







CAPITAL SHORTS:

- Our thoughts and prayers to Jerry DeLuca and his family on the death of his father. Jerry has strong ties to the fire service since he was the former Executive Director for State Chiefs, and wife Kathy works with Districts.
 - We also send best wishes to former State Fire Administrator Jim Burns who has been admitted to the Fireman's Home due to failing health. Drop him a card at 125 Harry Howard Ave, Hudson, NY 12534.
 - We are saddened by the untimely death of Chief Robert Bornt of the Hoosick Falls Fire Department who was struck at a NYS-DOT work site. Our condolences to his family, his DOT family and his fire department family.
 - See the new OSHA information in the Supplement!!
- CAFDA is happy to announce the dates for **Conference '26** in historic Lake George, April, 9th, 10th and 11th, 2026 plan on joining us.

- CAFDA General Membership Meeting, Thursday June 12th dinner at 6, meeting at 7PM.

Too Far to Travel? JOIN US ON ZOOM at 6:30 WITH THE FOLLOWING LINK:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82706067734?pwd=RmA5e1LbRXf0TxEeSK99RprdchpkbW.1>

- **Help needed**, is there a District/Company that accepts EMS applicants only. What are your requirements for those members that respond to EMS calls only, but are still considered firefighters for VFBL or LOSAP purposes? Contact me at my email address, asking for a friend.
- **Join us in person or Zoom in, General Membership meeting on Thursday June 12th at 7PM**
- We are excited to announce that in 2026 we will be adding an additional Commissioner's training site, to be held March 21st, at Niagara Engine Co. #6 in Schoharie, NY. To service the fire districts in Schoharie and adjacent Counties.
-  **Grant Alert: FY24 SAFER & FP&S Programs Opening Soon**
FEMA has announced the FY 2024 SAFER and Fire Prevention & Safety (FP&S) grant programs, with a combined \$396 million in funding available to support fire departments and firefighter safety initiatives.
 -  \$360M for SAFER: Supports recruitment and retention of volunteer and career firefighters: <https://bit.ly/3v9wi4c>
 -  \$36M for FP&S: Funds fire prevention efforts and research to enhance firefighter safety, health, and wellbeing: <https://bit.ly/3IAVXG9>
-  **Application period: May 23 at 9 am ET – July 3 at 5 pm ET**

STUFF FOR YOUR BENEFIT, NEED TO KNOW!

WWW.CAFDA.NET

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING **Thursday June 12th**, in person or Zoom in. 7PM

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<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82706067734?pwd=RmA5e1LbRXf0TxEeSK99RprdchpkbW.1>

SAVE THE DATE: CAFDA FALL TRAINING SEMINAR, Saturday November 1st at Verdoy Fire Department

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

WHEN YOU SEE ** IT'S A RECOMMENDED READ, TAKE THE TIME TO INFORM YOURSELF!!

CAFDA is happy to announce the dates for Conference '26 in historic Lake George, April, 9th, 10th and 11th, plan on joining us.

THE LATEST FROM THE STATE CAPITAL

Days Added to the Legislative Session

The Assembly is adding 3 additional days to the legislative session, but the Senate does not plan to extend their legislative calendar at this time. While lawmakers typically pass 600 to 800 bills in a session, only 153 bills have been passed by both chambers so far this year.

Legislative Commentary

Here is what the NYS Fire Service has gotten through legislation so far this session; changed the use of the term moped to limited use motorcycle, the commissioner of agriculture now sits on the Code Council, and new construction now requires EV charging where parking is provided. The Fire Service is obviously not the priority of those controlling the legislature. With the number of session days dwindling, the chances of getting significant bills past grows dimmer each day. Bills introduced by Republicans is even slimmer. Perhaps because most of the state voted Republican in previous elections with the exception of NYC. Of the 150 Assembly members, 65 are from New York City, do you believe they care about the volunteer fire service in upstate NY?

Bills affecting the operation of the fire service are being Introduced for the 2025/26 Legislative Session the latest ScoreCard will keep you informed about pending legislation.

THE LATEST FROM WASHINGTON

Sanity is slowly returning to the swamp.

FEMA to resume in-person training at National Fire Academy

FEMA will resume in-person training at the National Fire Academy in early June, the agency announced. The move follows a months-long pause that halted in-person instruction at the Emmitsburg, Maryland, campus. Training will also resume at the Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP) in Anniston, Alabama, and the National Disaster and Emergency Management University (NDEMU), which shares the Emmitsburg campus with the NFA. These three facilities serve as FEMA's primary national training centers for emergency responders and public safety officials. **ALSO:**

The National Firefighter Registry is back! The registry – a massive project to understand and reduce risk of cancer among U.S. firefighters – was temporarily offline following layoffs at several NIOSH programs. Fortunately, the administration has restored the NFR employees' positions, and the site is back up and running.

FIRE DISTRICT FINANCES

NYS OSC Audits

****Henrietta Fire District – Distribution of Foreign Fire Insurance Tax Proceeds**

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

Did Henrietta Fire District (District) officials properly distribute foreign fire insurance (FFI) tax proceeds?

AUDIT PERIOD

January 1, 2023 – February 20, 2025

UNDERSTANDING THE PROGRAM

In accordance with New York State Insurance Law (Insurance Law), FFI tax proceeds are generated from a tax, generally at a rate of 2 percent that is imposed on the premiums of fire insurance policies written by certain out-of-state insurers against loss or damage by fire on property located in the State. In general, the out-of-state insurer will collect and remit FFI tax proceeds to the New York State Department of Financial Services, which distributes the proceeds to the proper recipients. Pursuant to Insurance Law and relevant case law, when a fire district's fire department is comprised of both paid firefighting personnel and multiple volunteer fire companies, the fire district treasurer should distribute FFI tax proceeds among the paid firefighters and fire companies on a pro-rata share basis.

The District Secretary/Treasurer (Treasurer) is the chief fiscal officer and is responsible for the day-to-day financial activities, which includes receiving and disbursing FFI tax proceeds. The Treasurer received and disbursed FFI tax proceeds totaling \$332,504 in 2023 and 2024.

AUDIT SUMMARY

District officials did not properly distribute the 2024 FFI tax proceeds because the Treasurer miscalculated the distribution. The Treasurer used the 2023 pro-rata allocation percentage to distribute a portion of the 2024 FFI tax proceeds instead of using the 2024 pro-rata allocation percentage. Although the Chief and a Board member reviewed the Treasurer's distribution calculations, prior to the Treasurer making the distributions, the miscalculation was not identified by either individual. *As a result, two fire companies received more money than their pro-rata share (\$1,322 and \$61, respectively) and the paid firefighting personnel and remaining fire company received less than their pro-rata share (\$1,134 and \$249, respectively).* The report includes three recommendations that, if implemented, could improve the District's FFI tax proceeds distribution. District officials generally agreed with our recommendations and indicated they will initiate corrective action.

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

STEP INTO THE CHIEF'S OFFICE

****Fire Chief Considerations: The Accident Review**

Joseph Murray

According to the National Fire Protection Association, in 2023, an estimated 19,225 collisions involved fire department emergency vehicles responding to or returning from incidents, resulting in 1,450 injuries.

