ensembles for Contaminated Water Diving

Basically, this standard shall specify requirements for protective clothing and protective equipment used during operations in contaminated water dive operations. The purpose of this standard shall be to establish minimum levels of protection for emergency service personnel assigned to or involved in performing search and rescue activities in and below the surface of contaminated water. This standard shall apply to the design, manufacture, and certification of new contaminated water dive operations protective clothing and equipment.

This standard applies to the manufacture of such equipment and not to the persons, using the equipment or the operations related to the equipment.

- References 33 additional technical standards

- [NFPA 1971 \(198 page document\)](#)

Standard on Protective Ensembles for Structural Firefighting and Proximity Firefighting

This standard shall specify the minimum design, performance, testing and certification requirements for structural fire fighting protective ensembles and ensemble elements that include coats, trousers, coveralls, helmets, gloves, footwear, and interface components.

The purpose of this standard shall be to establish minimum levels of protection for fire fighting personnel assigned to fire department operations including but not limited to structural firefighting, proximity firefighting, rescue, emergency medical and other emergency first responder functions.

In Chapter 8, 8.1.12 there are **procedures to be followed** for Washing And Drying Procedures For Garment, Gloves And Glove Pouches.

*This standard applies to the manufacture of such equipment and not to the persons, using the equipment or the operations related to the equipment, except for **Chapter 8** which includes procedures for washing and drying protective equipment.*

- 74 additional reference technical documents.

- [NFPA 1977 \(118 page document\)](#)

Standard on Protective Clothing and Equipment for Wildland Fire Fighting and Urban Interface Fire Fighting

This standard shall specify the minimum design, performance, testing and certification requirements for items of wildland firefighting and urban interface fire fighting protective clothing and equipment, including protective garments, helmets, gloves, footwear, goggles and protective chain saw protectors; and for load-carrying equipment.

This standard shall establish minimum standards for the equipment used by wildland and urban interface firefighters and does not apply to the personnel themselves or the operations of said firefighters.

- 45 additional referenced technical standards.

- [NFPA 1981 \(81 page document\)](#)

Standard on Open-Circuit Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus for Emergency Services

This standard shall apply to all open-circuit SCBA and combination SCBA/SARs used by emergency services organizations for respiratory protection of its personnel during firefighting, rescue, hazardous materials, terrorist incident, and similar operations where products of combustion, oxygen deficiencies, particulates, toxic products or other IDLH atmospheres exist or could exist at the incident scene.

This standard establishes minimum standards for the design, performance, testing and certification of new SCBA and SCBA/SARs and for the replacement parts, components and accessories for these respirators.

- 22 additional referenced technical standards

[NFPA 1982 \(70 page document\)](#)

Standard on Personal Alert Safety Systems

This standard shall specify minimum requirements for the design, performance, testing and certification for all personal alert safety systems (PASS) for emergency services personnel.

Shall apply to the design, performance, testing and certification of PASS or RF PASS devices certified to an earlier edition of this standard that incorporate replacement parts, components and or software to be certified to this edition of the standard. PASS should be worn on protective clothing or protective equipment, or as an integrated part of another item of protective clothing or protective equipment and used whenever the member is involved in fire suppression or similar activities, regardless of whether SCBA is worn.

Note that NFPA 1500 requires that each person involved in rescue, firefighting or other hazardous duties be provided with and use a PASS.

This standard applies to the manufacturer of PASS devices.

- 18 additional referenced technical standards.

- [NFPA 1984 \(39 page document\)](#)

Standard on Respirators for Wildland Firefighting Operations and Wildland Urban interface Operations

This standard shall specify the minimum design, performance, testing and certification requirement for respirators to provide protection from inhalation hazards for personnel conditioning wildland firefighting and or wildland urban interface operations.

This standard shall apply to the design, manufacturer, testing and certification of new wildland firefighting or wildland urban interface operations respirators.

This standard does not mandate the use nor prescribe the use of approved respirators for use by firefighting personnel.

- 12 additional referenced technical standards

- [NFPA 1986 \(70 page document\)](#)

Standard on Respiratory Protection Equipment for Tactical and Technical Operations

This standard shall specify the minimum requirements for the design, performance, testing and certification of (1) new compressed breathing air open-circuit self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and compressed breathing air combination open-circuit self-contained breathing apparatus and supplied air respirator (SCBA/SAR) and (2) replacement parts, components and accessories for those respirators.

