



CAPITAL SHORTS:

- A letter of intent for those wishing to run for CAFDA officer or director must be in to the Secretary prior to the start of the October General Membership Meeting.
- Both the fire district election schedule and the budget development schedule are posted to the web site at www.CAFDA.net
- New York State has issued a temporary statewide burn ban that began this week, in response to rising fire danger and prolonged dry conditions and will remain in effect until October 15th.
- During the October meeting the attendees nominated the following for 2026; President Tom Rinaldi,

Vice President Ellen Martin, Directors: Les Bonesteel, Joyce Petkus, Skip Smith, Art Hunsinger and Ed Woehrle. The body discussed the need for two vice-presidents and decided to leave one of the positions vacant for further evaluation and discussion. Elections will take place at the meeting on November 13th. John Meehan and Fred Richards chose not to run for their positions in 2026.

LEARN WITH CAFDA – OUR EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

WWW.CAFDA.NET

1. ***NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING Thursday November 13th, in person or Zoom in. 7PM. Election for 2026 Officers and Directors will occur.***

ZOOM LINK FOR THE OCTOBER MEETING:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88171243348?pwd=rvkK8ojfyrbisyd8rz4PvLm63WuTuZ.1>

Meeting ID: 881 7124 3348

Passcode: 602778

One tap mobile +1-646-558-8656,,88171243348#,,,,*602778# US (New York)

It should also be noted that: "Letter of intent to remove a name from nomination for President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President and Board of Directors must be submitted to the Secretary in writing by the November meeting."

2. CONTINUE BELOW:



Capital Area Fire Districts Association FALL EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

**Saturday November 1st, Verdoy Firehouse
988 Troy-Schenectady Rd. Latham, NY 12110**

7am Registration, Continental Breakfast



**8:00-9:30am Bob Mitchell, Fire Station Legal
Liability and the Role of a Properly Designed
Decon Laundry**

**9:45-10:45am Alyssa Snyder, Running a
Proper; Election District and Company**



**11:00-12:00pm Greg Serio, Ethics and the
roles of the players; District and
Company**

**12:15-1:30pm Lunch with the Experts
Panel Round Table**



**To register go to: CAFDA.NET
Designed for District and Fire Company Officers and
Boards**

3. CAFDA is happy to announce the dates for Conference '26 in historic Lake George,

April 9th, 10th and 11th, 2026 plan on joining us.

4. CAFDA will be offering two Fire Service Financial training 2 day sessions in 2026

At Rombout Fire Department, Fishkill, Dutchess County on March 13th & 14th and at McNeil Insurance in Cortland, Cortland County at on March 27th & 28th. Training is provided by trainers from the Office of the State Comptroller. Continental Breakfast and Lunch will be included.

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!!

THE LATEST FROM THE STATE CAPITAL

Injured While Volunteering? You'll Get Less Than Unemployment Pays!

Volunteer firefighters and EMTs injured on duty receive benefits, at a rate less than those currently out of work under worker's comp. That's not just unfair — it's outrageous!

The VFBL (Volunteer Firefighters Benefit Law) is a program that was created to support volunteers who get injured. *It has not kept pace with the cost of living, while unemployment is updated regularly.* The result: unemployed New Yorkers are receiving more than injured firefighters recouping from serious injuries — right now — across the state. The state needs to hear from you — give injured volunteers the dignity and support they deserve. This does not help recruitment and retention!!

Please sign the support letter below — and if you've been hurt while volunteering, send us your story, which is below the letter.

Governor Kathy Hochul
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224
Dear Governor Hochul,

I write to you not only as a volunteer first responder, but as a proud New Yorker who has chosen to serve my community. I do this without compensation other than the satisfaction of being able to help my neighbors in their moments of greatest need. However, I am asking for something for my family: fairness.

Currently, when a volunteer first responder is injured in the line of duty they receive benefits under the Volunteer Firefighter's Benefit Law (VFBL) or the Volunteer Ambulance Worker's Benefit Law (VAWBL). The current levels amount to less than Workers' Comp or unemployment benefits in New York across the board. Under your leadership, New York has been a national leader in protecting workers and standing up for equity in the workplace. But somehow, volunteer first responders have been left behind. Raising VFBL / VAWBL levels is not about politics. It's about dignity and equity. It's a recognition that when a volunteer first responder is disabled or killed in the line of duty, they and their families deserve the same protections as any other New Yorker who are injured on the job or find themselves without employment.

Our disability benefits amount to less than half of the maximum benefit under Workers' Compensation. All levels are below New York's current unemployment rates. The fire service urges your leadership to raise weekly benefits for volunteers who sustain total or permanent disabilities in the line of duty to, at minimum, what unemployed New Yorkers take home to ensure a basic quality of life. Due to the relatively low prevalence of cases, the financial impact would be minimal while the positive human impact would be immeasurable.

When we are injured while volunteering, we don't have an employer to turn to. We only have our communities and the State. Right now, the State is failing us. We urge you to stand with New York's volunteer first responders

and help us close this shameful gap in protection. We don't want a parade. We don't need a ceremony. We just need the same basic support that every other worker in this state has when tragedy strikes.

Respectfully,

GO TO THIS LINK TO EASILY SUBMIT YOUR LETTER:

https://fasny.com/legislation/vfbl/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=October%202025%20E-Blast&utm_content=October%202025%20E-Blast+CID_ae7d3377d61935f69a492d07c1d51013&utm_source=FASNY%20Campaign%20Monitor&utm_term=Learn%20More%20%20SignSubmit%20Letter

Are You PESH Prepared?