Although motor vehicle collisions are an unfortunate reality of the fire service, it is important that fire chiefs recognize that each accident offers a learning opportunity for themselves and the members of their department. One way to help ensure that lessons are learned after each accident is to ensure a comprehensive accident review process is undertaken. It is vital that each accident is properly investigated so immediate and root causes can be identified and hopefully prevented in the future. Accident review protocols should be established within all departments to ensure information is shared and identified issues are addressed before a recurrence. *A proper accident review process includes five main steps.*

STEP ONE: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE AND SCENE PRESERVATION

The first priority of any accident is to ensure that the scene is safe from further hazards and that anyone who may have sustained injury during the accident is promptly assessed and provided medical treatment or transported to an appropriate medical facility. Once the scene is safe and protected from further hazards, the investigation process should begin as soon as practical. The investigator should work with responding police officers to control the scene and access to the site. The investigator should also ensure the preservation of

evidence from alteration or removal, attempt to determine loss potential, and make the appropriate contacts per department protocols.

As with any investigations, the sooner an accident investigator can speak with witnesses and those involved, the more likely it is to obtain accurate information. If it is impossible to conduct full interviews at the scene, at a minimum the investigator should attempt to obtain the names of those injured and the names and contact information of all the witnesses. As with most investigations, the more time that passes between the event and interviews, the more likely it is to forget or miss details.

STEP TWO: COLLECT RELEVANT INFORMATION

The second step includes collecting information. This can be done through observations on scenes, the collecting photographs and videos, and interviews with witnesses and those involved. While there is often much information to collect on the scene, additional information will likely be collected at other times and locations following the event.

The main goal of investigators on scene should be to observe and collect as much information related to the circumstances of the accident as possible. They should note weather and road conditions, take photographs/videos, and draw a sketch of the position of all vehicles and any objects involved in the collision. Additionally, investigators should collect and note the identification numbers of the vehicles involved and collect any relevant operating logs or records.

Conduct interviews as soon as possible to ensure the most accurate information. This is often the most important information an investigator will collect in the cause determination process. Fire chiefs should ensure that investigators are trained in proper interview techniques so that the most information possible can be retrieved.

STEP THREE: ANALYSIS OF COLLECTED INFORMATION

The next step is analyzing the information collected from the scene and reviewing any follow-up information collected or subsequent interviews. During this step, the investigator should begin to draw some preliminary conclusions about the likely immediate causes and root causes of the accident. This is a very important step, as it has implications for all remaining processes.

An immediate cause of an accident can be an unsafe act or condition that led to the collision or injury. Some examples of immediate causes include not properly stowing equipment in the cab, traveling at too high rate of speed, overriding safety devices, unsafe loads/weight, operating a vehicle without required training, and failure to stop for a red light.

Once the investigator determines the immediate cause of an accident, he continues to seek out information to determine if the immediate cause is related to an underlying root cause. For example, an immediate cause of an accident may be the driver's failure to deactivate the brake retarder on the apparatus during wet conditions. On review, the investigator might find that deactivating the brake retarder is not part of the curriculum in the department's driver's training program. A root cause in this example could then be a deficiency in the training program.

Determining what unsafe acts and conditions were present is one of the most challenging parts of the investigator's responsibilities. They must be prepared to face critical decisions as to why the unsafe acts/conditions were allowed to exist. When the cause of an accident is found to be failure on the part of fire department personnel or equipment, it can cause stress, anxiety, and anger. It is important that the investigator continue to focus on obtaining the facts and the truth as to why an incident occurred.

Investigators must keep in mind that the goal of the investigation is not to punish but to prevent future accidents. While the immediately identifying a cause might result in some consternation for those involved, the lessons learned might just save a life or prevent an injury in the future.

STEP FOUR: COMPLETING THE FORMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

After analyzing all information collected during the investigation, the investigator should complete a formal accident investigation report documenting the investigation findings. It should include the facts of the case such as a clear description of the events and conditions related to the accident, an accurate listing of the immediate and root causes of the accident, and a listing of corrective actions to avoid recurrence in the future. It goes without saying that an accident investigation report may become discoverable as part of potential legal

actions. As such, it is extremely important that the investigator completes the form with great care. They should be as thorough as possible when describing the steps of the investigation process and the statements received from those involved or witnesses. Investigators should provide a descriptive account of the physical evidence and the conclusions drawn from the information received. Opinions or personal feelings should not be included in the report.

When completing the accident investigation report, the investigator must keep in mind the ultimate goal of the process, which is preventing future recurrences. It is important for the investigator to determine the causes of an accident but not to overtly place blame. Naturally, it's human nature for members to react defensively to an accident investigation, especially if their actions or inactions contributed to the immediate or root cause. For this reason, it is important that accident reports are provided to the fire administration prior to being disseminated. Investigators must be prepared to back up their findings even in the face of criticism and continue to work with the fire administration to emphasize that the goal of an accident investigation report is to prevent future accidents and not simply to place blame.

STEP FIVE: TAKING CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

The final step is making recommendations and taking corrective actions to prevent the recurrence. The investigator must work with the fire administration, company officers, and safety officers to implement systems to prevent similar accidents in the future. These systems may include review of the accident reports, development or improvements in training programs, remedial training, and development of protocols. Depending on the nature of the recommendations, different levels of the rank structure may need to be involved. Regardless, each department should have a point person who has the responsibility to ensure that all recommendations are implemented and understood by those firefighters with driving responsibilities. In many departments, the point person is the appointed safety officer. In other departments, it may be the fire chief.

Motor vehicle accidents continue to be an unfortunate reality of today's fire service and emergency response system. Fire chiefs have a responsibility to do everything in their power to reduce the rates of motor vehicle accidents to best protect their firefighters and the public. *When properly managed, a comprehensive accident investigation process that includes education, training, and process improvements can contribute to reducing motor vehicle accidents. The fire service must continue to learn lessons from every accident to prevent injury and avoid needless loss of life.*

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Fairview, NJ, Firefighter Charged with Bilking Fire Department Funds

Jeff Goldman, nj.com

A firefighter in Fairview who also served as account treasurer has been charged with stealing \$6,721 from his own department, authorities said. Adrian Ocegüera made unauthorized ATM withdrawals and purchases from the Fairview Fire Department's Tiger Hose Company 1 between January 2023 and November 2024, the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office said.

The money was taken for his personal use, officials said. "It should be noted that the finances involved in the theft were separate from the taxpayer-funded Fairview Fire Department account controlled by the borough of Fairview," the prosecutor's office said. Ocegüera, of Weehawken, was charged with theft by unlawful taking and disposition following his arrest Thursday in Paramus. The prosecutor's office was tipped off in January about the alleged thefts. Ocegüera was issued a summons and released.

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.

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

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

How often do you say to yourself, "You wonder what's wrong with the volunteer fire service?" Unfortunately, we can't seem to be honest with ourselves when we look in the mirror and when someone notices the problems, they will fix them for you. But you might not like the outcome. Now I'll get off my soap box!!

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

Follow Up to Last Week's Article:

Va. County Bans FD From Responding To Calls, Citing 'Operational Deficiencies'

GREENE COUNTY, Va. — Greene County officials have released new information explaining their abrupt decision to **shut down the Ruckersville Volunteer Fire Company**, leaving many residents confused and concerned about emergency coverage in the area.