This standard does NOT deal with the used of such respirators by emergency personnel.

- 17 additional referenced technical standards

- [NFPA 1987 \(98 page document\)](#)

Standard on Combination Unit Respirator Systems for Tactical and Technical Operations

- 71 additional referenced technical standards

This standard shall specify the minimum requirements for the design, performance, testing and certification of new combination unit respirator (CUR) systems and for the replacement parts, components and accessories for such respirators.

This standard is for the design and manufacture standard for such respirators NOT with the use by personnel.

- [NFPA 1990 \(152 page document\)](#)

Standard for Protective Ensembles for Hazardous Materials and CBRN Operations

- 59 additional reference technical standards

This standard shall specify the minimum design, performance, testing, documentation, and certification requirements for the following PPE which is used by emergencies and CBRN terrorism incidents:

1. Vapor protective ensembles and ensemble elements for hazardous materials emergencies and CBRN terrorism incidents.
2. Liquid splash-protective ensembles and ensemble elements for hazardous materials emergencies.
3. Hazmat/CBRD protective ensembles and ensemble elements for hazardous materials emergencies and CBRN terrorism incidents.

The purpose of this standard shall be to establish a minimum level of protection for emergency responders during hazardous materials emergencies and CBRN terrorism incidents.

The standard deals with the equipment not the operations by personnel.

- [NFPA 1999 \(94 page document\)](#)

Standard on Protective Clothing and Ensembles for Emergency Medical Operations

- 60 additional referenced technical standards

The purpose of the this standard shall be to establish a minimum level of protection from contact with blood and body fluid-borne pathogens for personnel performing patient care during emergency medical operations.

Shall specify the minimum design, performance, testing, documentation and certification requirements for new single-use and new multiple-use emergency medical operations protective clothing, including garments, helmets, gloves, footwear and face protection devices used by emergency medical responders prior to arrival at medical care facilities during emergency medical operations and used by health care workers providing medical and supportive care.

The Standard deals with the equipment not the operations by personnel.

- **ANSI 107 High-Visibility Safety Apparel**

- Performance requirements of high-visibility safety apparel, or HVSA, help with providing visibility to the user under any light conditions by day or night. This is particularly crucial for hazardous conditions, as well as any situation where threats can be presented. The performance requirements include color, retroreflection, the recommended configuration of the materials, and more. Please note that ANSI/ISEA 107-2020's specifications may be applied to many occupational HVSA, but it is not for firefighter turnout gear.
- The updated ANSI/ISEA 107-2020 standard includes changes vs. the 2015 edition such as:
 - Removing the criteria for high-visibility accessories in favor of continuing to emphasize the configurations and design requirements that contribute to the Type-Performance Class designation.
 - Adding accommodating scenarios since garments can become soiled easily because of the work environment. This edition includes specific criteria for a single-use disposable coverall, which complies with the requisite minimum material amounts and color requirements imposed on all compliant HVSA, and emphasizes that the associated material integrity requirements are only applicable to single-use disposable coveralls, for which unique marking is applied.
 - Updates to the tests methods in an effort to align more closely with other material integrity tests and to recognize current versions used for evaluating the materials.
 - Introducing the concept of measuring the overall nighttime luminance of a garment by including optional language that allows a manufacturer to test a garment according to ASTM E1501.

In Total that is more than 1838 pages of additional document pages not including the thousands of pages of referenced documents within the NFPA Standards which the emergency response services would be legally liable for.

OSHA's Proposed Emergency Response Standard Presents Challenges to Fire Departments

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is proposing an extensive new safety and health standard, titled "Emergency Response," to replace the existing "Fire Brigades Standard." The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for the "Emergency Response Standard" was [published in the Federal Register](#) on February 5, with the public comment period open until May 6.

This proposed updated standard would issue hundreds of new requirements that may be very burdensome, and in many cases impossible, for volunteer fire departments to comply with. The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) encourages volunteer departments and associations to [submit comments](#) on this proposed rule and request a public hearing so OSHA can have the best possible understanding of how this proposed rule would impact volunteer departments. We also encourage you to send a letter to OSHA requesting a 90-day extension to the public comment period on this proposed rule.