Fire Departments **must** keep a "Log and Summary of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses" even if the number is zero. They must post **the Summary page (OSHA Form 300A), as required by OSHA**, in the workplace on February 1. **They must keep the Summary posted for three months.** Forms are available at:

<https://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/forms>

THE LATEST FROM WASHINGTON

✦ **Government Shutdown Watch:** The federal government has now been shut down for nine days with no end in sight. The Senate has held several [votes](#) on a House-passed continuing resolution (CR), but the repeated votes have not yet garnered enough Democratic support to pass the bill. Democrats are refusing to support a CR unless Republicans include [extensions of tax credits](#) to help lower health insurance premiums for individuals insured under the Affordable Care Act. If the tax credits expire, premium payments would increase significantly when open enrollment season begins on November 1. Republican leadership thus far has opted not to include an extension of the tax credits. A timeline for resolution on any of these issues remains unclear.

✦ **National Firefighter Registry (NFR) for Cancer passes 32,000 Enrollments:** At the end of September, the NFR [announced](#) that more than 32,000 current and former firefighters have enrolled in the NFR, making it "the largest cohort of U.S. firefighters ever assembled." The NFR is conducting critical data collection, research, and analysis to better understand and address cancer in the fire service.

✦ **Join the NFR Today!** [Click here to enroll.](#)

✦ **CFSI Honored to Be Recognized as an NFR Champion:** The NFR for Cancer has begun recognizing "fire service, media, and other nonprofit organizations who actively encourage firefighters in their networks to join the NFR for Cancer."

CFSI worked to secure the creation and subsequent reauthorization of the NFR and has supported annual funding for the program. We are pleased that the NFR has grown to surpass 32,000 enrollments and look forward to seeing what is to come for this important program.

About CFSI

Whether you are a member of the fire and emergency services, a public safety coalition, or the fire service industry, the United States Congress is more aware of your concerns because of the Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI). Established in 1989 as a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy institute, CFSI is designed to educate members of Congress about the needs and challenges of our nation's fire and emergency services to help them understand how the federal government can support the needs of our local first responders.

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

STEP INTO THE CHIEF'S OFFICE

****The Prisoners Run the Prison: Delegation, Ownership, and Inclusion**

Robert Ulrich

At one point in my career as an officer I was speaking with another officer about a small project that had dropped on to our radar. That officer was fretting about how he was going to administer and manage this new initiative. He asked my thoughts on it, and I said, “I am going to let the crew drive how we are going to get this done.” He was incredulous. What he said next almost floored me: “So you are going to let the prisoners run the prison?” I had problems with this on many levels. First, we have the best job in the world—why would you equate it to a form of punishment? Worse, why would you imply that your crew are like criminals, and you are the corrections officer who is tasked with “keeping them in line”?

Don’t get me wrong, anyone who has served in the role of fire officer will admit it can sometimes be like herding cats. Dealing with different personalities, lifestyles, personal concerns and agendas can make you feel like a surrogate father, psychologist, financial consultant, and life coach all rolled into one. The one thing I have never felt like (and you shouldn’t either) is a prison guard. That opening statement to me is indicative of something that many leaders deal with. Some fight it, some embrace it, but the “it” here is micromanagement, which affects many leaders at some point or another. To be honest, I have fallen prey to it once and a while and constantly want to rid myself of it.

ANOTHER ANGLE

As an officer, should we let the crew make decisions? The answer is yes. This is tempered by another question. What is the situation? Are we dealing with an emergency response problem or a routine problem?

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROBLEMS

If I am having a discussion by committee in the front yard of a house that is burning to gain consensus on how we are going to attack it, then I have failed as a leader. Our organizations have standard operating procedures (SOPs) and guidelines (SOGs) on how things are to be done for both emergency and nonemergency situations. We need to follow our SOPs and SOGs, but there is usually some latitude for discretion, as an officer. *An SOP will set a strategy with some basic tactical considerations. As an example: The SOP states the first-arriving apparatus will position, size up, communicate and begin fire attack. That SOP does not tell the driver-operator where to park; it does not tell your backstep crew what line to pull; it does not tell you that your 360 size-up must be conducted via walk around from a clockwise approach.* There are variables and room for discussion. Those things need to be worked out at a company or even at the unit level. This affords you the opportunity to teach, allow for input/feedback, and allow your personnel to drive outcomes in their favor. These things are accomplished through tabletops, discussions, and practice long before the alarm comes in.

This is also a great opportunity to assess your personnel: to find out their strengths and weaknesses and help them with critical thinking, not by infusing them with the answer to questions, but by asking questions that promote critical thinking. Ensure that you stay within the realm of the SOP but give your firefighters “ownership.”

NONEMERGENCY PROBLEMS

This can encompass a diverse group of issues, loosely guided by writ or mandate—or not. It may include items such as “station chores,” the daily routine of station upkeep. You, the officer, can establish the workflow, give assignments, set the times, and get all the details right down to the minute, second, and action. What happens if you turn that over to your crew? What if you were to put your least senior person in “charge” of getting it done? Once again, this becomes a great training opportunity to mentor someone on how to come up with a work plan, gain input, and administer assignments. It’s not “throwing the problem over the fence” by any means. You, as the officer, know the work must be done (and you must participate). You of course will have your preferences regarding how, when, and where you want the work done. Just imagine letting that go and letting the crew or members of the crew drive those decisions. They will take ownership of it. You will still set the boundaries of what needs to be done, set up “guardrails” and expectations, and give the goal. You still manage the project, simply by making sure your people are staying in the guardrails and on course, and most importantly by supporting them to ensure they accomplish the goal.