On May 23, the Greene County Board of Supervisors disclosed some details, offering more clarity on the controversial decision to ban the department from responding to any emergency calls. According to a letter from the county, the closure stemmed from a range of internal issues within the department, **WVIR** reported.

The letter included the following issues:

- Pending criminal charges against Assistant Chief Cameron Hord
- Alleged operational deficiencies
- Questions about command roles
- Missed active threat training events
- Concerns about responding to emergency calls
- How money was spent

Ruckersville Volunteer Fire Company President Harold Richards said the department was blindsided by the decision, learning about the shutdown through a letter with no prior discussion. "They said they want to conduct a due diligence review and that is fine," Richards said. "Review everything. But let us continue responding while you do." Richards says he has not had any direct conversations with the board of supervisors but is open to sitting down with them.

In Another Similar Situation in Pennsylvania!

"In another situation where if you don't wake up and fix the problems someone will do it for you."

A Delaware County fire company has been indefinitely closed and the trucks have been taken from the property after officials said they do not have the membership or certifications to effectively run.

Darby Township police and commissioners showed up at Goodwill Fire Company on West Cooke Avenue in the Briarcliffe section of the township after 9 p.m. on the night of Thursday, May 22.

"They hit the clickers and raised all the overhead doors and here's the cops," said the fire company's interim president Dan Assal.

Officials took the two fire trucks, which the township does own.

"What are you doing?' 'We're taking your trucks.' 'Why?' 'You don't need to know,'" Assal said, recalling the conversation. "And it was like an armed camp."

The Action Cam found one truck parked at the township building. The other is being stored at the Sharon Hill Fire Department.

The township said in a statement in part, *"The primary reason for the 'out of service' designation was the inability of the all-volunteer fire company to adequately respond to service calls with fully trained and certified operations and engineers with the fire apparatus in use at the station."*

"We need firefighters like every fire company around us. We're all struggling for the same pool of people," said Assal, who added the company has only 10 to 12 volunteers and they need more.

The township also said, "Out of an abundance of caution the vehicles were moved by certified drivers (...) to prevent any potential damage..."

"They took personal gear that was on the trucks that belonged to the members out with it and we still don't know where it's at. We haven't been able to access the trucks," said Assal.

Officials say Darby Township Fire Company is still running and it has mutual aid agreements with firehouses in other townships.

They also said the fate of Goodwill Fire Company will be discussed at the next commissioners' meeting on June 11.

FF HEALTH AND SAFETY – TAKING CARE OF OUR MEMBERS!

IN 2025 WE HAVE EXPERIENCED 35 FIRE FIGHTER LODD'S

*According to FirefighterCloseCalls.com**

In 2024 we experienced 64 LODDs reported nationally.!

SEARCH FOR ALL THE LODDS FOR 2025 AT THIS LINK:

<https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/firefighter-fatalities/search?page=1&deathDtRange=2025>

Details of Failed Rescue Attempt Revealed in Probe of New Haven Firefighter's On-Duty Death in 2021

Steven Goode, New Haven Register

A city firefighter died fighting a fire in 2021 when he ran out of oxygen, became disoriented and was separated from his partner — and after a first attempt to rescue him failed when other firefighters ran low on air and fled the building.

The details were revealed Tuesday in a federal investigation report into the line of duty death of Ricardo Torres Jr., which recommended several changes and improvements to department procedures.

Torres Jr., 30, was killed fighting a fire in a multifamily home at 190 Valley St. on May, 12, 2021. His lieutenant, Samod Rankins, suffered severe injuries in the blaze, which started in the basement of the 2 1/2 story home. According to a report released Tuesday by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Engine 6, Torres's company, arrived on scene at about 12:53 a.m. By just after 1 a.m. Torres and Rankins were going in the front door and up to the second floor living room to fight the fire.

A short time later, according to the report, "time-service indicators," which monitor a firefighter's self contained breathing apparatus for the engine 6 firefighters, began to go off and Rankins told Torres and another firefighter to leave and change air cylinders.

In the confusion Rankins and Torres became separated. At that time Rankins' face piece and helmet became dislodged and Torres ran out of air and became disoriented as he tried to get out of the room. According to the report, Torres walked or crawled between a couch and a radiator in the living room. At 1:16 a.m. he called in a Mayday, which was acknowledged by the incident commander.

At 1:17 a.m. Rankins called incident command and said "I have a firefighter down on the 2nd floor."

At 1:18 a.m., Rankins called a Mayday and was found by a rescuer in the living room near the entrance to the kitchen. According to the report, Rankins had his face piece and gloves off and said "help me" before falling into his arms.

Rankins was taken to a bedroom where rescuers tried to get him through a window but could not. Low on air, the rescuers had to leave. A new set of rescuers were told of his location and entered the building. He was removed at 1:35 a.m.

At approximately 1:21 a.m., a rescuer made his way into the home and found Torres lying prone with his face piece on, but he was out of air, according to the report. Three fire fighters dragged him to the living room window and tried to get him out but couldn't. Two of the firefighters left because they were low on air. One of them described Torres' location and other firefighters entered the building, went up the front stair and brought him down the same way. It was 1:33 a.m.

Both Torres and Rankin were taken to a local university trauma center, where Torres was declared dead at 2:12 am. The lieutenant was transferred to a trauma hospital with a hyper-baric chamber for treatment and recovery. Rankins retired after suing the city in an attempt to return to work.

The cause of the fire could not be determined due to the extent of the damage and a lack of physical evidence, but investigators determined there was no criminal aspect.

The chief conceded that a 360-degree size-up of the fire was not done during the blaze, which was one of the recommendations made following the investigation. But given the urgency crews faced to rescue a woman who was trapped in the home, Alston said he believes the "right decision" was made to focus on the rescue

efforts. According to Alston, firefighters have developed a relationship with the New Haven Police Department that allows for the police drone to get an aerial look at a structure fire.

Investigators from NIOSH recommended several changes in procedures including:

- Initial and ongoing risk assessments be conducted throughout fire incidents.
- Company officers and firefighters maintain crew integrity when operating in the hazard zone.
- Fire officers and firefighters are properly trained and utilize the principles of air management and fire ground survival procedures.
- Fire department operations include standard operating procedures /standard operating guidelines for operating at basements and below-grade fires.
- Fire officers and firefighters are trained in Mayday operations.
- A rapid intervention team/crew is dedicated, assigned, and in place before interior firefighting operations begin and throughout an incident.
- Response plans include a dedicated and trained incident safety officer.
- And operational battalion chiefs are staffed with an incident field technician or staff aide.

New Haven Fire Chief John Alston said Tuesday that the department has already implemented many changes related to the recommendations and is working on others, based on the previously released state police report detailing what happened at the fire. He said the department has implemented other procedures that aren't in the report, including a partnership with the police department related to blocked hydrants and having physicians called to the scene of any fires where a Mayday is called.

Mayor Justin Elicker noted that the fire department responds to about 36,000 calls and 110 fires annually and that the large majority of the city's firefighters always return home safely thanks to training, but tragedies do occur.