Additionally, please [fill out this survey](#) to assist the NVFC in collecting department data as we formulate our own comments on the proposed rule.

To assist you in developing your comments and public comment period extension letters, the NVFC has put has assembled [this comment guide](#). This guide provides guidance on:

- Where to find the text of the proposed standard
- Where and how to submit your comments on the proposed standard
- How to evaluate if your department is covered by the proposed standard
- How to develop your comments
- What part of the proposed standard will impact volunteer departments the most

The NVFC's comment guide also links you to a map of states with OSHA plans, a template for your comment extension letter, and webinars to further assist you in understanding whether or how the proposed rule would impact your department.

The NVFC recently hosted a Roundtable Talk on this issue, which you can watch [here](#). View some of the questions and answers resulting from the live discussion [here](#).

The NVFC has also put together [this outline of the proposed standard](#) to further highlight important language and provide additional context to the comment guide.

SBA Submits Request for Extension

The SBA Office of Advocacy has just submitted to regulations.gov recommending that OSHA extend the comment period for its **proposed Emergency Response rule** by ninety days and plan for a post comment hearing on the rule.

*****Paperwork Nightmare? OSHA Inks Emergency Response Proposal That Piles It On!***

JJ Keller Compliance Network

[EDITOR'S NOTE: REMEMBER THAT JJ KELLER MAKES A LIVING OFF OF TRAINING FOR FIRE DEPARTMENTS AND INDUSTRIAL CUSTOMERS, THIS CHANGE WILL PROVIDE MORE BUSINESS OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME FOR THEM!]

If you like paperwork, you'll "love" the upcoming Emergency Response proposed rule. According to the fine print, OSHA proposes to toss out three paperwork burdens. Yet, it will tack on over 25 new ones! While the proposal is not in the *Federal Register* yet, you can read the unofficial version on OSHA's website. Be sure to peek at the "Proposed Information Collection Requirements" starting on page 544.

NEWS UPDATE: The ["Emergency Response Standard" proposed rule](#) appeared in the February 5, 2024, *Federal Register*, on pages 7774 to 8023 of the pdf version. The "Proposed Information Collection Requirements" section of the preamble to the proposal begins on page 7999 in the third column. OSHA seeks comments on the proposed rule by May 6, 2024, for [Docket No. OSHA-2007-0073](#). The agency also says it will schedule an informal public hearing on the proposal if requested during the comment period, and, if such a hearing is requested, further notification will be announced in the *Federal Register*.

On December 18, the Office of Management and Budget gave OSHA the green light to publish the proposal in the *Federal Register*. Days later, OSHA issued a news release announcing that the proposal would appear in the *Federal Register* in January. At the same time, the agency posted a pre-publication version of the proposed rule on its ["Emergency Response Rulemaking"](#) webpage.

Stakeholders will have 90 days to comment in [Docket No. OSHA-2007-0073](#), when the proposal appears in the *Federal Register*.

SCOPE OF PROPOSED 29 CFR 1910.156

"Emergency responders are critical workers in all of our communities, and they deserve protections that keep up with today's industry practices," said OSHA head Doug Parker. "We are proposing much-needed updates that will expand protections for emergency workers and bring our standards closer to common industry procedures."

The proposal, if finalized, would modernize [1910.156](#), Fire Brigades. The standard would be renamed "Emergency Response" and expand coverage to emergency responders, such as:

- Firefighters,
- Emergency medical service providers, and
- Technical search and rescue workers.

The new 1910.156 would not apply to:

- Employers performing disaster site cleanup or recovery duties following natural disasters;
- Activities covered by [1910.120](#), Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER); or
- Activities covered by [1910.146](#), Permit-Required Confined Spaces.

The scope of OSHA’s standard would:

- Be expanded to include a range of hazards that emergency responders encounter,
- Align the standard with the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA’s) National Response Framework, and
- Modernize the standard to bring it in line with consensus standards issued by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

For more background, please see our earlier article, [“OSHA’s Responder Proposal May Pop Up by End of January,”](#) dated November 17, 2023.