GUARDRAILS WITH SUPPORT

“Guardrails” and “support” are the boundaries that you set and the conditions to be met on a project. Be clear on your expectations. As an example, you are tasked with coming up with a replacement plan for the departments “widget collection.” It is still a program assigned to you. Communicate with your personnel about the upcoming project and ask if anyone wants to be involved. Firefighters are great at wanting to be included. The size and width of your guardrails depend on the volunteers’ experience in this area. A prime candidate would be that overzealous kid who can dictate every operational specification for the next best widget, and can tell you where to get them, how they work, and all the operational data. That same person may have no clue about how to write a proposal, where to get it by department-approved vendors, how to create a request for proposal, and all the “boring” stuff we avoided in our youth. This is where the leader must establish guardrails to keep that person on track. Support may come in the form of you giving direct oversight, teaching about the processes that he or she may not understand and providing direct mentorship. But what about the senior person on your crew, who has zero interest in the “widget” but knows all the ins and outs of the department’s procedures and processes? Why not partner the two in such a project? Enable them both to play to their strengths, get them engaged, and set expectations. Now you can take a step back and take a higher-level view of the project. The project and expectations remain the same but allowing your people to be involved and drive projects can permit you to move on and work on other things simultaneously.

FORCE MAGNIFICATION AND OWNERSHIP

These two principles can help everyone from the company level, up. Lifted from the military of “force multiplier,” “force magnification” refers to the application of force to make everyone more effective on achieving goals on the battlefield. This is accomplished when leaders start to get their personnel engaged and work together to drive projects.

This magnification allows you to focus on things that are “above” line personnel’s capability to affect or drive. You begin to be able to look “up and out,” searching for more opportunities and projects to benefit the department, shift, and companies. Personnel who take ownership of a project become built-in advocates who not only have driven the project but who have hopefully drawn other firefighters into their “orbit” for input. Those directly and indirectly involved in making a project come to fruition will become ambassadors when that given project is rolled out or implemented. They have an inherent understanding of the nuts and bolts and they can answer questions that normally would fall into your lap and take up your attention. This effect will hopefully allow for smoother acceptance and adoption of changes, no matter whether it is new policy, equipment, or processes.

Ownership is a powerful tool. That inclusion and responsibility can make your people buy into other initiatives where they have an active voice. If people have the ownership over a project, they will be more likely to take care of that project. If it is equipment for the department, they will take better care of the “widgets” they helped to purchase. If it is a uniform change, they will be more likely to wear the prescribed uniform and keep them in good condition. All this is simply accomplished by allowing them a voice.

Proper ownership in a project also has repercussions; if a task is given and someone drives right through the “guardrails,” the leader must help get them back on track. If a newly implemented project or process has problems when put into use, that ownership of creation also goes back to the people involved to hear the negative feedback or flaws. Let them see that ownership has consequences and guide them to coming up with a solution. It is an ongoing process.

CHALLENGES YOU MAY HAVE AS THE LEADER

You have earned your stripes. You have taken classes, had years of experience, studied and passed promotional exams, and now are a company officer or higher. Now, it seems, I am asking you to “give away” your hard-earned responsibilities. Yes and no. At the end of the day, you are still responsible for projects put into your orbit. To steal a line from President Harry S. Truman, “the buck stops here.” You bear ultimate responsibility for the projects you undertake. The ideas of delegation, involvement, and empowerment might be wholly foreign to you. They may seem threatening. I have had other officers ask me if delegation means they won’t be replaced. This is not the case. You are still involved in anything you delegate. You communicate, guide, question, and learn alongside the people to whom you have delegated parts of the project (this is part of the guardrails). Isn’t it also our job to train our replacements? Pass the thread along to the next generation by giving them all the tools to succeed.

Give credit where credit is due. Be honest in success. Let those above you know it was a team effort and give others the “sunshine” when it comes. This will reinforce the value of the ownership you have entrusted to your subordinates and build trust. If a project goes “sideways,” you are the one that takes the hit, because at the end of the day it was your project to start with. This helps to show you that you can’t just “throw it over the fence.” You need to be involved but not micromanaging.

THE KEYS TO THE CAR

Let’s change that initial mentality of the “prisoners running the prison” to “letting the kids have the keys to the car.” When your children started to drive, you let them have the keys to the car after you drove with them, guided them, made sure they were following the rules of the road, and knew that they knew how to navigate. When you do “turn over the keys,” you will be just as nervous as your parents were the first time they left you have the keys to the car. If you provide guidance, ownership, and training, and can put your ego aside, there is massive upside for your personnel. They will learn the intricacies of ownership and critical thinking, and you will have passed on the lessons of the department.

STEP INTO THE ATTORNEY’S OFFICE

NYS Volunteer Firefighter Cancer Benefit Program

THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER CANCER BENEFITS AND COMPLIANCE WITH MANDATED LEGISLATION

Firefighting is an inherently dangerous profession due to exposure to life-threatening risks, one of the most serious being cancer. The link between firefighting and an increased risk of various cancers has been well-established, with volunteer firefighters facing many risk hazards without benefits in place to help. In response, GML 205 - CC was introduced and passed to ensure that volunteer firefighters receive cancer benefits, helping to alleviate the financial burdens associated with a cancer diagnosis. Complying with these mandated benefits is crucial for the well-being of volunteer firefighters and the integrity of firefighting services across the nation.