"Part of honoring his death is learning from the tragedy to see if there are things we can do better," Elicker said. "We've learned a lot from the report and I think we'll be stronger because of it. This report, I hope, will offer some closure."

NIOSH investigators noted that, since the incident, the fire department has already taken steps to address some of the recommendations that were made, including those dealing with crew integrity, basement/below grade fires, air management/firefighter survival and size-ups/risk assessments.

****Safety Focus: Why Fire Trucks Crash**

Greg Rogers

There are multiple factors that contribute to increased collision risk for fire apparatus. Design, engineering, human and policy factors may be involved. While we are limited to some extent with the design and engineering factors (more on that later), we have considerable control over the human and policy-based factors.

POLICY AND TRAINING FACTORS

The foundation of fire apparatus safety is proper training and experience. Apparatus operator training should be based on NFPA 1010, the Standard on Professional Qualifications for Firefighters, promulgated by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). **NFPA 1010** requirements are covered in more detail in the previous article.

- **Policy compliance.** Note that due to the NFPA's consolidation plan, apparatus operator requirements that were previously covered in [NFPA 1002](#), Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications, have been merged into NFPA 1010, Standard on Professional Qualifications for Firefighters.

Your policies and training programs should comply with both your state law and NFPA standards. This helps ensure apparatus operators understand the requirements and demonstrate they can safely operate their rigs before being allowed to drive to emergencies. Starting out with effective standards-based training provides operators with the knowledge and skills necessary for safe operation.

But what happens after that initial training? Does your department have a plan for continued training to keep those skills sharp? Many states require a certain amount of annual in-service training to ensure apparatus operators maintain their proficiencies.

- **Time and experience.** One aspect of driver training should include spending more time behind the wheel. Consider the difference between fire apparatus operators and other truck drivers. Most commercial drivers are behind the wheel for several hours per shift. On the other hand, firefighters tend to drive for a few minutes at a time, several times per shift. While experience is not based solely on how much time you spend doing something or how many times you do it, there is certainly a correlation between repetition, time and skills.

At a minimum, this time spent driving should be periodically observed and evaluated by an officer or instructor.

If you are a company officer and your engineer's driving skills aren't as sharp as they should be, it is your responsibility to provide feedback and training opportunities to improve them. Sloppy or unprofessional driving is unacceptable and should be corrected immediately.

- **The question of numbers.** Staffing is a policy-related issue that can also affect apparatus safety. In an urban setting with a career-staffed department, rigs are commonly sent out the door with at least *three* personnel on board. But in departments with staffing limitations, a unit might respond with only one person — the driver. This increases risk due to several reasons.

While staffing issues can be costly and complicated to address, departments should do everything in their power to prevent apparatus from responding with only one firefighter. A second set of eyes is one benefit here, but adding another person or two to the rig also adds judgement which can serve to influence behavior in a positive way. Sometimes tunnel vision prevents the engineer from acting rationally and a simple, "Hey, slow down a little bit," is enough to change the driver's behavior. Additionally, a driver responding alone to an incident is more likely to be preoccupied with thoughts and actions that are better handled by someone else.

Ideally, an officer should be riding up front and be responsible for the overall conduct and safety of the company. *Aside from overseeing the company's operations, the officer should also be answering the radio, operating the siren and focusing on incident needs. This frees up the driver's hands and mind to focus on one thing — driving.*

HUMAN FACTORS

Like any other risk-related issue, human involvement influences risk and tends to increase it. As long as we have humans operating fire apparatus, human behavior and human error will contribute to crashes.

- **A "response time culture."** Aside from skills and training, there are other human factors at play here. If your department has a culture that puts heavy emphasis on response times, that pressure might influence a driver to take undue risks. This is an area where everybody loses. *While it's true that response times can affect the outcome of many incidents, there are few ways to reduce time once the apparatus leaves the station.* If you want to reduce response times, increasing speed is not the way to do it. Yes, driving faster may shave a few seconds off, but at what cost?

The best areas to focus on to reduce your overall response times include call processing time, notification time, turnout time and overall readiness. If your response area is large, has heavy traffic, or is insufficiently covered by existing stations, your department should explore other solutions such as mutual assistance agreements or organizational restructuring to solve the problem. Some of these solutions are more complicated than others and require buy-in from multiple parties, and some of these ideas may be unpopular with your membership or political leaders, but fire departments should put community needs ahead of internal discord.

- **Tolerating aggressive drivers.** People's individual qualities also affect behavior and actions. Simply put, some apparatus operators lack the professionalism or maturity to operate their rigs safely. There's a good chance you've ridden with someone or know of someone who drives too fast, takes too many chances and disregards laws and regulations when responding to calls. This is the aggressive operator who drives with excessive speed, refusing to pause at intersections.

Drivers like this are all too common, and frankly, they baffle me. Most firefighters would never tolerate blatant disregard for safety on the fireground, so why are they willing to accept it on the road? These drivers have no place in the fire service and if you have them in your department, you need to correct their behavior. If the behavior cannot be corrected, the member should be reassigned to a position that does not require driving.

Looking the other way is not acceptable because what you condone, you promote. If you're a fire service leader and you are allowing this type of behavior, you might as well be encouraging it.

- **Nervous, insecure drivers.** Some operators are excellent drivers until a call comes in. Then, in true Jekyll-and-Hyde fashion, they go from responsible and safe to rattled and dangerous. For various reasons, some firefighters become nervous when a call comes in. This is a problem on many levels, but when it comes to operating fire apparatus, it's simply unacceptable. *If someone isn't comfortable responding to calls, they shouldn't be driving.*

This problem might be correctible if department leaders work with drivers to find solutions to this behavior. ***But the fact is, operating fire apparatus is not for everyone***, so if your department's staffing allows for it, limit the driving to the most proficient operators. I'm not implying that an inexperienced member should be forbidden from working towards becoming a driver. We always need to develop new drivers, but the selection process should be more involved than simply asserting that "everyone drives."

- **"First water" mentality.** Some of this crazy driving goes back to the early days of the organized fire service. Back then, fire companies would race to a scene to claim "first water." In a time when multiple, independent fire companies served our cities, the company claiming "first water" would be the only one compensated for their work.

As time progressed, many fire departments began receiving funding through taxes and other fees so the first water race shifted from economic imperative to tradition. If Engine 1 and Engine 3 were responding to the same fire, they might try to beat each other to the scene for nothing more than bragging rights. The stakes were even higher if you were to beat a company to their first-due area. Sadly, this is still happening today. If this mentality persists in your department, stop it. That's it — just stop. The bragging rights aren't worth the risk to human life.

APPARATUS DESIGN AND RELATED FACTORS

Modern fire apparatus is not your grandfather's fire truck. It's taller, longer, heavier and even has a roof! Over the past few generations, industry needs and safety requirements have inspired advances in apparatus technology, leading to changes that are mostly good, but can come at a cost.

- **Equipment and visibility.** In some rigs, visibility from the driver's seat can be obstructed by a number of things. *Ironically, mirrors can reduce visibility and increase risk.* In order to reduce blind spots, today's mirrors are larger than they were in the past, but these can obstruct the driver's view of approaching traffic at intersections. Newer rigs also frequently feature larger A-pillars. While these improve a cab's structural integrity in the event of a rollover, they also tend to obstruct the driver's view. Drivers should be trained to lean forward and back when approaching intersections to check the blind spots created by mirrors and other vehicle features. This is sometimes called "rocking and rolling."

