



CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

JANUARY 4, 2025

EDITOR - TOM RINALDI tom@rinaldi1.com
Serving the fire service community since 2004

CAPITAL SHORTS:

- Our initial meeting for 2025 was well attended and productive. CAFDA adopted a credit card policy, reviewed the upcoming commissioner training, financial training and Conference '25 held in Lake George. Art Hunsinger had to resign his position as 2nd Vice President due to no longer being a fire district official, but was voted in as a Ex-Officio Member and subsequently a Director. Ellen Martin vacated her position as Director and was voted in as the 2nd Vice President.
 - Tom Wood, Northumberland Fire District as reappointed Sergeant at Arms, Tony Hill was reappointed treasurer, Fred Richards, Harmony Corners Fire District was reappointed Chaplain and Molly Jenkins was appointed Secretary. Greg Serio was again retained as association legal counsel.
- Annual Dues are starting to be received as are renewals from several of our Business Partners.
- The next CAFDA meeting will be a Dinner Meeting held Thursday February 13th, Dinner at 6pm, Meeting at 7pm.
- **Any new OSHA information IS PRECEDED BY THE RED ARROW**
- **January 17th, 2025 is the end date for public comment related to the public hearing on the proposed OSHA standard for response personnel. Address comments or documentation to OSHA.emergency.response@dol.com**
- Sponsors are already starting to line up for the Spring 2025 Conference being held in Lake George in April. Sponsors at any level are welcome.

CAFDA NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

WWW.CAFDA.NET

Best Of Luck To All Those Elected for the Coming Year

Hope your elections went well and congratulations to the winners and losers, the winners for their future contributions and to the losers for your past contributions, many times it's a thankless job.

Local Training for New/Appointed/Reappointed Commissioners will be held in the following locations by CAFDA:

- Rensselaer County, AVERILL PARK FIRE DISTRICT: Saturday, February 1, 2025 Snow Date: Sunday, February 2, 2025
- Saratoga County, CLIFTON PARK FIRE DISTRICT: Saturday, March 1, 2025 Snow Date: Sunday, March 2, 2024
- Fulton County, BERKSHIRE FIRE DISTRICT: Saturday, March 29, 2025 Snow Date: Sunday, March 30, 2024
- Warren County, WARRENSBURG FIRE DISTRICT: Saturday, April 5, 2025 Snow Date: Sunday, April 6, 2024

Classes begin at 8am and end at approximately 3pm. Continental Breakfast and Lunch are included.

\$85 per attendee for Member Districts and \$95 per person for non-member districts.



THIS QR CODE TAKES YOU TO THE CAFDA WEBSITE FOR REGISTRATION for Commissioner's Training.

[Planning for CONFERENCE '25 - Lake George](#)

The Education Committee has been hard at work on the 2025 Conference to be held in April at the Fort William Henry Conference Center in Lake George. Topics have all been determined, vendors are lining up to attend and sponsors are lining up to contribute. We are excited to announce that vendors and participants will be in the Fort William Henry, Turn of The Century Carriage House, for displays and cocktail hour.

Mark your Calendar for April 10-11-12, 2025 & see you there. More details to be released soon.

[Upcoming CAFDA Educational Event for Fire District Officials](#)

WHEN: Thursday March 13th and Friday March 14th, 2025

WHAT: Fire District Financial Training, Presented by the NYS-Office of the State Comptroller

WHERE: To be held at Fulton Montgomery Community College, Johnstown, New York

Supported by Mohawk Fire District

Commissioners, Treasurers and Chiefs are cordially invited to attend

More Information to Follow

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

CAFDA CLASSIFIEDS

Nothing this week

THE LATEST FROM THE STATE CAPITAL

[Issues of United Concern 2025](#)

The NYS Fire Service Alliance kicked off the 2025 legislative season today by meeting in Troy to discuss the issues of united concern. In attendance were Districts, Chiefs, FASNY, Fire Police, Coordinators and a number of other interested parties including CAFDA and our fire service lobbyists. The following are legislative items for the coming session:

Top Five:

- Make permanent Heart and Lung presumptions
- Adoption of Residential Sprinklers in the State Building Code (Lobby to insure that sprinkler provisions currently in the ICC Building Code remain there)
- Amend the VFBL regulations to insure parity with payments made to workers compensation recipients for volunteer firefighters.
- Increase the income tax credit to \$800 annually, and if possible include ability to collect on the property tax incentive for recruitment and retention.
- Make permanent the EMS cost recovery provisions

Also Discussed:

- Recovery of 54g funding to support local government code enforcement efforts, former funding was folded in with State Funding in the General Fund. (These funds come from the insurance industry)

- Amend the mental hygiene law in support of the “First Responder Peer Support Act”
- Designate EMS as an “Essential” Service and expand the benefits available to EMS personnel and set standards for EMS.
- Create the local option for the AHJ to provide pay per call stipends for volunteer firefighters with the needed amendments to VFBL to allow pay per call without penalty.
- Cancer coverage relief by having the State pay for the cost of coverage
- Exempt the Fire/EMS services from the EV mandates set by the state.
- Continued focus on illegal conversions which circumvent the requirements of the Building Codes.
- NYS retirement credit for employees who volunteer as fire or EMS members. For example 1 year of credit for every 5 years as a volunteer with a maximum of 3 years additional credit.
- Secure a sales tax exemption for home use life safety products such as detectors or extinguishers.
- Phase out PPE containing PFAS chemicals.
- Redirect 911 fees to the local government directly instead of to the State General Funds and then a subsequent grant program. These funds are needed to fund NEXT-GEN 911 upgrades.

IF NOTHING ELSE READ THE ARTICLES PRECEDED BY **

THE LATEST FROM WASHINGTON

Waiting and watching the developments within the new administration.

For information only and not for the purpose of providing legal advice. The opinions expressed are the opinions of the individual author at the time the facts were presented and based on the law then applicable. The information contained in these opinions is not guaranteed to be up to date. The information provided is not legal advice. Since legal advice must be tailored to the specific circumstances of each case, and laws are constantly changing, nothing on this site should be used as a substitute for the advice of competent legal counsel. The authors assume no responsibility to any person who relies on information contained herein and disclaim all liability in respect to such information. You should not act upon information in this publication without seeking professional counsel from an attorney admitted to practice in your jurisdiction.

FIRE DISTRICT FINANCES

Local Government and School Accountability Contact Information:

Phone: (518) 474-4037; Email: localgov@osc.ny.gov

Address: Office of the State Comptroller, Division of Local Government and School Accountability
110 State Street, 12th Floor; Albany, NY 12236

Financial Training by the Office of the State Comptroller – Specifically for Fire District Officials

Thursday March 13 and Friday March 14, 2025 At **Fulton Montgomery Community College**, the Alan House, co-sponsored by Mohawk Fire District, consult our website at CAFDA.org for more information.

Tuesday March 25 and Wednesday March 26, 2025 At **Brighton Fire District, Monroe County**, co-sponsored by the Monroe County Fire District Officer’s Association, consult our website at CAFDA.org for more information.

STEP INTO THE CHIEF’S OFFICE

****The Most Critical Command Function: Controlling Yourself**

Jason Caughey

Many of us hope to someday master the art and science of golf. If you count yourself among this group, then you know that to achieve skilled golfer status, you need to spend hours (and hours and hours) honing your abilities on the driving range. From there, you’ll need unwavering focus and self-discipline to execute a flawless shot on the course. Chances

are you've experienced hitting a subpar shot and mentally urged yourself to "keep your head down" or "stay focused," perhaps accompanied by some colorful language.