THE CANCER RISK TO FIREFIGHTERS

Firefighters are exposed to various carcinogens during their careers, particularly during structural fires, where they come into contact with toxic smoke, soot, and chemicals. Studies have shown that firefighters are at an elevated risk for various cancers. Volunteer firefighters, while often not receiving the same compensation or benefits as full-time professionals, are still exposed to the same dangers during their service.

Volunteer firefighters often serve in rural or less-populated areas, where resources and medical support may be limited. Despite these challenges, they bravely respond to emergencies with little to no financial compensation, relying on their sense of duty to protect their communities. However, when these brave individuals are diagnosed with cancer, they may face significant medical costs and financial strain, which can make their fight for survival even harder.

WHY CANCER BENEFITS MATTER

Cancer benefits for volunteer firefighters serve as a form of protection and recognition for the risks they face. Without proper coverage, volunteer firefighters might be forced to shoulder the financial burden of treatment, which can devastate the firefighter and their families. The availability of cancer benefits ensures that these firefighters have access to the medical care they need and that they will be supported during their recovery or, tragically, their end-of-life care.

These benefits can include compensation for medical treatments, disability, and even death benefits for survivors and families. In many cases, cancer benefits are specifically designed to help firefighters by providing financial security when they are diagnosed with cancer after their service.

LEGISLATIVE MANDATES AND COMPLIANCE

In 2019, New York State passed GML 205 - CC, which mandates and requires all fire entities, departments, and companies to provide legislated benefits to their volunteer members. Failure to comply with these mandates not only jeopardizes the financial security of volunteer firefighters but also undermines the health and safety standards of the entire fire service community. *Additionally, non-compliance can lead to financial repercussions for municipalities or fire departments, including departments paying out claims that an*

Insurance Program could have covered. Departments are discovering that if they don't purchase coverage through the approved insurance providers they will be on the hook for all costs to the affected member(s).

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Volunteer firefighters serve as a vital backbone of fire protection services throughout the State of New York. Ensuring that cancer benefits protect them is a matter of fairness and responsibility. Communities that rely on these brave men and women must recognize the importance of supporting them in their time of need. Compliance with cancer benefit legislation demonstrates a commitment to the safety and well-being of volunteer firefighters and reinforces the importance of public service and community care.

Furthermore, offering cancer benefits is vital for attracting and retaining volunteer firefighters. As the risks of the job become more widely known, ensuring that cancer benefits are in place can help encourage more individuals to volunteer, knowing they will be cared for in case of an unfortunate diagnosis. With this assurance, some may be able to join or remain in the ranks of volunteer firefighters, which could impact fire department staffing and overall safety.

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

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

Mays Landing, NJ, Fire Department Official Charged with Theft

John O'Connor

The treasurer for the Mays Landing Fire Department was charged with theft Tuesday after he allegedly stole \$17,000 from the organization, the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office said.

Matthew C. Robison Jr., 28, of Mays Landing, was released on a summons pending court.

An investigation launched Aug. 7 revealed Robison Jr. transferred, withdrew and spent money from the organization's bank accounts for personal use between January 2024 and the beginning of this year, the Prosecutor's Office said in a news release.

Robison Jr. also allegedly altered purchase descriptions and deleted the debit lines from QuickBooks before submitting the reconciliation reports for tax purposes, the Prosecutor's Office said Wednesday.

Volunteer Fire Station In Oregon Burns Down In Blaze

The Hauser Volunteer Fire Department's lone fire station looks to be a total loss due to a fire that started around 1 a.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 7. The department lost nine total vehicles including their fire engines. All that's left is a pickup truck. Chief Wharton says that his phone has been ringing all day with calls from different agencies and people asking how they can help.

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

Training: Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

Clifton Park - October 18-19

MissionCIT's recruitment and retention workshop is back with two sessions this October for fire and EMS leaders looking to strengthen their teams.

This immersive two-day experience will equip you with proven strategies to recruit effectively, retain members, and build a stronger department culture. Whether you're a seasoned officer or just stepping into a leadership role, this training will help you create lasting impact.

REGISTER NOW AT THIS LINK:

<https://firefightersassociationofthestateofnewyork.cmail20.com/t/y-l-qijitky-ikjuyhjliy-m/>



Does your fire or EMS department need more volunteers? The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is here to help! Use the FREE department portal from the NVFC's Make Me A Firefighter campaign to access tools and resources to help you find and keep volunteers.

Get started:

- Register for free at portal.nvfc.org.
- Post your volunteer opportunities so potential recruits can find and connect with your department at [MakeMeAFirefighter.org](https://www.makeamefirefighter.org).
- Customize recruitment materials with your department's details using the materials generator.
- Share your message with ready-to-use flyers, PSAs, social media content, and videos.
- Track your applicants and follow up with ease using the recruit tracking tool.

Plus, access additional resources to help with recruitment and retention, including:

- "What to Expect" Guide for the Families of New Recruits
- Volunteer Retention Research Report
- Volunteer Value Calculators
- Recruitment and Retention Guide
- Recruitment and Retention Online Training
- And Much More!

GET STARTED NOW AT THIS LINK:

<https://tracking.police1.com/t/9495565/187515077/7816037/1/1006865/?b44ed14b=YmY5NWQ4NzktNW RmOC00MWJkLTkzMDctNzg0Y2VhZTNjMzYy&x=1ee5e8f9>

CT Department Recruits New Volunteer Firefighters Amid Statewide Shortage: 'Volunteerism Isn't Dead'

Kaitlin Keane, Journal Inquirer

Though fire companies are struggling statewide to retain new members, Ryan Delaney knows "volunteerism isn't dead" in New Milford as the Water Witch Hose Company #2 continues to grow its membership.