We also have a bunch of necessary equipment riding around with us in the cab. There are mobile data terminals (MDTs), thermal imaging cameras, flashlights and gas meters — just to name a few. Depending on how this equipment is mounted or stored, it may block the driver's view. The closer an object is to the driver, the larger the blind spot will be. Most states have laws prohibiting objects from obstructing or obscuring a driver's view and a fire apparatus is not necessarily exempt.

When purchasing and outfitting fire apparatus, consider the driver's field of view. Consider the various cab and seating options offered by manufacturers and try to choose wisely. Sit in the cab of one of your current rigs and identify where improvements can be made before outfitting your new apparatus. If you're having a truck built, take time during the construction and outfitting processes to check for potential visibility issues. Look for mounting and storage solutions that reduce blind spots. Good visibility is as important as a good braking system.

- **Vehicle stability.** Stability is another significant factor in apparatus safety. The taller the truck, the higher its center of gravity. To prevent rollovers, **NFPA 1900** requires apparatus to be equipped with stability control systems. The overall design and engineering of the truck can also affect stability. Today's custom apparatus chassis are designed with the engine mounted as close to the ground as possible. This lowers the center of gravity and reduces rollover risk. There have also been advances in fire pump technology, from weight reduction to lower placement on the vehicle.

It should come as no surprise that water also plays a role in how these rigs handle. Your pumper may be carrying anywhere from 500 to 1,000 gallons of nature's most versatile extinguishing agent. You probably know that water weighs about 8.34 pounds per gallon, so 500 gallons weighs 4,170 pounds. That's over two tons. Now, consider that it's a fluid and fluids are always in motion. This movement affects vehicle stability. Even though water tanks are baffled, fluid affects and is affected by apparatus movement. While heavier, a full water tank is less impacted than a partially full one because the water has less room to slosh around. We generally don't drive around with half-empty tanks but there are times this may occur. Whenever possible, top off your water tank before leaving the scene.

For the truck company folks, the weight of the aerial makes the rig top-heavy. Placing thousands of pounds of metal atop a 10-foot-tall truck makes the vehicle's center of gravity higher than that of a pumper. While this weight doesn't move around like water does, it has a significant impact on the stability of the rig. Drivers need to be aware of this as they negotiate curves and take turns. Even with 10 wheels on the ground, rollovers can still occur.

- **Vehicle weight.** Both [weight and weight distribution](#) affect braking and overall apparatus stability. Departments should use care when outfitting their rigs, paying attention to both the gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) and the gross axle weight rating (GAWR). The GVWR is the overall maximum allowable weight of the apparatus and includes all equipment, fluids and personnel. The GAWR is how much each axle is capable of safely carrying. If an apparatus is improperly loaded, it could be within the GVWR but exceed one of the GAWRs.

Overloading the rear axle can cause understeer, a condition where the front tires lack sufficient traction to steer the vehicle, particularly in slippery conditions. Overloading either axle can cause issues with braking. If an axle is overloaded, the other axle(s) may be underloaded. An underloaded axle may lack sufficient traction for the brakes to stop the vehicle safely. An overloaded axle can also lead to overheated brakes.

Departments should ensure their apparatus has a sufficient margin between the vehicle's unladen weight and the GVWR to allow for equipment, water and personnel. When laying out the rig's equipment storage, care must be taken to distribute the load according to the GAWR. If you are purchasing a new apparatus, ensure that it can carry the equipment it needs to without exceeding the GVWR. Mass plays a significant role in vehicle stability and dynamics, so set these rigs up for safe operation before they're even on the road.

- **Geographic factors.** Every so often, we see reports of collisions involving two apparatus. For various reasons, these collisions often occur at intersections. *You should be aware of other companies responding to the call and where they are likely to come from.*

I used to respond to an apartment complex that was served by three different fire departments. We knew the truck company from a neighboring district would likely cross paths with our apparatus at a particular intersection and almost without fail, that was the case. Having this awareness, we would approach that intersection carefully to reduce our risk.

- **Intersections.** When approaching a controlled intersection and meeting other emergency vehicles, operators should yield the right of way to whichever vehicle has the green light. This is a simple solution to a complicated problem and should be standard practice. It eliminates confusion, making things safer for all parties involved. Of course, that means all agencies need to be aware of and follow this guideline.

Speaking of intersections, if your department uses traffic preemption devices, don't assume they are going to work every time. Depending on the equipment you have, there can be limitations to its operation. If sensors are obstructed, they may not receive the signal from your emitter. Likewise, ice, snow or other debris on your emitter may block the signal. Another reason your light may not turn green is that another apparatus is approaching the intersection, and the system is giving the other truck the green light, forcing your signal to remain red. Be on the lookout for this.

- **Loud sirens.** Sirens sound like sirens and when yours is on, you can't hear anyone else's very well. Apparatus equipped with air brakes will also have air horns. While air horns can be highly effective in warning motorists of your approach, they can also be helpful in warning other responders. The sharp sound of an emergency vehicle air horn cuts through other sounds, including sirens. Use your air horn when approaching intersections and if you hear an air horn that isn't yours, be alert for other apparatus.

SPEED KILLS

Speed is a factor in many apparatus crashes. This is where vehicle stability, human behavior and visibility combine to create a perfect storm. *Increased speed reduces the time you have to identify and react to changing conditions. Speed also increases stopping distance and exaggerates steering responses. In short, driving too fast influences multiple factors that increase collision and rollover risk.*

The simplest solution here is to slow down. I'm not advocating for a lack of urgency, but apparatus operators need to use speed wisely to prevent crashes. The speed an emergency vehicle operator drives should be based on an ongoing risk assessment to ensure that their actions are appropriate and safe for the circumstances.

SUMMARY

Preventing and reducing fire apparatus crashes should be a leading initiative in all fire departments. It is important to understand all the factors that can lead to a collision and to address them as soon and as frequently as possible. Department policy and culture, individual abilities and behavior, apparatus design and outfitting all need to be considered when working to improve apparatus-related safety for firefighters and the public.

Your firefighters and community deserve a department whose principles are rooted in saving lives without harming others.

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

- During a response of a tractor-trailer vs. two parked vehicles plus utility poles plus building, a firefighter suffered a medical emergency and was also hospitalized in stable condition, according to a statement from the Ridgefield, New Jersey Fire Department. The Palisades Park Fire Department assisted at the crash site, while departments from Fairview and Cliffside Park provided mutual aid coverage for Ridgefield.