OTHER REGULATIONS IMPACTED

In addition, the proposal pulls other regulations into the fold:

- [1910.6](#), Incorporation by Reference;
- [1910.120](#), Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response;
- [1910.134](#), Respiratory Protection;
- [1910.155](#), Scope, Application and Definitions Applicable to This Subpart;
- [1910.157](#), Portable Fire Extinguishers;
- [1910.158](#), Standpipe and Hose Systems; and
- [1910.159](#), Automatic Sprinkler Systems.

PAPERWORK BURDENS

Despite concerns raised years ago by small business about the cost and time commitments of the *draft* standard, the latest proposal would remove three but add over 25 new “information collection requirements.” Specifically, OSHA proposes to eliminate existing language under:

- [1910.156\(b\)\(1\)](#) that requires employers to develop and maintain an organizational statement;
- [1910.156\(b\)\(2\)](#) that requires employers to obtain a physician’s certificate of certain employees’ fitness to participate in fire brigade emergency activities; and
- [1910.156\(c\)\(4\)](#) that requires the employer to inform fire brigade members about special hazards to which they may be exposed during fire/emergencies.

In place of these information requirements, OSHA’s proposed rule builds in collections for:

Category:	Paperwork:
Emergency/risk planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A facility vulnerability assessment • A written emergency response program • An annual evaluation of the emergency response program • Keeping previous versions of emergency response programs • A written comprehensive risk management plan • Identifying the location of each fire hose valve
Vehicle procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures for operating certain vehicles • Policies and procedures if responders cannot be seat belted in a vehicle • A procedure for vehicle operator training
Incident planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-incident plans for locations within the facility • Pre-incident plans for the facilities where incidents may occur • Pre-incident plans for each facility subject to EPA 40 CFR 355 within the primary response area • A comprehensive and ongoing size-up of an incident scene • A risk assessment for an incident scene

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An incident action plan • Established, marked, and communicated control zones • Standard operating procedures for emergency events • Post-incident analyses
Medical/health records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum medical requirements for team members and responders • Keeping confidential records for each team member and responder related to duty restrictions, work illnesses and injuries, and exposures • A medical evaluation program • A record of each responder’s exposure to combustion products • Behavioral health and wellness resources • A health and fitness program
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team members and responders to report safety and health concerns • Posting your procedures for reporting safety and health concerns • A hazard assessment for personal protective equipment selection

OSHA estimates that the proposed paperwork burdens will: **[EDITOR’S NOTE: IT IS GENERALLY FELT THAT THIS IS A SERIOUS UNDERESTIMATE, BUT REAL NUMBERS NEED TO BE DEVELOPED, REASON MORE TIME BEYOND THE 90 DAY COMMENT PERIOD IS NEEDED.]**

- Impact 22,551 entities,
- Take 3,896,719 hours in total each year to complete, and
- Cost a total of \$106,502,463 annually.

That averages to 173 hours and \$4,723 per year for each entity.

KEY TO REMEMBER

OSHA proposes to remove three but add over 25 paperwork burdens amounting to 173 hours per year per entity. The move is part of an upcoming Emergency Response proposal.

[EDITOR’S NOTE: NATIONAL STUDIES HAVE PREVIOUSLY FOUND THAT THE ONE THING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS DON’T HAVE IS TIME. IS THIS NEW IMPOSITION BEING DONE ON PURPOSE TO SATISFY UNION ACTIONS TO CRIPPLE THE VOLUNTEER FIRE SERVICE? IF THEY WOULD BE PATIENT THE IAFF WILL GRADUALLY MAKE IN ROADS AS THE VOLUNTEER FIRE SERVICE CONTINUES TO ERODE. REMEMBER THE IAFF PROVIDES CONTRIBUTIONS TO A SLEW OF POLITICIANS THROUGH THEIR CAMPAIGN PACS, VOLUNTEERS PROVIDE VERY LITTLE CAMPAIGN FUNDING.]

[Formal Comment Submitted by CAFDA on Your Behalf!](https://cafda.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Extension-Request-from-CAFDA.docx)

<https://cafda.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Extension-Request-from-CAFDA.docx>

Posted to the CAFDA.net website.