"We're bucking up the system where we have people that still want to volunteer," said Delaney, the second lieutenant of the Water Witch Hose Company #2. "People want to be involved, they want to give back to their community... *If you don't have an influx of new people and (a) constant rotation of people coming in, you're going to die out like we've seen departments around us.*"

Several departments have closed this year, including in North Haven, Meriden and the Torrington Volunteer Fire Department in Torrington.

The Water Witch Hose Company #2 has an active roster of 50 members as well as several veteran and retired members. The company has about 10 new recruits, including six probationary members, Delaney said.

New Milford fire officials credit their "recruitment rush" to people wanting to get involved in their community. "The presence of other candidates and probationary members immediately gives new candidates a welcoming team experience," Fire Chief Sean Delaney said. *"Our officers have certainly rose to the occasion as well. By tailoring a portion of our training to very entry level skills, these candidates have a chance to go hands-on immediately.* The impact that we have now with them will reverberate into active years of service."

Between the increase in emergency calls and the lack of available volunteers to cover the call volume, Ryan Delaney has observed the “volunteer crisis” happening regionally and statewide in the past few years. State Comptroller Sean Scanlon, the grandson of a decorated firefighter, shared a study this year of the state’s volunteer departments and where they might be headed.

Scanlon’s report warns the number of fire departments is “expected to decrease as the state continues to struggle with volunteer recruitment and retention.” It highlights the profession’s long-term health risks and fewer health and pension benefits as possible deterrents for those looking to pursue a career in firefighting.

‘A big commitment’

Delaney said it is a commitment and they understand “how much we’re asking of our members.”

“It’s a very daunting thing to do — wake in the middle of the night, go to an emergency and return home — *so we really try to make it a fun environment, a good environment*, for all of our people to keep them engaged, keep them coming back,” he said, “Because if we were to just constantly push, push, push and work, work, work, you are going to burn people that way.”

Fire Chief Sean Delaney said walking through the front doors is “the biggest step anybody takes” to become a member.

“And now they see the door’s always open,” he said. “Anyone who wants to be a volunteer has a place here.”

While the fire company has some members who came from other departments, Ryan Delaney said volunteers can join with no experience.

“We’ll take anyone off the street, and we’ll train them in-house,” he said.

Ryan Delaney said the company focuses on building skills to be as “proficient as we can.” The state requires new recruits to complete the Firefighter 1 class. They also get hands-on experience early.

About 25% of the company’s call volume is answered by new recruits, Ryan Delaney said. Out of the 763 calls the company responded to last year, he said about 220 calls were answered by new members.

Ryan Delaney estimated it takes about two years for a volunteer to become a fully certified interior firefighter. That includes six months for volunteers to move through the candidacy and application processes; six months to vote them into the department; and their probationary year as members.

He recognizes this process doesn’t always align with members’ lives and schedules. In fact, he said only about 10% of Water Witch’s new recruits become long-term firefighters.

“It’s a big commitment to prove you’re actually willing to do the jobs,” Ryan Delaney said. “We want to have the right people before we get into making investments in gear or training, so that’s why we have such a rigorous application process and then a probationary period.”

Once they are voted into the company, volunteers get to sign “the Book,” which contains the signature of every Water Witch member since the company’s founding in 1863. Volunteers also receive their badge and start their probationary year.

“We’re looking for people that want to give back to the community in the same way as we do,” he said. “We’re not getting paid to do it — we’re here because we love to do it. I think our biggest goal is that we don’t want to see New Milford go to a paid department, so the more people we can bring in, the longer we can stay volunteer.”

‘Open doors, open arms’

Though the new probationary members come from different backgrounds, they shared a desire to join to give back to New Milford, where they live.

“I’ve always been interested in it,” said Hunter Goddard, an engineer for an Orange-based natural gas company. “I’ve always wanted to give back to the community and I love that they love their community... There’s no harm in coming around and seeing if this is something that you could see yourself doing.”

Pat Maguire admitted he had “no initial reach” for becoming a firefighter, though his father Patrick Maguire previously served as a chief for the Water Witch Company and his sister Ashley Maguire is a member.

“I was curious about it,” he said.

Then one day he saw Sean Delaney who told him they’re always looking for new members. Maguire said he took that as his opportunity to drop by.

Mark Hanrahan said he was thinking about his next step after retiring from his engineering career with Honeywell, while Chris Freeman said the opportunity to join the fire company “just aligned perfectly.”

On top of serving their community, several members said they were drawn in by the camaraderie shared between firefighters, and the fire department at 8 Prospect Hill Road has become a second home.

“This place is my family,” Freeman said. “It’s open doors, open arms.”

Brooks Baldwin, a New Milford and federal firefighter who became a lieutenant for Water Witch in July, said it’s a “huge honor” to help members in the same way he was helped and teach them “to become the best firefighter and the best member of the community that they can be.”

“That’s one of the most unique things about the fire service,” Baldwin said. “You can have a member that’s been involved for 25 years and you have the opportunity to teach them something new because this field is ever evolving.”

Your Volunteer Retention Playbook: 4 Challenges and Solutions

Dan Rogers

What’s the process for bringing new volunteers into your department? Do you simply provide the new member gear, a pager and a T-shirt and expect them to succeed?

Even for officers who see the clear fault in that approach, some likely find themselves wondering how to meet the needs of the department and their recruits – a lot of work for a volunteer officer, perhaps more than they want to take on. While it does take work, officers must recognize that fostering new members is critical to the future of the volunteer fire service – critical in getting members to stay.