Leading the response to any fire incident, especially a major one, demands the same deliberate commitment, focus, determination, self-discipline and practice required to excel in golf. The problem: Incident command tends to take place in a far more chaotic environment than a golf course. Exercising self-discipline is paramount amidst chaotic situations. Your role is to restore composure and order amidst the turmoil. If you cannot regulate your own actions, how can you manage the incident effectively? Are you prepared for this responsibility?

SETS AND REPS

The mental fatigue associated with command should be acknowledged and managed. The stress of the incident, the stress of safety, and the adrenaline rush and dump that comes with the incident's timeline all impact your ability to communicate and think clearly.

Preparation is one controllable and impactful way to bolster your performance. Obviously, the more prepared you are, the better you will perform. Focus on sets and reps. Just like hitting a golf ball, the more you do it, the better you will hit it. ***Command is the same; the more you practice through real-world simulations, the better you will perform when the tones drop.***

There are many sources for command training. However, you can create your own scenarios using YouTube or fire software. Another excellent opportunity to increase sets and reps is driving the neighborhood to practice scene size-ups and tactical decision-making. The drive provides the opportunity to learn about the neighborhood, identify community hazards and risks, and discuss tactical operations.

BREATHING BASICS

Calm down, breathe, collect your thoughts, and bring calm to the incident. Start with breathing, slow your heartbeat, and remember that ***it's not your emergency; you adopted the emergency***, so don't make it worse. Control your voice. If you have to pause before communicating on the radio, do so. It's better to take an extra half-second than to miscommunicate to your crew.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Be prepared with the command boards, tablets and equipment to do the job. Make sure you have the resources available to do the work. Use technology to provide plans and data to support the operation. Establish an operational system that you consistently use for every call and personalize it to work for you.

I recommend having a vehicle command, but if your system doesn't allow it, be prepared for the climate and environment.

While you might not think of water and food as "tools" per se, they are critical to fueling your mind. Remember to hydrate. When dealing with emergencies, providing food, snacks and comfort becomes critical. Just like firefighters need rehabilitation, you also need to take care of yourself.

TACTICAL OBJECTIVES AND BENCHMARKS

One of the greatest challenges for incident command officers is to deviate from their normal approach. There are many factors that impact tactical decision-making and necessitate a change of plans:

- Staffing
- Response time
- Incident time
- Occupancy
- Building construction
- Rescue
- Fire conditions
- Fuel Load

We tend to rely on familiar tactics, ***but we cannot get stuck in a "that's how we always do it" mindset***, as conditions can change at the drop of a hat, and our tactics must change too. Sometimes we use a smaller hose when we should use a larger one, or we enter through the wrong door instead of choosing the closest access point to the fire. We also sometimes apply tactics meant for houses to larger buildings. In the worst cases, we fail to analyze the impact of our tactics on the situation, which can make the situation worse.

When dealing with known or potential victims, it's important to remember that we have two options: Remove the victim from the hazard or remove the hazard from the victim. This can be challenging if you have limited staff. This is where studying, *knowing your capabilities*, and understanding fire dynamics can impact not only your own safety but also the safety of the public.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The key to effective command is preparation, sets and reps, personalizing your system, and recognizing that there is a right time and place for all fireground tactics. Choose wisely. Most of all, controlling your emotions and your mindset will make an impact on the incident outcome. Go to work, practice and prepare.

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Rhinebeck, NY, Firefighter Charged with Falsely Reporting Incidents

Diane Pineiro-Zucker – The Daily Freeman

A volunteer firefighter and new member of the Hillside Fire Department was arrested Monday, Dec. 30, and charged with falsely reporting five incidents to Dutchess County 911 involving a fire, noxious odors and a vehicle in a ditch, state police said Tuesday.

Cyril Uebbing, 23, of Rhinebeck, was arrested by state police at Rhinebeck at 3:08 p.m. Monday, Dec. 30, in connection with incidents reported to state police by the chief of the Hillsdale Fire Department in Columbia County on Saturday, Dec. 28, at 10:53 a.m., state police said.

Uebbing was charged with five felony counts of falsely reporting a fire, explosion or hazardous substance to an official. In an email, state police said an investigation into the matter determined that Uebbing made the following false calls by cell phone to Dutchess County 911:

* According to state police, on Monday, Dec. 23, at 1:57 p.m., “an individual contacted Dutchess County 911 to report black smoke coming from a chimney at the Southlands Farm located at 5771 Route 9 in the town of Rhinebeck.”

* On Tuesday, Dec. 24, at 10:38 a.m., an individual contacted Dutchess County 911 from the phone number tracked back to Uebbing and “reported an outdoor odor of sulfur in the area of Primrose Hill Road and Ackert Hook Road” in the town of Rhinebeck.

* On Tuesday, Dec. 24, at 2:30 p.m., Dutchess County 911 received a call reporting an ATV in a ditch in the area of Mill and Lynwood roads in the town of Rhinebeck.

* On Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 6:44 p.m., “an individual contacted Dutchess County 911 to report smoke in the area of Albany Post Road and Old Route 9, Habitat on the Hudson,” state police said.

* On Thursday, Dec. 26, at 12:07 p.m., police said “an individual contacted Dutchess County 911 to report the outdoor odor of gas in the area of 31 Riverview Drive and Mill Road in the town of Rhinebeck.”

Uebbing was issued appearance tickets for Rhinebeck Town Court on Wednesday, Jan. 8, at 5 p.m.

OUR CHANGING FIRE SERVICE –CHALLENGES & POSITIVE IDEAS. LEARNING FROM OTHERS

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

State Chief's Scholarship Program

NYSAFCE established this scholarship program to enhance, through academic achievement at the college level, the quality of leadership in the fire and emergency services, life safety field, and public safety field and to assist association Individual Members (and their spouses and children) in their efforts to pursue academic advancement. Scholarships will be awarded in memory of Executive Director Emeritus Ward A. Bohner and his wife, Janice R. Bohner, and in memory of Past President Anthony J. “Andy” Messina for their many years of dedicated service to the association. Tuition assistance is offered based upon merit to Individual Members of NYSAFCE (and their spouses and children) pursuing degrees (full or part time) at an accredited institution of higher education. The Messina Scholarship is awarded to students working toward an emergency services degree (fire science, EMS, emergency

management, etc.) and the Bohner Scholarship is awarded to those pursuing a general course of study in any other field.

[2025 Scholarship & Awards Application & Nomination Package](#) (PDF)

Deadline: April 1, 2025

Pa. Fds Create Live-In Programs To Deal With Declining Membership

Ciara Mceneany – Pittsburg Post-Gazette

When the Berkeley Hills Volunteer Fire Company got a call for a house fire in the early 2000s on Kinsdale Drive in Ross, it soon became a frenzied effort to get someone to the scene.

It got to the point that the Ross Township fire marshal had to drive the truck, fire Chief Dillon Coleman said. Eventually, firefighters got the blaze under control, rescuing a child trapped inside.

From that point on, the fire company knew something had to change.

A live-in program was created, offering free housing in exchange for service, to make sure volunteers are at the station to respond in a timely manner when a call comes in.

“We turned an office into a bunk room with three or four bunk beds in it, just to see if this is something we’re interested in, and it filled up pretty quick,” he said. “People started staying continuously and we went through five or six modifications since then, with our last being a renovation.”

Berkeley Hills can now accommodate up to 15 volunteers in dorm-style housing right inside the Siebert Road station.

The fire company is not the first, or last, volunteer department to offer a similar program in Western Pennsylvania.

With volunteer rates consistently in decline, many fire departments are looking for ways to gain and keep members. Nearly 90% of the 2,462 fire departments statewide are made up of volunteers.