[Where To Go To Upload A Formal Comment To The Proposed Emergency Response Standard](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/02/05/2023-28203/emergency-response-standard?utm_campaign=subscription+mailing+list&utm_medium=email&utm_source=federalregister.gov)

https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/02/05/2023-28203/emergency-response-standard?utm_campaign=subscription+mailing+list&utm_medium=email&utm_source=federalregister.gov

[OSHA Takes Action To Limit Emergency Responder Injuries And Fatalities](#)

Michael Fraley – Fire Rescue One

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recently announced plans to update the outdated and scope-limited Fire Brigades Standard, 29 CFR 1910.156. The proposed new standard will be titled “Emergency Response” and aims to include emergency responders, including fire departments, EMS agencies, and technical search

and rescue teams. It will also govern responders who work other jobs in commercial or industrial settings but are activated as part of a Workplace Emergency Response Team when an incident occurs in the facility.

This article is a brief overview of many of the standards mentioned in the proposed rule and is not meant to be an exhaustive analysis of each section. The highlighted segments are included to portray the variety of areas the rule would cover and the significant work that may be required of some services to comply.

This article also will not explore the details of who is legally obligated to comply with OSHA standards. This varies from state to state and is complicated by a variety of factors. It should also be noted that in some circumstances, volunteer agencies may be covered by OSHA standards. Regardless of whether OSHA has legal authority over a particular state or service, there is an argument that they set a standard that could be indirectly applied to everyone. This may be particularly true after an incident has occurred and no other standard exists.

The general purpose of the proposed rule is to reduce emergency response team member injuries and fatalities. The NPRM document begins with an impressive section of statistics highlighting the dangers emergency responders face and the need for standards to reduce the impact of these injuries and deaths. The rule is specific to protecting responders and does not directly apply to medical care, outcomes or safety as they relate to patients.

SOME OF THE SPECIFIC SECTIONS OF THE PROPOSED STANDARD INCLUDE:

- **Emergency response plan (ERP).** Agencies *will be required* to have a written program to ensure they are prepared to respond to, and operate safely in, the emergency and non-emergency situations that are likely to occur in their primary response area. The ERP is intended to provide for the occupational safety and health of team members and encompass all aspects of emergency response, many of which are outlined below.
- **Vulnerability assessment of hazards.** Agencies *must assess* their primary response area *to identify the types calls they may respond to*. Resources in the plan must be matched to these hazards and the plan should identify mutual aid resources to be called when the agency cannot mitigate a particular hazard.
- **ERP tiers, types and levels.** The agency must identify the various tiers, types and levels of responders covered by the ERP. *Several sections of the proposed standard require the agency to identify training, evaluation, qualifications, duties and capabilities of responders based on these terms*. One size does not fit all.
- **Team involvement with the plan.** The Emergency Response Plan should be developed, implemented, reviewed and updated with involvement from team members. OSHA identifies that front-line responders have valuable insight into the work process particularly as it relates to safety.
- **Medical and physical requirements.** The proposed standard specifies that ***responders will be required to meet medical and physical requirements based on their type and level of service***. This section is extensive and pays particular attention to cardiovascular health.
- **Behavioral health and wellness resources.** Agencies *would be required* to offer team members services that include diagnostic assessment, short-term counseling, crisis intervention and referral to additional resources. Records arising from any use of these resources must be kept confidential.
- **Health and fitness program.** Team members should have access to health and fitness programs that help them maintain fitness for duty and to prevent work-related illness.
- **Training program.** *A comprehensive training program must be in place* to include initial and ongoing training as well as *skills checks* at appropriate intervals. All training and assessments will be based on tiers, types and levels of providers employed. The program must detail instructor qualifications, member evaluation methods, and assurances that team members will not be tasked with duties until they demonstrate the skills and abilities to safely complete them.
- **Facility safety.** OSHA understands that fire and EMS responders spend significant time in stations between calls and requires that these facilities also be safe. The section details the need to provide adequate spaces to decontaminate, maintain and store PPE and other equipment separate from living quarters. It also lists requirements for fire alarms, sprinkler systems, carbon monoxide detectors and equipment to prevent vehicle exhaust from entering sleeping and living areas. And yes, they even set standards for fire pole safety.
- **Personal protective equipment (PPE).** Significant attention is paid to the provision of PPE to responders as well as training, testing, maintenance, cleaning and disposal of the supplies and equipment.
- **Vehicle safety.** Highlighting the high numbers of fire and EMS responders injured and killed in vehicle crashes, OSHA proposes broad-reaching standards related to maintenance, inspection and testing of vehicles. The

standards also outline important benchmarks in training and operation of vehicles, and the policies that should be in place to cover both. OSHA even settles the debate about the proper name of a legendary fire prevention character when it highlights the need for procedures to ensure the safety of occupants that are not able to be belted in a seat. OSHA notes that mascots such as *Smokey Bear* may not be able to be seat belted in when riding on a vehicle in a parade! (Note they did not call him Smokey the Bear?)