In the accompanying article on recruitment, “**Your volunteer recruitment playbook: How to develop the plan and execute**,” I touched on firefighter retention and the reasons we believe firefighters are leaving the ranks.

4 REASONS FOR POOR VOLUNTEER RETENTION

If we can’t retain them, we will not be able to recruit them!!

The likely reasons for our volunteer firefighter retention issues fall into four categories:

1. Lack of quality training and leadership;
2. Culture of cliques that exclude others;
3. Generational differences that cause tension; and
4. Lack of camaraderie or sense of community.

Let’s break down each reason to better understand what we can do to eliminate these issues.

1. Lack of quality training and leadership

Just because we were successful in recruiting new members doesn’t mean our job is complete. A recruitment plan must include a path for new members to become fully trained and developed public servants. After all, there is nothing worse than wasting a fully committed volunteer due to lack of training or lackluster leadership.

Remember, as department officers, we made a promise to these new recruits to provide them the training they needed to keep themselves and those around them safe. Make sure you have a quality training plan ready. Focus early trainings on what Seattle Captain (ret.) Mike Gagliano calls the “flawless execution of the basics.” Assign them a mentor who will provide continuous coaching for success.

2. Culture of cliques that exclude others

This is far more common than we think. Chief officers do this subconsciously. Why? Because those members who show up more tend to be given the “better” jobs on the fireground. Why? Because we trust them more. As a result, those members tend to hang within their own group. In addition, generational cohorts tend to stick together.

We must identify cliques within our department and ensure that we are spreading the workload more evenly. Yes, this is easier said than done, especially when safety is involved. However, we must, at a minimum, have a group conversation about expectations; this can help diffuse the situation without hurting anyone’s feelings. Simply explain: “If you want better jobs on the fireground, then show up to more training.”

Further, make a solid effort to break up these exclusionary groups by teaming members who might not normally choose to work together. This might also involve having some difficult conversations in private with your veteran members. Explain to them that they are the future of this department, and the responsibility lies with them. Challenge them: “Where will we be in 15 years given our current situation?” We never know day

to day who will show up, so forming that brotherhood and sisterhood bond starts with leaders and veterans. It starts with culture.

3. Generational differences that cause tension

When I joined the department, the older “salty” members complained about my generation and called us weak. But 30 years before that, the veteran members of my department also complained about the incoming generation. This type of complaining has been going on since firefighters learned to complain.

It’s time we put our differences aside and focus on what we have in common – our desire to help the community. The sooner we can focus energy on the advancement of the department, the sooner we can work together as a team.

Remind the older members that their family, friends and neighbors will benefit from change, spending money and/or technology. Remind the younger members that everything we do is for the benefit of the community we serve. Remind newer members that the “saltier” members have, in fact, seen and done a few things, and still have a lot to offer the department.

Cohesiveness is achieved by defining specific goals, mixing new and old experiences, and reaching these goals as a team. And when things go right, celebrate your successes together.

4. Lack of camaraderie or sense of community

Feelings cannot be forced. We cannot force a member to have pride in the department or a sense of community, or even camaraderie with another firefighter. We can only facilitate an atmosphere that focuses on teamwork, all while moving toward a common goal of providing better service for our community.

Consider the U.S. Army. Despite coming from all walks of life with many diverse backgrounds, soldiers form an unbreakable bond that comes to bear during even the most extreme situations. Why? Because they were trained to depend on each other when their environment gets hairy (similar to ours). When things get tough, they lean on each other, because they trust each other.

This is how we need to train our members. Put members in simulated situations where they are forced to lean on each other. Team members who wouldn’t normally choose each other and facilitate solidarity. A simple Google search yields hundreds of team-building exercises that promote trust and communication that can be carried over to the fireground.

Solutions to volunteer firefighter retention problems

Now that we have touched on the retention issues plaguing our agencies, let’s now consider some solutions to overcome these retention pitfalls.

START A FIREFIGHTER MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The best way to help ensure the retention of newly recruited firefighters is to implement a new firefighter [mentor program](#).

Each recruit should be assigned their own mentor, typically not an officer, but rather an active firefighter with 5 years or more experience, who would report additional to the chief officer. The mentor serves as a sounding board for recruits, sometimes afraid to talk with their officer.

The mentor should be tasked with overseeing training, answering questions, introducing the recruit to active members, and ensuring that all associated documentation is up to date. The mentor is the go-to person for the recruit. Through this process, the mentor will gain valuable experience in dealing with personnel and equipment issues. What better way to gauge the abilities of a potential future officer?

FORM COMMITTEES WITHIN YOUR DEPARTMENT

I am a huge proponent of committees. I believe wholeheartedly that committees can help halt a downward trajectory and increase morale within your agency.

Start by establishing three to five committees. Assign two to three firefighters per committee, and task them with handling various equipment needs, regulatory compliances, and divisions.

Require them to report at each meeting on needs, updates and improvements made within their committee.

Ask to hear from each member and continue to task them with activities that fall within their respective committee. Hold them accountable for these duties and be clear with your expectations.

How do committees fit into volunteer firefighter retention?

- You’re giving members a voice at the meeting. They have ownership and feel like a member of the team.

- You're giving members responsibility within the department. Responsibility = commitment; commitment = pride; pride = retention.
- You're breaking down generational barriers by promoting healthy working relationships among members.
- You're relieving overworked officers of basic tasks.