In Allegheny County 96% of departments are volunteer-based.

It’s a problem nationwide, according to the National Volunteer Fire Council. In 1984, there were nearly 900,000 volunteers across the country. That number had fallen to just over 650,000 by 2020.

“We provide a vital service and are not getting paid while putting our lives in jeopardy,” said Ben Reynolds, chief of the Edgewood Volunteer Fire Department.

‘PEAKS AND VALLEYS’

Since volunteers are not paid and have other commitments, a live-in program offers the incentive of free housing for those who are already juggling work and other responsibilities, Chief Reynolds said.

Edgewood has seen an increase in calls over the years, topping out at 700 as of last week. The department created their live-in program a decade ago to address the growing need.

The department currently has 35 volunteer firefighters, though none of them are utilizing the live-in program full-time, Chief Reynolds said. Beds are currently used by volunteers that stay the night here and there for possible calls, since the final live-in program member moved out last week into an apartment close by.

“There is a particular cycle for volunteer recruitment,” he said. “When you run a live-in program you have to expect to run into this cycle of peaks and valleys.”

Fluctuation in members, live-in or not, is due to many going on to paid positions in the field, such as career fire departments and EMS agencies — a “risk” with volunteer recruitment altogether, he said.

Most live-in volunteers at Berkeley Hills, Edgewood, Monroeville and Penn Hills stay with the department for an average of three to five years.

At Penn Hills Volunteer Fire Department No. 7, leadership has made significant investments to their live-in program, said Chief Bill Jeffcoat.

Buying the building next door in 2018, the department renovated the top floor to become a dorm-style facility, featuring a living room, kitchen, bathrooms and laundry. There are enough beds to accommodate around 20 volunteers, as well as multiple bunk-ins, who sign up to help from other departments.

The department has 40 active members, the chief said.

The live-in program has attracted younger members looking to gain hands-on experience at a station with a high call volume, he said. It has also shortened response times, with an average three-minute turnaround for getting a firetruck headed to a scene after receiving a call.

Lt. D.J. Lesh, president of the Monroeville Volunteer Fire Company No. 1, said live-in programs also offer the opportunity to save money while gaining skills.

"I think a lot of the younger individuals like to use it as a way, whether it's immediately post-high school, college, to have a place to live that's not home," he said. "They're beginning their early stages of independence from living at home, while not incurring expenses of renting an apartment, and then using it to gain experience in the fire service, often to eventually get a paid job."

To go on calls at volunteer fire departments or join a live-in program a candidate must commit to undergoing hundreds of hours worth of fire training first. This alone can be a hiccup when trying to recruit new members, Chief Jeffcoat said. "How do you pull someone into this lifestyle and tell them before they can do anything they need close to 230 hours of training?" he said. "I mean, if I came off the street with a full-time job, a wife, a son, a mortgage, and vehicle payments, where do I find that time to go and get training before I can put a mask on and go put fires out?" Berkeley Hills, Edgewood, Monroeville and Penn Hills have seen success, with improved response times and help reducing costs.

'NOT A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION'

According to a Pennsylvania state Senate report from 2018, fire and EMS services are in a "crisis," citing an aging population, declining volunteer rates, cost increases and communities shifting focus to individual needs, such as bills and groceries, instead of financially supporting agencies like fire and EMS.

The responsibility to find long-term solutions falls on individual volunteer departments, according to the report.

"And yet, Pennsylvania and its communities continue to rely in large measure on volunteers to perform this critical emergency response and public safety service," the report said.

Many local volunteer fire departments have pursued financial aid that could help them with recruitment and retention since live-in programs are not "a sustainable solution long-term," said Edgewood's Chief Reynolds.

Berkeley Hills was recently awarded a Staffing For Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant of just under \$550,000 through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to put towards recruitment and retention efforts, such as advertising and marketing, Chief Coleman said.

Funds will also be used to give each member a small stipend. For the last five years, Ross has given \$80,000 to its eight volunteer fire departments, but Berkeley Hills responds to the highest number of calls at upwards of 2,000 so far in 2024. The annual budget for Berkeley Hills sits at about \$250,000, Chief Coleman said.

The Community College of Allegheny County also has a program that works with local volunteer departments.

In 2009, the college launched its Firevest Scholarship program, which gives students who are already members with a local department free training at the county fire academy, and full scholarships towards a certificate or associate degree.

Candidates must commit to five years of service to an Allegheny County fire department after graduating, said Rick Susulla, director of public safety at CCAC. Firevest currently has 119 people enrolled.

Pennsylvania does have an Active Volunteer Tuition and Loan Assistance Program, which provides \$1,000 a year to full-time students and \$500 to part-time students. That program was instituted in 2022 in response to the "growing crisis in attracting first responders," according to the program's website. It also provides a number of grants and low-interest loans.

So what can departments do to increase volunteer rates? That is what leadership at every level is grappling with, said Monroeville's Lt. Lesh.

"Every Sunday night, we're having a family dinner at the fire station. Getting people to come up and have dinner is helping a lot. So we're always trying to think of new and creative ways that don't cost our station a fortune because, again, we are all volunteers," he said.

"I think there's a general stigma around why someone would want to do this. We're all here because we're having fun and doing it with people we like, but it's definitely hard. If you had asked me when I was graduating high school if I thought I would ever be a volunteer firefighter, I probably would have told you you were crazy because it does sound crazy. It can be hard to understand why someone would do it for free when it feels like it should be a paid job."

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

FF HEALTH AND SAFETY – TAKING CARE OF OUR MEMBERS!

IN 2025 WE HAVE EXPERIENCED 0 FIRE FIGHTER LODD'S

*According to FirefighterCloseCalls.com**

*In 2024 we experienced **61** LODDs reported nationally, down 24 from the previous year.!*

DOES'NT HAVE TO BE A FATALITY-JUST A DIBILITATING INJURY, YOU JUST NEVER KNOW!

- The Boston Fire Department is mourning the loss of one of their own, Boston Fire Lt. Joseph “Joe” Hurley, a married father who died unexpectedly the day after Christmas. He was 43.
- Avon, MA Firefighter Justin Powers, who also worked as a paramedic, died unexpectedly on Christmas Eve.

BUILDING CODE ISSUES AND REPORTED FIRE FATALITIES

If we had sprinklers in 1 & 2 family homes by now the death toll of 700+ would be a hell of a lot less and fewer firefighters would be injured. But because builders and realtors make big contributions to politicians, sprinklers have been negotiated out of the Code!!

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!!

2024 HOME FIRE FATALITIES REPORTED BY THE MEDIA FROM THE US FIRE ADMINISTRATION	
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	64
Last fire death 12/30, Vernon, Oneida Co. Female, 78.	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	124
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	1205
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA/ 90
	#2 TX/ 72
	#3 NY/ 66
There has been a total of 2072 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 as well as Wash. DC require sprinklers in residential dwellings	
2025 HOME FIRE FATALITIES REPORTED BY THE MEDIA FROM THE US FIRE ADMINISTRATION	
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	0
Last fire death 12/30/24, Vernon, Oneida Co. Female, 78.	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	0
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	5
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 VT/ 2
	#2 MI/AL/GA/ 1
	#3 N/A
There has been a total of 16 civilian home fire fatalities in 2025	
There were a total of 2072 residential fire fatalities reported in 2024 in the US media.	

GREEN TECHNOLOGY & THE FIRE SERVICE

[Cybertruck Exploded In Front Of The Entrance To Trump Las Vegas International Hotel](#)

One person was killed and seven suffered minor injuries when a Tesla Cybertruck exploded in front of the entrance to Trump International Hotel Wednesday morning, Sheriff Kevin McMahon said at a news conference.