FIRE APPARATUS ACCIDENTS FOR THE WEEK

- Three firefighters from the Macon-Bibb Georgia Fire Department were taken to the hospital after their fire truck flipped over Wednesday evening, Macon- Bibb County officials confirmed. There were no serious injuries," PIO Floore said. "Just bruised and sore, thankfully."
- The engine from Landover Hills, MD was blocking a motor vehicle crash in the early morning hours n when it was struck on busy Route 50. No one was injured but a \$1M engine was severely damaged.
- A motorcyclist was killed after he [collided with an FDNY truck](#) responding to an emergency call in Brooklyn.
- Two firefighters with Central Surry (NC) Volunteer Fire Department were injured after a fire apparatus overturned, both firefighters were transported to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. No other vehicles were involved in the crash. It's not clear what caused the fire apparatus to overturn.
- While attempting to engage pump operations on Craford, Colorado VFD Engine 6, during a structure fire, a mechanical failure caused the truck to roll unattended into the nearby cemetery, where it struck a tree and overturned. Thankfully, no one was inside the vehicle at the time. However, firefighter Bryan Cotten was injured by an attached hose line during the incident.



BUYING NEW APPARATUS, NEED TO KNOW

A Perspective on the Apparatus Spec and Build Process

Eli Dupslaff

The Fairview (NY) Fire District protects 4.5 square miles in the cities of Poughkeepsie and Hyde Park along the Hudson River in upstate New York. Its service area features steep grades, areas without hydrants, and a high concentration of garden-style apartment buildings. Last year, the district took delivery of its new Ladder 1, which was custom built to address these challenges after an extensive planning process.

Deputy Chief Robert Ridley shares some insight into how Fairview approached customizing and spec'ing a new apparatus. Ridley has been in the fire service for 25 years and has been with the district since 2007. Before helping spec its new ladder, Ridley was involved with the build process for one of the department's engines and two ambulances.

FORMING A TRUCK COMMITTEE

Traditionally, when Fairview needed a new apparatus, a committee was formed without an apparatus replacement strategy—a pattern Ridley wants to disrupt. “One of the directives that I’ve started as a deputy chief is to actually form a committee on an apparatus replacement plan because it’s an area where we had a weakness, strategically planning,” he explains. Since the apparatus market is changing, a once-in-a-while committee with no continuity is not beneficial to his department’s future. There are multiple aspects that must be considered before a purchase is even in the cards. “We want to make sure that our people understand that it’s not just like, ‘OK, we’re going to build a ladder truck, cool, this is fun.’ But, here’s where the money is coming from, and these are the grants that we have to look out for,” he says. Ridley explains that Fairview was able to purchase its new ladder with help from a State and Municipal Facilities (SAM) grant and New York State Assemblywoman Didi Barrett.

Eight years ago, the fire commissioners for the district, who follow National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) guidelines for the lifespan of apparatus (15 years for engines and 20 for ladders), formed an apparatus committee to replace the district’s aging ladder truck—a process that was not always smooth. “It was a huge committee at first, which wasn’t beneficial because there were so many hands in the pot,” Ridley says. “Through attrition, we were able to get the committee down to three people, working with oversight from the chief and a commissioner, and we were able to move forward and get things done.” Ridley says he values objectivity, a level head, and mechanical aptitude in the members of a truck committee. “For fire apparatus design in general, you have to look at the needs of the citizens you’re serving and what you need that piece of apparatus to do. A lot of times, especially in the fire service, people become emotionally attached to an item or a product. You cannot be emotionally attached to what you’re purchasing. You can be emotionally attached to the job because you want to be dedicated to delivering the best service. You want to make sure that whatever you’re designing will be able to save a life,” Ridley explains. “The apparatus needs to stabilize an incident and protect property. A member has to have a level head and be able to take the emotions out of it.” Having someone with a strong mechanical aptitude is important to the department as well. With the unique challenges in the department’s service area, certain things must be considered. “You need somebody who’s not going to design an over-the-road truck and grossly beef up the suspension or give you the wrong

transmission so that you're underpowered on the hills." Things like engines, transmissions, and suspensions need to be understood by the committee so not only will the end product meet your needs, but it can also be maintained.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF DEMONSTRATION APPARATUS

Before making a purchase, the Fairview Fire District faced a large decision: Which type of aerial device should it consider? Ridley explains that the district considered everything from water towers to tractor-drawn aerials. To answer this question, the committee looked to manufacturer demonstrations, an experience Ridley says must be taken advantage of. "When you get a demo, you need to look at the aerial, look at the outriggers, get a stopwatch, and see how long it takes to set the truck up. Get a couple of reps in with it. Drive the manufacturer and the dealer nuts, and do it a couple of times so you start to build your own muscle memory." He says don't stop there: "Get it out of your firehouse parking lot and into your district. Drive it around, bring it to the areas that are challenging for your current apparatus or areas where you think there's going to be a problem and set it up."

Performing different maneuvers with the demonstration apparatus really helped narrow down Fairview's decision. Personnel brought demos to areas with low power lines and tree overhangs; loaded them with water to see if there were any performance differences; and even tested compartment space, a struggle with the department's current ladder. "We were offloading the equipment of our current ladder truck and putting it in the compartments to see if stuff would fit," he says. "Stripping all the equipment off and sticking it into this compartment to see the room we were gaining—it was a good visual for people to see and to start getting that we're going to gain something here."

Ridley says to change your expectations of demo units and take them with a grain of salt. A demonstration apparatus is not purpose-built for your department, so there will be features that you will not use. However, demo units can display new features your department hasn't considered. There were many things that Fairview noticed on demo units that it incorporated into its own customized apparatus. One demo unit featured outriggers forward of the pump module. This allowed for better setup in the district's hilly areas. Fairview also has a younger staff and can be understaffed during some situations, so seeing an easy-to-use aerial was also a plus. "We're a low-manpower department, and we had some turnover. I think some departments would traditionally fight technology. Our younger people were going to be so much more in tune with embracing a smart aerial, especially with the joystick. They love the joystick on the Rosenbauer. I'm a three-position control guy, but these guys said, 'Yeah, let's do it like this,' " Ridley explains.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRECONSTRUCTION

After the demonstration process, Fairview was able to narrow down the aerial type it needed, and the manufacturer began to bring its new apparatus to fruition—a 109-foot Rosenbauer Viper straight-stick aerial. For its build, Fairview visited the Rosenbauer campus three times: for a preconstruction meeting, for a midconstruction inspection, and for a final inspection. Ridley stresses the importance of a preconstruction visit and meeting, something he regrets not doing for previous apparatus builds.

During preconstruction, a department works with the manufacturer and dealer representative to go through the "punch list" of the spec before the actual build begins. Fairview Fire District's preconstruction visit took two full days, but Ridley explains that physically being at the factory can give some very valuable insight to the department and committee.

Ridley highly recommends connecting with the people around you. "Please interact with the people in the factory," he says. "Shake their hands, introduce yourself. Say, 'Hey, my name is Robert Ridley. I'm a chief at the Fairview Fire District. We're here for a preconstruction. Can you tell me what you're doing?' You will gain insight into the process and what they're doing," he says.

Ridley explains that through his experience, he has been able to see apparatus being built for departments across the country and compare some of the things that work for them. Seeing all the apparatus at a factory can also provide insight into certain features or setups that can guide the build process. "Walking that factory floor in preconstruction is going to give you all of these different options that you can see. It's not going to be every one, but it's going to be so much more than what you would normally see," he says. "So, jump up into the cabs and see how that feels, because there might be something different in there. It could be something

as simple as a siren brake or a different colored toggle light for your scene lighting. But, there's going to be something that you're going to see."