Some examples of committees:

- **Small equipment:** This committee is tasked with starting, checking and maintaining all small engines and equipment within the department. Repairs and issues should be brought to the membership's attention via the meeting report as well as updates and potential new equipment purchases. Let these folks spec new equipment. Trust them.
- **ISO/NFPA/OSHA compliance:** ISO, NFPA, OSHA compliances can be difficult for small departments to manage. Create a committee to research NFPA/OSHA standards to ensure your agency is compliant. Task the members with not just bringing non-compliance to light but also brainstorming solutions before presenting to the membership.
- **PPE:** This committee is charged with categorizing, inventorying and issuing PPE. It is also in charge of [PPE NFPA compliance](#) and developing new gear specs when the time comes to purchase.

Speaking of PPE, here's an example of why it's important to include non-officers on purchasing committees: My department was awarded a [PPE grant](#). We formed a purchasing committee that was ultimately given the responsibility of choosing the gear our department will be wearing for the next 10 years. The committee included interior firefighters, only two of whom were officers and none who worked too closely with department finances. This allowed them to go beyond the bottom line to focus on the equipment.

The committee was tasked with meeting with seven vendors and demonstrating several sets of gear from each vendor. They returned a set of specs that were sent out for bid. Once the bids returned, the chief and I worked with the group on the financial side.

The committee chose a vendor and presented the PPE request of choice to the membership for vote. Members asked several questions, and the committee answered without issue. In the end, the process gave the committee members a sense of responsibility and belonging.

SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION

Most chief officers know that we will never get a formal thank you from the thousands of people we help during our careers. But the "thankless" element of the job should really only relate to interactions with the public.

I know what you're thinking: "No one ever thanked me for running into burning buildings." You're right, me either. But times have changed, members have changed, and if we are serious about retention, we must adapt. Thank your members for showing up and let them know you appreciate their time.

There are many other ways we can thank our members. Length of service awards, response stipends and training incentives are some of the best ways to show appreciation. These tokens of appreciation can come in the form of a department shirt, plaque, gift card or even monetary payment. I know my department can't afford these things when we can barely cover PPE upgrades, so we are applying for funding to help with this. Let's tackle this next.

APPLY FOR GRANTS

The most underrated grant in the fire service is the **Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant**. This grant has a portion of funding dedicated solely to the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

By developing a recruitment and retention plan, you can apply to have your marketing, training and retention programs funded without matching any funds. This program, as I have experienced myself, is an absolute game-changer when it comes to recruiting and retaining volunteers.

Several retention tools are covered through SAFER grants:

Retention/training

- Tuition for training: Funding for a training to advance members' careers.
- Basic firefighter training: Funding designed for the recruit to earn a basic level of certification as your department requires.

Retention/acknowledgement

- Length of service awards: Funding to purchase length of service awards for current members and even recruits outlined in your recruitment plan.
- Response stipend: Funding to provide firefighters with a monetary payment or gift card based on response totals (also can be utilized as a recruitment tool).
- Training incentives: Funding to provide firefighters with a clothing incentive when training requirements are met or exceeded. (How many chiefs get nagged about a new department hoodie? Make them earn it.)

When applying for grant funding, especially a SAFER grant, it's important that you identify the need, research the core issues, and develop a solution. This is referred to as a basic Applied Research Project (APR), and you don't have to be a scientist to make one.

Grants are all based on the basic premise of needs vs. wants. As a grant writer, I always envision myself at the desk of the peer reviewer considering if this funding request is for an actual need or simply a want. You have to prove to me that there is a need, and a quality APR usually answers this question for me.

If this all sounds a little too much for you to handle, remember that **grant writer fees are 100% reimbursable if awarded**. There are many grant writers who can help you through each step of the process. Reach out to someone and give your agency the best chance of being successful.

BE THE CHANGE

While there is no single solution to our retention issues, I have seen these tactics work to recruit members, train them, and retain them as quality, volunteer firefighters. I know that if you put in the work, use the resources, and keep up the recruitment and retention work, your agency will maintain a quality membership well beyond your days as the member wearing the white helmet.

The future belongs to those who are willing to make the changes. The true test of a fire department is how well the membership operates in our absence. If you feel like you, personally, must be present for your agency to get the job done, then you have failed at preparing for the future, and it's time to change that.

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH & SAFETY; PROTECTING OUR OWN

65

LINE OF DUTY FIREFIGHTER DEATHS FOR 2025

In 2024 we experienced 64 LODDs reported nationally.!

Overall, 2024 was one of the safest years on record for U.S. firefighters with 64 on-duty deaths recorded, down from 74 in 2023 and reflecting a steady decline in annual fatalities in recent decades since a high of 174 in 1978. (The trend calculations don't include the 340 firefighters who died in the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.)

DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A FATALITY-JUST A DIBILITATING INJURY, YOU JUST NEVER KNOW!

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FIRE APPARATUS ACCIDENTS FOR THE WEEK

- CUMBERLAND COUNTY, Pa. (WHP) — A motorcycle reportedly collided with a fire engine in Mechanicsburg Monday evening. The Hampden Township Volunteer Fire Department confirmed that one of its trucks was struck around 4:45 p.m. in the area of Market and Main streets.
- A Greenville (MS) Fire Department ladder truck caught fire on a highway Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2025, according to the public information officer. No injuries were sustained during the incident, but the ladder truck sustained significant damage.
- A water tender working the Dragon Bravo Fire in Arizona was involved in a single vehicle rollover Saturday, Sept. 27, 2025. While driving a recently maintained road, the northbound water tender moved to the right side of the road in order to provide room for another vehicle to pass southbound.