The person who died was in the Cybertruck, and McMahon said it was unclear if it was a man or a woman.

McMahon said police were told the truck pulled up to the hotel entrance and emitted smoke, which was followed by a large explosion.

The hotel was evacuated and many guests went to Resorts World, he said. According to a spokesperson for Clark County, two people were hospitalized.

The fire was reported just after 8:40 a.m. at 2000 Fashion Show Drive, according to the Clark County Fire Department's PulsePoint app. The fire is out, according to the Metropolitan Police Department's X social media account.

Fashion Show Drive is closed in both directions from Sammy Davis Jr. Drive to Las Vegas Boulevard. South, according to the RTC X account.

Investigators are asking the public to avoid the area.

"I know you have a lot of questions," Jeremy Schwartz, acting special agent in charge for the FBI's Las Vegas office, told reporters. "We don't have a lot of answers."

"The whole Tesla senior team is investigating this matter right now," Tesla CEO Elon Musk wrote in a statement on X, adding: "We've never seen anything like this."

In a later post, he said, "We have now confirmed that the explosion was caused by very large fireworks and/or a bomb carried in the bed of the rented Cybertruck and is unrelated to the vehicle itself."

Ana Bruce, who was visiting from Brazil, said she heard three explosions.

"The first one where we saw the fire, the second one, I guess, was the battery or something like that, and the third was the big one that smoked the entire area and was the moment when everyone was told to evacuate and stay away," Bruce said.

Her travel companion, Alcides Antunes, took a video that showed flames on the sides of the silver vehicle.

Mike Campbell, a guest at the hotel, said he heard a loud boom that shook the windows of the tower. When he took the elevator to pick up his car around 9:15 a.m., it smelled like paint thinner, he said.

Eric Trump, a son of President-elect Donald Trump and executive vice president of the Trump Organization, posted about the fire on X, praising the fire department and local law enforcement "for their swift response and professionalism."

FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION:

With additional information, this event is being defined as a terrorist event due to the explosive materials on board the vehicle. Officials have not yet confirmed the identity or the gender of the driver in the Cybertruck because they do not yet have "100% certainty of who the individual is." Tesla boss Elon Musk revealed that the Cybertruck explosion was "unrelated to the vehicle itself" and that "all vehicle telemetry was positive at the time of the explosion." This incident remains under intense investigation.

FIRE SERVICE EDUCATION SO THAT OTHERS MAY LEARN



[Sexual Harassment ESIP WEBINAR SERIES](#)

With a new year comes the need to revisit the important topic of working together and being professional in our interactions within our organizations. This presentation will cover the material that is required by most Authorities Having Jurisdictions to ensure a safe, successful culture.

Wednesday January 8th at 7PM

A Certificate will be available to provide proof of the course completion.

REGISTER AT THIS LINK:

<https://mcneilandcompany.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=03596f243a9d922954ebaf15e&id=fff953be61&e=781e9a2c81>



2025 Seminar Series, Short-Handed Firefighting

34 years ago, this class was developed by Firefighter Andrew A. Fredericks. At that time, the fire service was starting to suffer from a shortage of members, especially but not limited to the volunteer ranks. Today, as we all know, departments across the nation have experienced a large drop-off in membership. With today's hotter, faster-moving fires, it is imperative that we get on the road ASAP and are ready to mount an aggressive interior attack – especially where life-saving attempts must be carried out. This class will look at new apparatus and equipment designed to make our jobs less labor-intensive. In many places, where it used to take one or maybe two departments to handle the job at a single-family residence, now up to six departments are necessary due our diminished ranks. We must protect our residents and, just as important, our members and make sure everyone goes home.

Mike Healy has been a member of the Rockland County fire service for 54 years, serving with the Blauvelt F.D. for 14 years, followed by the Central Nyack F.D. for 40 years. He has served as a chief for three terms. Healy is currently the coordinator of education for the Rockland County Fire Training Center. **Jeff Daniels** is a 23-year fire service veteran. He served with the Air National Guard as a crash rescue firefighter for 17 years and was a member of the West Haverstraw Volunteer F.D. for 14 years. In 2002, he was hired as a NYS DMNA firefighter and served for over four years before being appointed to the FDNY. Daniels was assigned to Ladder Co. 39 for 12 years and was later an instructor for the FDNY Fire Academy. Currently, he is a member of Squad 61. He also teaches at the Rockland County Fire Training Center.

Coming to These Counties in 2025 (7:00 p.m. Starting Time):

Albany (February 24) • **Cortland** (October 28) • **Erie** (October 8) • **Fulton** (September 9) • **Herkimer** (April 14)
• **Jefferson** (October 15) • **Monroe** (September 30) • **Nassau** (November 5) • **Niagara** (March 12)
• **Oneida** (September 24) • **Onondaga** (February 18) • **Orange** (April 29) • **Otsego** (September 15)
• **Rensselaer** (October 20) • **Rockland** (April 23) • **St. Lawrence** (March 24) • **Steuben** (February 12) • **Suffolk** (April 2)
• **Westchester** (September 3) • **Wyoming** (March 4)

\$35 – NYS AFC members • \$50 – non-members (per person)

REGISTER AT THIS LINK: <https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/2025seminarseries>



Company Officers Leadership Training 2025

NYS AFC's [Company Officers Leadership Training \(COLT\)](#) is a two-day leadership development program for current and aspiring company officers featuring the lectures:

- “**Leadership, Mentoring, and Succession Planning**” with Deputy Assistant Chief (Ret.) **John Norman** (FDNY)
- “**Liability, Immunity, and Indemnity – A Practical Understanding of Three Legal Concepts for Fire Officers**” with Attorneys **Terence Hannigan** (Hannigan Law Firm) & **Mark Butler** (Law Offices of Mark Butler)
- “**Leggo My Ego**” with Captain **Joe DiFabio** (Syracuse F.D.) & Lieutenant/Chief **Paul Haynes** (Syracuse F.D./East Syracuse F.D.)

2025 Sites:

Fulton County – **January 17-18 Friday/Saturday**, Berkshire Fire District, Gloversville

Monroe County – February 28 – March 1, Hilton Fire District, Hilton

Erie County – March 28-29, Orchard Park Fire Company, Orchard Park

Registration (per person):

\$200 – NYSAFC members • \$225 – non-members

Pre-registration is encouraged. On-site registration will be accepted if space permits.

REGISTER AT THE FOLLOWING LINK:

https://ygc8ha5ab.cc.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001e_HCLWepJUYQIRASURG1xPPJKm64CN8NMvAmhmisITERuBKNCPiKwIPBf5-PHB6hGNEdF9ZQocIz0IDqjile2an6-nl-fhdnwMFSJmsm8Zayv35i0gNA4mE12KWi_sl2PU97gDnT0HrnEYQU0MRsMuGlTDyNrvB3qFmyRbhewg=&c=j_VPsmE5V9vffC-r_2S8C4gmXhoVnfVagiAnRXrpqZRvqmmJUUYKmg==&ch=avJNQy1vwn6rKcav6zIrbSYy1W1SLzkKgwOAeeeZmUh7c782_o07g==

Save The Date: 1st Annual FASNY Training & Educational Weekend

May, Friday the 16th through Sunday the 18th, 2025

Fort William Henry, Lake George, NY

An array of Speakers on many subjects including Chief Tom Richardson, Chief Tom Basher, D/C Tim Cowan, Brian McQueen, Chief Stefano Napolitano, Chief Doug Cline, Chief Justin Bailey and Ed Mann..

More information to come.

ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Coming Attractions:

- Mini Summit in White Plains, Sonesta Hotel, **Friday March 28 & Saturday 29 2025**
- **October 2-4, 2025, Thursday - Saturday**, Annual Meeting and Vendor Expo at the Saratoga Hilton and City Center, Saratoga Springs
- **October 8-10, 2026**, Annual Meeting and Vendor Expo at the Saratoga Hilton and City Center, Saratoga Springs

**Regional Hands-On Training – Fire Behavior From the Outside****Two-Hour Program Overview**

Understanding fire behavior and building construction as it relates to the fire service is arguably the most important aspect of our job. In this program, firefighters will observe changes in fire behavior from the outside while typical fireground actions are simulated. Firefighters will recognize the vast difference in fire dynamics with the synthetic fuels used in homes today versus the fuel the fire service is using in training towers. This two-hour training includes a classroom presentation, followed by an interactive demonstration using a 10-square-foot dollhouse prop. The unit provides a safe, inexpensive way to discuss fireground strategies/tactics to improve firefighter safety and victim survivability.

Course Prerequisites (or Equivalent)

None

PPE Requirements

None. Members of the fire suppression team designated by the host agency must wear OSHA compliant full PPE with SCBA.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS:

Programs are open to host organization's members and invited guests only.

Monday March 3, 2025 – 7:30 p.m.

Rockland County

Host: Hillcrest Fire Company/Moleston Fire District

Monday April 28, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.

Sullivan County

Host: Roscoe Rockland Fire Department

How to Host a Program in Your Region

Complete and submit a [Regional Hands-On Training – Fire Behavior From the Outside Request Form](#), which outlines all host responsibilities. This course can be delivered on any day of the week at any time and is ideal for a fire department drill. Training will be provided in New York state only. Programs will be scheduled throughout the year based on availability of NYS AFC instructors. [Email](#) NYS AFC with questions regarding Hands-On Training.



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

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

HAPPEN'N IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Gansevoort Fire Department Breakfast

Sunday **January 12th** at the Gansevoort Fire Station 1870 Route 32N, Gansevoort, NY
All you can eat, these folks provide a great breakfast, something for everyone!!

Clifton Park Fire Department Breakfast

Sunday February 12th at the fire station at 38 Old Route 146, Clifton Park NY.

All you can eat, a good breakfast, eggs cook to order, toast, pancakes, bacon, sausage, OJ & Coffee or hot chocolate

LAUGH OUT LOUD!!

**My wife said: "That's the 4th time you've gone back for dessert!
Doesn't it embarrass you?" I said: "No, I keep telling them it's for you."**

A LITTLE LITE READING

A Blast From The Past: 8 Things To Know About Fire Hydrant History

Rachel Engel

Fire hydrants, those steadfast sentinels of safety dotting urban landscapes, harbor a colorful history. From their inception to their indispensable role in modern firefighting, fire hydrants have not only been pivotal in the evolution of urban safety but also in the annals of municipal innovation.

Learn more about this symbol of fire safety and be sure to check out our deep dive into the legacy of one of San Francisco's most infamous fire hydrants.

1. Wood pipes preceded the modern hydrant

The tale of the fire hydrant begins in the 17th century, albeit in a form vastly different from what we recognize today.

Wooden pipes buried beneath the streets of cities like London and New York constituted the earliest firefighting infrastructure. These pipes had holes drilled into them, which could be opened to fight fires and then plugged again, quite literally, with wooden plugs. This rudimentary method laid the groundwork for the modern hydrant, a beacon of progress in urban safety and planning. Thus the term, “fire plug”.

2. The original patent for the cast iron fire hydrant was burned in a fire

It is widely believed that the patent for the first cast iron fire hydrant was lost in the Great Patent Office Fire of 1836. This calamity consumed thousands of patent documents, leaving historians to speculate and manufacturers to claim the title of “first.”

It’s an ironic twist of fate that a device designed to mitigate fires was itself a victim of one.

3. Hydrant color could indicate flow rate, potable water ... or not

Fire hydrants have not just been silent protectors; they’ve also been canvases for communal expression and a reflection of national or municipal standards. NFPA 291 includes a color chart for painting fire hydrants, but the standard is considered a “recommended practice,” not a requirement.

OSHA also weighs in on hydrant color, suggesting that those representing non-potable water sources be painted violet. Many municipalities create their own hydrant color scheme to assist crews responding to scenes.

4. Dogs and fire hydrants are forever linked in pop culture

No discussion of fire hydrants can be complete without a nod to their most infamous admirers: dogs. The fire hydrant’s status as a favored canine checkpoint is a humorous footnote in urban culture. This peculiar affinity is believed to stem from dogs’ instinct to mark their territory. Fire hydrants, with their prominent placement and metallic scent (and likely the scent of the thousands of dogs who marked their territories before), make for an irresistible target. Some dog parks even include a non-functional fire hydrant just for the canines’ enjoyment.

5. Roswell, Georgia, boasts nation’s first ‘smart’ hydrant sensor system

Smart hydrants in Roswell are equipped with sensors that provide real-time data on water pressure, flow and even quality, directly to the city’s water department and fire services. Issues such as leaks, potential freezing conditions, or contamination can be detected early, mitigating risks and preventing larger crises. For the fire service, the system means quicker, more informed decisions during firefighting operations, potentially saving lives and property by utilizing the most efficient water sources available.

6. A cannon maker manufactured the first cast iron hydrant

Henry Foxall was a cannon maker in early America, and was personally invited by President Thomas Jefferson to set up a foundry in Washington, D.C.

In 1802, Foxall was commissioned by the City of Philadelphia to manufacture the first cast iron hydrants, with hundreds installed throughout the city over the next decade.

7. Texas boasts the world’s largest working fire hydrant

Donated to the city of Beaumont, Texas, by Walt Disney Studios in 1999 to celebrate the re-release of the animated classic “101 Dalmatians,” this gargantuan hydrant is not only a visual spectacle but also a fully functional piece of firefighting equipment. Towering at an impressive 24 feet and weighing over 4,500 pounds, the World’s Largest Working Fire Hydrant captivates visitors with its Dalmatian-spotted exterior, making it a unique and photogenic landmark.

8. A fan? See hydrant history on display at a museum near you

For those water supply enthusiasts, there are several collections of fire hydrants at fire and rescue museums around the country. At the Hall of Flame Museum of Firefighting in Phoenix, visitors can see more than 100 hydrants throughout the exhibit. In San Francisco, the infamous “little giant” or “golden hydrant” saved the city’s historic Mission District from going up in flames following the Great Earthquake of 1906, when most other hydrants in the city stopped working. The golden hydrant is still in operation today, solidifying its place in the city’s storied fire service history.

Guardians of public safety

From their wooden predecessors to the high-tech versions of today, fire hydrants have played a crucial role in shaping the safety and functionality of urban environments, reminding us that even the most mundane objects can have a rich history. As we walk past these guardians of public safety, let’s remember the centuries of innovation and dedication that stand behind each brightly painted sentinel.

CAFDA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR 2025

President, Tom Rinaldi, Commissioner, Stillwater Fire District

1st Vice President, John Meehan, Commissioner West Crescent Fire District

2nd Vice President, Ellen Martin, Deputy Treasurer Clifton Park Fire District

DIRECTORS:

Les Bonesteel Commissioner Burnt Hills/Saratoga,

Fred Richards Commissioner Harmony Corners/Saratoga,

Joyce Petkus Treasurer Greenfield/Saratoga,

Ed Woehrle Commissioner Niskayuna #1/Schenectady

Art Hunsinger, Ex Officio CAFDA member/Saratoga

APPOINTEES at the Reorganization Meeting:

Secretary Molly Jenkins, AFDSNY Region 1 Director

Treasurer: Tony Hill

Sargent at Arms: Tom Wood, Commissioner, Northumberland Fire District

Chaplain: Fred Richards, Commissioner, Harmony Corners Fire District

Legal Counsel: Greg Serio, Safety Officer, Verdoy Fire District

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

[EMAIL TREASURER: TREASURER@CAFDA.NET](mailto:TREASURER@CAFDA.NET)

518-407-5020

[EMAIL SECRETARY: SECRETARY@CAFDA.NET](mailto:SECRETARY@CAFDA.NET)

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.