A FINISHED PRODUCT

Fairview Fire District took delivery of its new apparatus after it was featured at FDIC International 2024. Its previous ladder, which it hopes to keep as a reserve, was a former demo unit. Ridley says it worked, but there are some challenges with an apparatus not built for the district's community. For example, he says that ground ladder storage was an issue with the previous truck. A custom build was a game-changer for Fairview. "It had a three-section 24, three-section 35. It met a requirement, but it made no sense. And, you needed a small army to get ladders out and up to people because of them being three sections."

Ridley says his nightmare situation is a garden-style apartment fire where multiple people are on balconies and there won't be enough time to set up ground ladders. The new Ladder 1 features a large ladder tunnel in the torque box. The ability to store two-section ladders was a great improvement.

Ridley says that the truck has really given the Fairview Fire District the versatility to set up in places they haven't been able to set up before, do things they haven't been able to do before, and that it's bringing back a truck culture in Fairview. Ladder 1 went into service September 16, 2024.

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!!

HOME FIRE FATALITIES REPORTED BY THE MEDIA FROM THE US FIRE ADMINISTRATION FOR 2025	
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	37
Last fire death 4/27/25 Queens NYC., 3 Males 45,52 & 67 years old	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	64
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	501
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA/46
	#2 NY/37
	#3 IL/30
Civilian home fire fatalities in 2025: 995	
2046 civilian home fire fatalities in 2024	
Week 23 of 2025, fire has claimed on an average 43.2 lives PER WEEK, perhaps OSHA should examine that death toll.	
Both the states of Maryland and California as well as Wash. DC require sprinklers in 1&2 family dwellings.	
According to realtors and builders only old homes burn, so sprinklers are not needed in new homes: so when does a new home become an old home?	

GREEN TECHNOLOGY & THE FIRE SERVICE

Home Destroyed By Fire Caused By Lithium Batteries, Chief Says

BRIGHTON, Wis. (WISN) - A fire caused by lithium batteries destroyed a house in Wisconsin on Thursday. The Kenosha County home is now a pile of rubble. Kansasville fire officials say flames already engulfed the structure by the time rescue crews arrived. No one was inside at the time, but multiple pets are believed to have died.

The fire chief says the fire was caused by lithium-ion batteries that were charging. "Lithium-ion batteries were reportedly to power a 6-foot drone that the homeowner had just recently purchased, and he plugged the charger in probably three hours or so before the fire was reported," Kansasville Chief Ron Molnar said.

STUFF FOR YOUR OFFICERS AND MEMBERS!



BY  **McNeil & Co.**

Earning The Stork Pin: Prehospital Childbirth ESIP WEBINAR SERIES

In this session, Risk Management Training Supervisor Lee Price will discuss the initial steps involved in preparing the mother for delivery and guiding the childbirth process. From addressing fears to ensuring a safe environment, first responders play a vital role in this intense and impactful moment.

WEDNESDAY 6/4/25 at 7:00PM

One of the Top 5 Killers of Firefighters

Webinar - Roadway Incident Safety & Survival: Best Practices for Emergency Responders

Thursday, June 5 at 2pm ET

Presenters:

Brady Robinette and Jack Sullivan

REGISTER AT THE FOLLOWING LINK:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-PddKE1JSByWR6CFfR-xlQ#/registration



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):

Cortland (October 28) • Erie (October 8) • **Fulton (September 9)** • 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) • Suffolk (April 2) • Westchester (September 3)

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

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

ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Coming Attractions:

- **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



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

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

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Au Sable Forks Grand Opening Celebration

Saturday, June 7th, beginning at 11am, all are invited.

A poster for the Au Sable Forks Fire Department's Grand Opening. The top half shows a photo of the new fire station with the text 'AU SABLE FORKS FIRE DEPARTMENT' and 'GRAND OPENING' in large white letters. A red banner on the right says 'SATURDAY JUNE 7TH'. Below the photo, there are two main sections: 'ACTIVITIES TO INCLUDE:' and 'EVENT SCHEDULE'. The activities list an opening ceremony, station tours, hamburgers, a cornhole tournament, and raffles. The schedule lists times from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM with corresponding events like opening remarks, pre-registration, and raffle drawings.

AU SABLE FORKS FIRE DEPARTMENT

GRAND OPENING

SATURDAY JUNE 7TH

Join us on for a fun-filled day the whole family will enjoy as we celebrate the grand opening of our brand-new fire station! Come take part in this exciting community event featuring special ceremonies, station tours, food, raffles, and activities for all ages. It's a day of tradition, celebration, and community spirit—don't miss it!

ACTIVITIES TO INCLUDE:

- Opening Ceremony: Remarks, Blessing, Dedication & Fire Truck Push
- Station & Fire Truck tours
- Hamburgers & hotdogs (by donation)
- Cornhole Tournament
- Raffles: Basket of Cheer, Lottery Truck & Cornhole Board Set

EVENT SCHEDULE

11:00 AM
Opening remarks from the Chief, Chairmen & Town Supervisors, followed by a blessing, mission statement, dedication, and traditional fire truck push & hose uncoupling

12:00 PM
Pre-registration for Cornhole Tournament

1:00 PM
Cornhole Tournament & Activities Begin

3:00 PM
Raffle Drawings

FOR FURTHER DETAILS, CONTACT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT AT 518-647-5582 OR SEND US A MESSAGE ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE!

2456 State Hwy 9N, Au Sable Forks NY
Au Sable Forks Fire Department

Gansevoort Fire Department Breakfast

June 15th, at the Gansevoort Fire Station 1870 Route 32N, Gansevoort, NY

ALL YOU CAN EAT BUFFET! , Eggs made to order, omelets, pancakes, French Toast, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, biscuits with sausage and gravy, Fried Potatoes, toast, cereal, milk, coffee and orange juice. \$12 adults, \$10 seniors & military, \$8 children 6-12.

The fire company thanks you for your support!!

Clifton Park Fire Department Breakfast

See you in October when we start up again.

Asking for a Friend

Help needed, is there a District/Company that accepts EMS applicants only. What are your requirements for those members that respond to EMS calls only, but are still considered firefighters for VFBL or LOSAP purposes? Contact me at my email address, asking for a friend.

GENERAL INTEREST

Fire Department Recruitment: The Real Reason Your Agency Is Struggling

Bruce Bjorge

As public safety agencies grapple with the ongoing challenge of recruiting and retention, many are searching for answers regarding how we got to this point. Regardless of the reasons, lots of agencies are having trouble getting people to join their teams.

While this is truly an issue throughout public safety, it is no more prevalent and critical than in the fire service. This is because fire departments rely heavily on volunteers to provide much of the community fire protection across the country.

THE STRUGGLE IS REAL

Over the past several years, there has been a lot of dialogue, conversation and ideas thrown around trying to figure out why public safety agencies are **struggling to recruit and retain** personnel. Explanations range from pay and benefits to shift schedules, available time and so on. Others blame generational differences, saying the current generation we are recruiting is selfish and doesn't care about helping others. Many are saying this out loud, where Gen Zers can hear us too!

This baffles me. Why would anyone want to be part of any organization that doesn't want them? Until we change our attitudes toward future candidates and generations, this issue will continue to contribute significantly to the overall problem.