- **Incident Management System.** To align with the National Response Framework, OSHA will expect Emergency Response Plans to contain language about implementation, training and use of the Incident Management System. An emphasis is placed on provider safety monitoring and reporting during incidents.
- **Respiratory protection.** Training, equipment and policies related to responder respiratory protection have long been a major area of concern for OSHA and the proposed Emergency Response standard will continue that emphasis.
- **Communication.** Language in the proposed rule encourages reliable communication between dispatch centers and responders including monitoring of on-scene radio transmissions to maintain safety and respond to any on-scene responder emergencies. The rule also calls for interoperability between mutual aid resources.

TWO OPPORTUNITIES

EMS agencies and fire departments have two important opportunities right now.

- Review the proposed standard, whether OSHA rules directly apply to you or not, and provide comments to help shape the document into something that will improve safe practices in our industry.
- Review your department's current responder safety program and take steps to build the program so it will meet or even exceed the standard that this rule will bring.

[Tailboard Talk: The OSHA Fire Brigade Standard from Fire Engineering](https://www.fireengineering.com/podcasts/tailboard-talk-the-osha-fire-brigade-standard/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=fe_daily_newsletter&utm_campaign=2024-02-26)

https://www.fireengineering.com/podcasts/tailboard-talk-the-osha-fire-brigade-standard/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=fe_daily_newsletter&utm_campaign=2024-02-26

[OSHA Proposes Major Changes to Regulations for the Fire Service](https://www.firelawblog.com/2024/02/15/osha-unveils-major-changes-it-proposes-for-the-fire-service/)

Insight from Curt Varone

<https://www.firelawblog.com/2024/02/15/osha-unveils-major-changes-it-proposes-for-the-fire-service/>

[OSHA'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE STANDARD UPDATE THREATENS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS](#)

National Vol Fire Council

On December 21, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced that it will issue a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to modernize the agency's "Fire Brigades" standard. This standard was first published and last updated in 1980.

This proposed updated standard would issue several new requirements that would be very burdensome, and in many cases impossible, for volunteer fire departments to comply with. Specifically, there would be prohibitively restrictive standards on physical exams, the purchase of new equipment, and the formation of emergency plans that exceed the staffing capabilities of many volunteer departments.

The proposed updated standard was published in the Federal Register on February 5, and public comments are being accepted until May 6. The National Volunteer Fire Council will be filing comments on this proposed rule and encourages members of the volunteer fire service community to submit their own comments and request a public hearing on this proposed standard.

Access the text of this rule and instructions on how to file comments [here](#). Additionally, OSHA Region 1 Training Institute Education Center recently conducted a [webinar](#) providing an overview of what's in the standard and some of the impacts it would have on volunteers.

We all know that whatever a bunch of bureaucrats in Washington put on paper will make all the difference in the world, this is the same federal government that told us everything was safe after the Twin Towers fell.

[LINK TO THE PROPOSED OSHA STANDARD, NO FLUFF:](#)

<https://cafda.net/proposed-changes-to-the-osh-standard-comment-period-opens-february-5th/>

Here are the links for the resources as Dave promised:

1. [Webinar: Emergency Response Rule | Oshaedne](#)
2. [OSHA's NEW Proposed Rule 1910.156 Emergency Response rule on Vimeo](#)
3. [Microsoft PowerPoint - 1910.156 Webinar 1-31-2024 draft 2.pptx \(oshaedne.com\)](#)

OSHA PROPOSED UPDATE TO THE BRIGADE STANDARD COMPLETE TEXT: <https://cafda.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/ER-NPRM-Unofficial-WORD-VERSION.docx>

LINK TO MY SYNOPSIS OF THE PROPOSED UPDATE: <https://cafda.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/SYNOPSIS-OF-THE-PROPOSED-UPDATED-OSHA-FIRE-BRIGADE-STANDARD-1.docx>