[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

½ Tables available at no charge at Workshop '24, Sat November 2nd at Verdoj, FD

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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Young, Kelsey & Brown & Stroppoli, PC

The law firm of Young, Kelsey, Brown & Strippoli dissolved effective April 26, 2024. We are committed to meeting the legal needs of our clients and believe we can best accomplish this by practicing law in other larger law firms. Our firm has always put our clients interests first, and this decision reflects this commitment. Please be assured that we do not anticipate any interruption in client service or availability during the transition.

Contact:

Mary Megyeri at mmegyeri@mclclaw.com

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

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

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/>

CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

SAVE THE DATES!

CAFDA has been busy, and 2025 is shaping up to be a great year!

COMMISSIONER TRAINING

AVERILL PARK FIRE DISTRICT	Saturday, February 1, 2025	Snow Date: Sunday, February 2, 2025
CLIFTON PARK FIRE DISTRICT	Saturday, March 1, 2025	Snow Date: Sunday, March 2, 2025
BERKSHIRE FIRE DISTRICT	Saturday, March 29, 2025	Snow Date: Sunday, March 30, 2025
WARRENSBURG FIRE DISTRICT	Saturday, April 5, 2025	Snow Date: Sunday, April 6, 2025

OTHER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

FINANCIAL TRAINING FOR FIRE DISTRICT OFFICIALS	Fulton-Montgomery Community College 2805 State Hgwy. 67, Johnstown	Thurs-Fri. March 13-14,
FINANCIAL TRAINING FOR FIRE DISTRICT OFFICIALS	Brighton Fire District 2025 3100 East Avenue, Rochester	Tues-Wed. March 25-26,
CAFDA CONFERENCE	Fort William Henry Hotel & 2025 Conference Center, Lake George	Thurs-Sat. April 10-12,

ANNUAL FALL WORKSHOPVerdoy Fire District
2025 988 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham

Saturday, November 1,

SOCIAL EVENTS**OFFICER INSTALLATION DINNER**

Century House, Latham

Saturday, March 8, 2025

DAY AT THE RACES!

Saratoga Race Course, Saratoga Springs

Friday, August 8, 2025

MEETINGS – CLIFTON PARK FIRE DISTRICT & ZOOM**General Membership Meeting**

Saturday, January 4, 2025

General Membership Meeting

Thursday, February 13, 2025

General Membership Meeting

Thursday, March 6, 2025

Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, April 3, 2025

General Membership Meeting

Thursday, May 8, 2025

General Membership Meeting

Thursday, June 12, 2025

Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, August 14, 2025

General Membership Meeting

Thursday, September 11, 2025

General Membership Meeting

Thursday, October 9, 2025

General Membership Meeting

Thursday, November 13, 2025

**FOR MORE REGISTRATION INFORMATION****Website****www.CAFDA.net**

Note the website was listed as .org last week, it should be .NET

CAPITAL AREA TRAINING OPPORTUNITY - GO TO CAFDA.NET TO REGISTER



FINANCIAL TRAINING FOR FIRE DISTRICT OFFICIALS

**THURSDAY, MARCH 13 -
FRIDAY MARCH 14, 2025**

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

CAFDA, together with our friends from Mohawk Fire District, are again partnering with the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) to bring you this Fire District focused event!

Topics to Include:

- Duties/Responsibilities of Fire District Officials
- Governmental Accounting Overview
- Policies & Procedures
- Understanding Financial Reports
- Multi-Year Capital/Financial Planning & Budgeting
- Fraud Prevention & Detection
- AFR and Common Filing Errors
- Common OSC Audit Findings
- Municipal Accounting Software
- Q&A with the OSC Staff

**This Training is Not Just for
Fire District Treasurers!**

***ALL COMMISSIONERS and
OFFICERS are INVITED and
ENCOURAGED to ATTEND!***

**Join OSC Thursday after the
last session for a social mixer,
great conversation & lite fare!**

**Take Advantage of this Unique
Opportunity to ask OSC Questions!!!**

Event Location:

Allen House located at
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FINANCIAL TRAINING FOR FIRE DISTRICT OFFICIALS

**TUESDAY, MARCH 25 -
WEDNESDAY MARCH 26, 2025**

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITY!

Join CAFDA and our friends from Monroe County and Brighton Fire District for a second chance at Financial Training with the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC)!

Topics to Include:

- Duties/Responsibilities of Fire District Officials
- Governmental Accounting Overview
- Policies & Procedures
- Understanding Financial Reports
- Multi-Year Capital/Financial Planning & Budgeting
- Fraud Prevention & Detection
- AFR and Common Filing Errors
- Common OSC Audit Findings
- Municipal Accounting Software
- Q&A with the OSC Staff

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Fire District Treasurers!**

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**Join OSC Tuesday after the
last session for a social
mixer, great conversation &
lite fare!**

**Take Advantage of this Unique
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Event Location:

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(ENTIRE URL must be copied/pasted to work properly)

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OSHA INFORMATION SUPPLEMENT

PROVIDED AS A SERVICE FROM THE CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICT'S
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NEWEST INFORMATION ALWAYS AT THE TOP WITH RED ARROW

CORRECTION: *In The United States There Are Approximately 675k Volunteer Firefighters, Yet There Have Been Only Approximately 3000+ Comments To The OSHA Portal!!!!*

 ****THIS WEEK'S NEWEST ITEMS PRECEDED BY THE RED ARROW**

Recent E-mail from OSHA

Good morning,

Everyone here at OSHA would like to thank all of the people who participated in the Emergency Response public hearing, which ended on December 4. Your testimony has provided OSHA with valuable insights and points of view that will be critical in helping us continue through the rulemaking process.

Finalizing the daily hearing transcripts is underway, and we anticipate that they will be uploaded to [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) in the coming weeks, following review and approval by the Chief Administrative Law Judge.

In the meantime, the docket is open for submission of post-hearing comments at [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov). OSHA welcomes and encourages any additional comments, information and data from hearing participants and members of the public, which can be submitted until **docket closure on January 17, 2025.**

Thanks, and have a wonderful day!!
The OSHA Emergency Response team

Public Hearing After Action Comments

Dave Denniston

As we conclude the informal hearing on the proposed 1910.156 standard, I wanted to recap what has stood out to me from all the comments.

1. The proposal was drafted in a vacuum without equal representation of all of, or the majority of, emergency responders.
2. Almost all expressed that the current standard was outdated and warranted changes.
3. All agreed that responder safety was a major concern.
4. Strong opposition was voiced as to the technical and economic feasibility of the proposal.
5. There were mixed feelings as to if volunteers should be exempt or not.
6. Despite claims that the proposal was flexible in nature, most felt it was too rigid and designed as a one size fits all solution and that it shouldn't be
7. Emergency services are delivered in a vastly different nature and organizations function at various levels across the country.
8. That workplace response agencies and community response agencies are not the same.
9. That the delivery of emergency services would be severely impacted by the proposal as written.
10. **Outside of the unions, consultants, and those that wanted to weaponize the standard to demand more money from municipalities, no one came forward to say the proposal as written was the best option available.**

HERE ARE WHAT I SEE AS THE CHALLENGES MOVING AHEAD.