While these are contributing factors, the elephant in the room still is not being addressed. And that is: Why should I join your organization? If I do not understand the opportunities for me, then I'm not motivated to join you — career, volunteer, combination, whatever. And to be clear, this isn't a question of "What's in it for me?" which is why many believe the current generation is selfish. Not at all. If potential recruits don't see a benefit, they simply won't join up.

INVITATIONS AND INFORMATION

Allow me to paint a mental picture for you. I am getting ready to do something fun and recreational. The activity can be whatever you enjoy — fishing, skiing, skydiving or whatever you consider fun. Fishing is relatable for many, so stick with me on that journey for a moment.

If I invite you to **go fishing with me** but I don't provide any details on when, where and what we are fishing for, how likely are you to join me on the trip? What if we were going skydiving? If I asked you to go with me, you would have many questions I must answer before you'd be willing to put on a jumpsuit. Why? Because terminal velocity is a genuine concern.

In the same way, a potential firefighter candidate may have some serious questions about the possibility of running into a burning building when everyone else is running out. Let's face it, that's the impression many

potential recruits will get from the messaging we all put out. But that's a different blog topic for another time. Make sure your message represents what the job actually is! (More to come on this later.)

Many of us fail to remember our journey into the fire service. While some recruits initially become interested in the fire service through a flyer or video, I wasn't really "hooked" until I stepped across the threshold to the fire station, rode on the truck and experienced the environment firsthand. I think that's a very common experience among veteran firefighters.

So, when I invited you to go fishing, if I told you what time to meet me, provided you with tackle and gear, and made sure you caught fish when we went, you would be much more likely to come fishing with me again. And if you had a great time, you would be much more willing to tell others about our amazing fishing trip. You might even invite others to join!

LESSONS TO LEARN

This idea suggests two fundamental things for **recruiting and retention**:

1. **Good teams attract good recruits.** It's important to do your due diligence to ensure your "fire service boat" isn't leaking. If you're having trouble keeping good people, you need to figure out why. Focus on providing an environment and culture where your current staff is a happy, high-functioning team who enjoys their work. If we fail there, it doesn't matter how much we recruit; we will lose them as fast or faster than we can recruit them.
2. **Send out the welcome wagon.** When anyone shows interest in joining you, roll out the red carpet and get them involved in what we do as quickly as possible. The sooner you can get them "hooked," the better. Also, every person you recruit likely has many friends and family members who might be interested, too. Referrals have always been the secret to a successful recruiting campaign for any organization.

I do not want to underemphasize the other concerns I raised earlier. Considerations like wages, benefits and so on must be addressed to remain competitive in today's job market. With so few people available to work, we have to attract applicants with a competitive job opportunity or we won't convince them to join our teams. While these factors are important, I will always argue that the financial benefits of the job are only part of the equation. The fire service provides an environment that encourages initial participation and keeps people for the duration of their time or career with us. In a very big way, the job can be its own reward.

GETTING OUT THE MESSAGE

We all need to remember that if we want people to go fishing with us or jump out of a perfectly good airplane with us, we must make an effective case regarding why they should. Once we have explained the rewards, we must allow them to experience the fire service themselves so they can see the opportunity is as good as we say it is. If we fail to accomplish this, people will stay in the airplane or on the dock and never join us.

The sooner we commit to messaging effectively about the benefits and rewards of the fire service, the more people we'll have joining us in the boat. And of course, being fully staffed means we have the help we need to better serve our communities.

LAUGH OUT LOUD!!

You know that indestructible black box that is used on airplanes? Why don't they make the whole plane out of that stuff??

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Greenfield Fire District is Hiring

The Greenfield Fire District is looking for a professional and highly-motivated person to perform a wide variety of functions relating to the material needs and possessions of the Greenfield Fire District. Must have good organization and communication skills, the ability to manage several projects simultaneously, and be flexible

with work hours when necessary. Prior experience preferred and all candidates must have a clean driver's license. Individuals residing within Fire District Boundaries preferred. Employment application and job description can be found on the district website at www.greenfieldfd.org. Applications, or cover letters & resumes, will be accepted until the position is filled, and should be sent to Joyce Petkus, District Administrator via email at jpetkus@greenfieldfd.org or regular mail to Greenfield Fire District, P.O. Box 103 Greenfield Center, NY 12833.

CAFDA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

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 Member Clifton Park Fire District

APPOINTEES

Secretary Molly Jenkins, Region 1 Director, Assoc of Fire Districts, NYS

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

518-407-5020

EMAIL SECRETARY: 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.

CAFDA BUSINESS SUPPORTERS

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

We want to thank all of our Business Partners for renewing their partnership for 2025. You are invited to our monthly membership meeting and to any of our social events..

FIRE SERVICE LEGAL SERVICES



The D'Amato Law Group LLP
Gregory Serio, Partner
Alyssa B. Snyder, Partner
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Albany, NY 12210
518.426.3800
Email: gserio@dlgny.com or
asnyder@dlgny.com
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Jack Clark, Fire District Attorney
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Ducharmeclark.com

Whiteman Osterman & Hanna LLP

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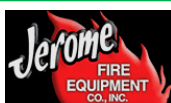
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*The Weekly Capital Bulletin is reaching well over **650+** subscribed fire district members and now other members of the fire service on a regular basis. This is a service of CAFDA through the effort of Tom Rinaldi who can be reached at tom@rinaldi1.com for comments and content contributions are always welcome.*

BECOME A MEMBER OF CAFDA!

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 100 members in 14 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 — Thurs-Fri. March 13-14, 2025 — 2805 State Hwy. 67, Johnstown
FINANCIAL TRAINING FOR FIRE DISTRICT OFFICIALS	Brighton Fire District — Tues-Wed. March 25-26, 2025 — 3100 East Avenue, Rochester
CAFDA CONFERENCE	Fort William Henry Hotel & Conference Center, Lake George — Thurs-Sat. April 10-12, 2025
ANNUAL FALL SEMINAR	Verdoy Fire District — November 1, 2025 — 988 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham

SOCIAL EVENTS

OFFICER INSTALLATION DINNER	Century House, Latham — Saturday, March 8, 2025
ANNUAL 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	Wednesday March 5, 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
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OSHA INFORMATION SUPPLEMENT

PROVIDED AS A SERVICE FROM THE CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICT'S
ASSOCIATION – CAFDA

NEWEST INFORMATION ALWAYS AT THE TOP WITH RED ARROW

[Dave Denniston Reports on a Successful Visit to Washington, D.C.](#)

Could not be prouder than to be part of the current team as we laid the foundation for groundbreaking collaboration between the US Secretary of Labor, OSHA, IAFF, and NVFC. We all agreed to roll up our sleeves and finish crafting the Emergency Response Standard. **This new rule** will be a labor of love that protects our mutual volunteer and career first responders with a standard that is reasonable, and both economically and technically feasible.

The passion in this room was unsurpassed and I am confident the group will leave a fire service for the next generations that is safer and better than the one we found. Thank you for all the hard work that got us this far and the work of additional others that will be invited to help us in this process moving forward.

[NVFC Forming Red Ribbon Panel to address proposed OSHA ER Standard, more information to be posted as soon as it is available.](#)