1. OSHA has invested a lot of time and money into the process to date. They will be looking to save face and not blow this up.
2. Changes to the existing standard are needed and warranted.

3. Exempting volunteers entirely will be difficult at best because of combination departments, definitions of volunteers, different laws in different states, the reduction of volunteer numbers across the country.
4. Only exempting volunteers will still have major financial impacts on our economy and municipalities that have any career staff.
5. The appointment for Secretary of Labor is known to be pro-labor and unions.
6. ***Even if we get a political “stay” on this for now, when the political landscape changes back in 2 to 4 years, we will be fitting this battle all over again.***
7. ***OSHA has now repeatedly asked for data and input to ideas of what would work and be acceptable.***
8. Any solution will have pain for some and there is no way to keep everyone completely happy here.
9. **This is not just going to go away.**

So please hear me out. In an effort to come up with a workable solution, I have taken the proposal rule and made some substantial edits. I am proposing a standalone standard that only applies to first response agencies (fire departments and ambulances). I have removed the incorporated NFPA standards and made them as reference material. I have adjusted the wording to put more power back in the hands of the AHJ. I have made it much cleaner and easier to read and understand. While there will still be some lift for local organizations and some pain points, I truly believe these edits would make it workable for the majority of organizations across our diverse country. **I believe if we are not willing to be part of the solution, we are in fact part of the problem.**

Please read my attached draft version and see if you think this is something we can live with. If it is (with any suggested edits) I would like to do a mass distribution of this and see if we can get enough support for it to give OSHA a way out and help improve the safety of our responders at the same time. I ask you to view this with an open mind and only object to portions that you feel would cause major disruption to your organization.

Folks, we asked OSHA to listen, and they are listening. Our elected officials repeatedly said we needed to work with OSHA to find a solution. This is a solution. While the courts may provide us with some relief, that will be a lengthy and time-consuming process with no guarantee for success. I have read this draft for the 4th time and do not see anything here now that I could not live with as a compromise.

<https://cafda.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/OSHA-1910.156-Denniston-Edits-Clean-Version.docx>

I look forward to your feedback. Time is of the essence here as the deadline for post hearing comments will come soon.

[OSHA Issued The Following Statement Regarding Its Emergency Response Rulemaking And Volunteer Emergency Responders:](#)

OSHA’s rulemaking on Emergency Response is focused on providing long overdue protections to emergency responders. The agency has tremendous respect for both the work that emergency responders do and their unique role providing essential public safety services to every community in America. This statement describes the rulemaking’s applicability to volunteer responders.

On February 5, 2024, OSHA published the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), Emergency Response Standard. ***While OSHA does not directly cover volunteer emergency responders, some OSHA State Plans treat volunteers as employees under state law, which is how a federal proposed standard could affect volunteer responders in those State Plan states.***

In the NPRM, OSHA preliminarily determined, based on the limited evidence available to it at the time, that the proposed rule would be economically feasible for volunteer organizations. *OSHA had sought information about the potential impact of the rule on volunteer organizations, but it did not have sufficient evidence to show that the rule would be infeasible for these organizations.*

Therefore, in accordance with the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, the proposal did not provide special allowances for the volunteer organizations that could be affected in some states. At the same time, the agency requested commenters’ input on whether the proposed rule would be feasible for these entities. OSHA received that input during the extended comment period from February 5, 2024 through July 22, 2024.

OSHA has received comments in response to the NPRM from many stakeholders, including volunteer emergency responders, fire chiefs, trade organizations, and members of Congress, which raise serious concerns about the economic feasibility of the proposed standard for volunteer fire departments. OSHA takes these concerns seriously. The comments submitted to the rulemaking docket provide crucial information that the agency did not have earlier in the rulemaking process. This new information will help the agency make the necessary determinations about whether the proposed standard is feasible for volunteer organizations.

OSHA is committed to taking steps in any final standard, consistent with the rulemaking record, to assess and minimize detrimental effects on volunteer fire departments. **If supported by the record, this may include excluding voluntary emergency response organizations entirely based on these feasibility concerns.**

EDITOR'S NOTE: IN OTHER WORDS, YOU STILL NEED TO MAKE THE CASE AS TO WHY THIS PROPOSED STANDARD WILL NEGATIVELY AFFECT YOUR FIRE DEPARTMENT OPERATION!!!!

While the initial comment period has closed, OSHA strongly encourages stakeholders to continue to provide information and data relevant to this question at the public rulemaking hearing scheduled to begin on November 12, 2024, and during the post-hearing comment period. Instructions for how to participate in the hearing are available on the Emergency Response rulemaking webpage, www.osha.gov/emergency-response/rulemaking. Once the rulemaking record is complete, OSHA will review all the information received and determine the appropriate approach to take with respect to volunteer organizations.

OSHA created an advisory committee working group to help the agency craft a proposed standard so that stakeholders would have a direct hand in the process. That working group included representatives from labor and management; career, volunteer and industrial responders; as well as several other important stakeholder communities. OSHA included both career and volunteer responders in the working group because some OSHA State Plans treat volunteers as employees under state law, and a federal proposed standard could affect both groups in those states. The agency's intention has always been to work collaboratively with the emergency response community to find win-win solutions that ensure both responder safety and public safety.

EDITOR'S NOTE: ALTHOUGH THE NVFC WAS REPRESENTED ON THE WORKING GROUP MANY OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES CAME FROM INDUSTRY AND LABOR, WITH MANY OF THE SUGGESTIONS BY OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GROUP BEING DISCARDED OR IGNORED! TIME FOR YOU TO GET ANGRY AND SPEAK UP.]

COMMENTS FROM NFPA..HIGHLIGHTED SECTIONS OUT OF AN 11 PAGE LETTER!!

NFPA applauds OSHA for opening this national dialogue on how to protect first responders from a variety of occupational hazards. NFPA shares that goal and has played a significant role in advancing first responder safety over the last century. Nevertheless, it is important to note that as a general policy, **NFPA does not request incorporation by reference of any of our codes and standards.** While NFPA has been involved with OSHA over the course of many years and through several Administrations considering rulemakings, NFPA had no specific recent role in putting this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking together, and NFPA did not suggest to OSHA that it should undertake this activity.

NFPA understands that OSHA has proposed to reference NFPA's codes and standards because they are widely recognized as the best in the world and thus are widely used in the United States and elsewhere. Our technical committees, comprised of 9,000 volunteer members, consider every submitted input to prepare standards that address the latest in technology, research, and other relevant information. We are proud that our codes and standards serve the safety goal of protecting emergency responders. The NFPA Fire & Life Safety Ecosystem (<https://www.nfpa.org/about-nfpa/nfpa-fire-and-life-safetyecosystem>) identifies the components that must work together to minimize risk and help prevent loss, injuries, and death from fire, electrical, and other hazards. We are confident that, throughout the years, our world-class codes and standards have saved firefighters' lives, prevented injuries, and enhanced first responders' effectiveness in aiding their communities. The development, use, and adherence to current codes and standards is a key part of the Ecosystem. The Ecosystem also relies on prepared first responders. The process of preparing first responders depends on continuous recruitment, training, and supplies of the best equipment. This is one of the reasons that NFPA strongly supported the reauthorization of the Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants managed by the Federal

Emergency Management Administration, which was recently enacted as Public Law 118-67. We continue to advocate for expanded funding for both critical grant programs. A decision made by a government, or by a for-profit or non-profit entity, to use a particular code or standard furthers the goal of enhancing safety. In the case of this Emergency Response Standard, as in the case of so many others, the entity making the incorporation decision must consider the appropriate implementation schedule and compliance plan. **We are sensitive to the concerns that many in the fire service, especially smaller volunteer fire companies, have expressed about the expense of meeting the OSHA proposal and how quickly the requirements would be mandated. At the macro level, we know that investments in safety are almost always worthwhile. We trust that OSHA will determine the appropriate implementation schedule should this proposed rule be finalized. Parallel to whatever OSHA decides, our nation must continue** to invest in AFG, SAFER, and other efforts to fund our volunteer and career first responders.

However, recent legal developments create a risk that OSHA's continued use of incorporation by reference could frustrate NFPA's ability to continue developing world-class safety standards. NFPA therefore requests (1) that OSHA refrain from incorporating NFPA's standards by reference in the proposed rule and that OSHA instead provide in the text of the rule that NFPA's standards are a benchmark for gauging compliance with the regulations and do not impose any binding legal obligations; (2) that OSHA explicitly acknowledges, in the rule, NFPA's copyright interests, knowing those interests also serve the agency and the public by ensuring the independence and sustainability of standards development; and (3) ensure through the rule that the public knows that NFPA posts its standards online for free read-only access.

The recent court decision, and the importance of NFPA's copyrights to OSHA's work, necessitate a different approach to OSHA's use of NFPA's standards. **NFPA requests that OSHA not incorporate by reference its standards in the proposed rule. Instead, NFPA requests that OSHA refer to its standards in the text of the proposed rule as one benchmark of compliance with the regulations and *expressly provide in the rule that NFPA's standards are guidance and not binding.***

NFPA requests that OSHA use a similar approach for the NFPA standards it currently proposes to incorporate by reference in its rule. For example, the proposed rule incorporates by reference NFPA 1910, Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Refurbishment, Testing, and Retirement of In-Service Emergency Vehicles and Marine Firefighting Vessels. The proposed rule requires organizations and employers to "[i]nspect, maintain, and service test aerial devices on vehicles, to ensure they are safe for use, as specified by the manufacturer, or to a standard at least as equivalent to NFPA 1910 (incorporated by reference see § 1910.6)." 89 Fed. Reg. at 8,019. ***OSHA could instead draft this rule to require that there be inspection, maintenance, and servicing of the devices "to ensure they are safe for use." OSHA should then further expressly provide in the text of the rule that NFPA 1910 is one way of ensuring safe use of test aerial devices on vehicles but does not create any binding obligations.*** This approach would ensure safety, while preserving NFPA's copyright in NFPA 1910. For each standard that OSHA's proposed rule incorporates by reference, NFPA would welcome the opportunity to work with OSHA on ways to ensure that the rule achieves the agency's safety objectives without using incorporation by reference.

****The New OSHA Rule You Must Pay to Learn**

The Center for Individual Rights

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has proposed a new rule that would impose steep compliance costs on local volunteer fire departments around the country and make them pay substantial fees just to learn what the regulations require. The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act) created a federal agency with an extremely vague mandate to establish nationwide workplace safety standards with almost no congressional guidance. Yet OSHA's most recent proposal, the Emergency Response Standard (ERS) manages to extend this already broad power even further with sweeping workplace standards that even reach volunteer organizations.

If adopted, the ERS would impose federal safety standards for emergency response services, including local, volunteer fire departments, that purport to preempt and displace existing state-enforced safety regulations. ***Many of the affected volunteer fire departments lack adequate funding (relying as they do upon voluntary support) and cannot***

afford to overhaul their standards to comply with new federal rules, which larger departments in metropolitan areas can more easily manage.

UNCONSTITUTIONAL REGULATION

CIR filed a comment with OSHA explaining that the ERS likely violates both federal law and several different provisions of the Constitution. To start, the OSH Act provides such broad discretion to OSHA as to amount to an unconstitutional delegation of legislative authority. Moreover, the sweeping reach of the ERS, a nationwide overhaul of safety regulations for such a wide swath of emergency responders, vastly exceeds the limited guidance Congress did provide. ***Worse yet, even fire departments that do not object to complying with the rule will have to pay substantial fees just to learn what it actually requires. Rather than clearly articulating the new safety standards on a freely accessible website, OSHA has incorporated by reference more than 20 consensus standards published by different private organizations.*** Just to download, print, or copy these standards, organizations must pay steep fees. But to synthesize them will require hiring expert consultants.

This approach violates federal law—the Freedom of Information Act component of the Administrative Procedure Act, which requires that an agency make all substantive rules of general applicability available to the public. It also violates the Due Process Clause of the Constitution, which guarantees citizens the right to fair notice about governing law.

The text of the OSH Act poses another problem; it does not apply to volunteer organizations at all. The terms of the law are expressly restricted to employees, i.e. people who are paid to work. ***Yet due to complex state regulations that treat some volunteers as employees for the purpose of certain state benefit programs, the ERS is unlawfully sweeping in volunteer organizations.***

This case is a vital reminder of the importance of establishing firm limits on federal power to the defense of individual rights.

TO READ CIR'S 15 PAGE COMMENT TO OSHA OPEN AT THIS LINK:

<https://cafda.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/CIR-comment-OSHA-ERS.pdf>

[This is a Link to the 18-page letter to Douglas Parker, Assistant Secretary for Labor for OSHA](https://cafda.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/NYS-United-Concerns-OSHA-Response-FINAL-07.16.24-DD.docx)

<https://cafda.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/NYS-United-Concerns-OSHA-Response-FINAL-07.16.24-DD.docx>

This is a must-read item for all concerned about the proposed update to the OSHA Standard for Emergency Response. This was filed on behalf of the NYS United Concerns Group who participate in the zoom meetings on a weekly basis. **Please take the time to read this important document.**

[Joint Letter to OSHA from NYS Association of Counties, NYS Conference of Mayors, and the NYS Association of Towns](#)

Open the Document at This Link:

<https://cafda.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/NYCOMNYSACAOTjointletter.pdf>

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE AT THIS LINK:

<https://www.voterveice.net/NVFC/Campaigns/115571/Respond>

Additionally, the public comment period for OSHA's proposed standard is ongoing and concludes on June 21. The NVFC encourages all departments to submit comments. Please visit NVFC's OSHA landing page for guidance on submitting comments and other resources at this link: <https://www.nvfc.org/osha-standard/>.

[Landing Page with Resources](#)

The NVFC has created a landing to provide resources to help members of the fire and emergency services and the public better understand the issue and submit a public comment by June 21. This includes an outline of the proposed standard, comment guide, and recorded webinars. This page will be updated periodically with new resources and information.

[NVFC LANDING PAGE LINK HERE:](#)

https://gma5qspab.cc.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001L6aLm-Ax7THBUrMdNSMphNIFj1WWWXRRzYxdUshoNVzVUkCq2FlyoxhE-Ayblw8OnamjN0BiBpzyC-pPzLiiYEvhxQ9sAxH0UIN-rMeW-UojESKwKkPDdMRzXK8VXBP-Sh4YQDWc0PJekSA9BGQCOh6lo_AGJ2vqw1b4iSBqWLS=&c=LauWWHLcf9ha42GymhgekGbw4yjuTH862UfuVJahY7fFHeGl_qUJw==&ch=lefmM7sGv75CYvgpTK9dENyqA1Rv5PwzXZ1xlkZP-JITscwLK8iGsQ==

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>

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 OSHA 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.

LINK TO THE PROPOSED OSHA STANDARD, NO FLUFF:

<https://cafda.net/proposed-changes-to-the-osha-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>