The rear wheels of the tender began to sink into the soft shoulder. The driver felt the sinking and began steering the vehicle out of the soft road material. The rear wheels began coming out of the soft material, they struck a culvert catch basin which “launched” the fully loaded tender out of the ditch causing the driver to lose control. This event caused significant damage to the cab and tank of the vehicle but the driver was uninjured.

- A civilian was killed in a crash involving a Polk County Fire Rescue Ambulance. The ambulance was responding to an emergency when the collision occurred. The ambulance crew was transported to a hospital where they were released after treatment.

FIRE APPARATUS

Snippet of the Congressional Apparatus Manufacturer Hearings::Interesting

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1333790294922070>

Apparatus Cab Design and Layout

Mark Miller

Fire department apparatus committee members and fire apparatus manufacturers alike have made great strides over recent years in taking full advantage of the space that’s within the cab of custom fire apparatus. Whether an organization practices a Clean Cab concept or a “Cleaner Cab concept,” there’s significant space for both fire and EMS equipment that can enhance the operational effectiveness of the fire company greatly. Furthermore, interior cab specification items that the apparatus committee can identify can allow for the future addition of equipment that requires proper mounting and/or charging ports.

EMS COMPARTMENTS

Storage compartments for EMS equipment are, perhaps, the most common in-cab compartments that are added to fire apparatus. This simply is because most staffed fire apparatus respond to more EMS incidents than to fire incidents. Mounting options for these compartments are on the standard rear-facing seat riser or the forward-facing rear seat riser.

The apparatus committee must determine which layout, or combination thereof, best will fit the equipment that the department plans to carry. This includes compartment dimensions, shelving requirements, 12- and 120-volt power, and door type. Another question to ask: Is exterior access required for the compartment via the sidewall of the apparatus.

Most apparatus are staffed with cross-trained firefighter/paramedics. This allows for the most efficient EMS deployment model because of the strategic location of fire stations within communities. With this level of prehospital care comes an extraordinary amount of essential equipment that must not only be carried but secured. The apparatus committee must take great care to ensure that the compartment dimensions can accommodate all of the equipment that’s required. Door options include netting, roll-up doors, Lexan, aluminum plate and simple straps. Security of ALS medications as well as temperature regulation must be taken into account.

Exterior door access into the EMS compartment on the rear-facing seat riser is an extremely popular option these days. It’s more commonly located on the officer’s side of the unit.

Compartments that are in the cab extension that transverses under the forward-facing rear seat riser also are commonplace. These compartments either can include roll-up or traditional pan doors. Either way, these doors should be lockable if a medications bag is stored within the compartment. If the apparatus is equipped with electronic door locks, doors can be programmed into the system.

OVERHEAD COMPARTMENTS

Overhead storage compartments can be built into the raised roof of apparatus and can be forward- and rear-facing. These compartments are more common on heavy rescue and squad companies, but they can play a vital role in basic engine companies as well to increase valuable storage space.

Specification of overhead compartments by the apparatus committee is similar to specification of EMS compartments. However, often, the equipment that’s stored in these areas is different.

We regularly see storage of ice and swift-water rescue gear in these compartments for rapid deployment at time-sensitive incidents. Meter banks for hazmat incidents usually are kept in these locations, too. Again, electrical requirements for, in this case, charging meter banks must be taken into consideration by the apparatus committee.

Shelving and horizontal dividers also are options.

Lastly, the door options for these compartments include horizontally hinged Lexan, netting, aluminum plate and sliding Lexan doors.

Overhead storage compartments and EMS compartments are considered “bolt-on” options. With the price of purchasing new fire apparatus today, these items might need to be added later as additional funding becomes available. (Departments also might wish to add these compartments to older apparatus or to apparatus for which the mission of the unit changed. Most of these items can be fabricated locally and easily installed for a nominal cost.)

TOOLS

Interior tool mounting is another area of concern for the apparatus committee. Often, equipment that’s specific to a company’s seat-riding assignment is mounted. This includes hooks, irons, water cans, box lights, TICs and search ropes.

Tool mounting locations include the back of the engine house, the side of EMS compartments, doors, doorsteps and rear cab walls and in the cab extension on the exterior. Any equipment that’s in the cab must be mounted with approved hardware and brackets that meet rollover requirements.

Mounting plates for engine houses are another good way to ensure that equipment is secured properly.

Often, these plates are constructed out of ¼-inch aluminum plate.

Other mounting systems, such as tool boards and peg boards, also are good ways to secure equipment and to allow for future addition of equipment on vertical surfaces.

When aluminum plate is used in the engine house, it’s recommended that it be mounted on a ½-inch riser, so the bottom side can be used as a wire chase. The aluminum plate is a premium location to mount map boxes, TICs, light boxes and portable batteries. Another advantage of the mounting plate: When the layout is changed over the life of a vehicle, drilling directly into the engine house isn’t necessary. This can prevent costly errors down the road.

POWER

In-cab electricity (12- or 120-volt) should be provided for the current and future needs of the apparatus that’s being designed. Members of the apparatus committee should specify whether outlets are “battery hot” or “ignition hot” and the location of each.

Also, if shoreline power is required, it must be identified by the committee in the written specification.

Cigarette lighter plugs and USB outlets are common locations for 12-volt outlets to be installed.

All of these outlets should be marine grade.

MDTS AND RADIOS

Mobile data terminals (MDT) and mobile radios are another area of concern for the apparatus committee in addressing apparatus cab design. It’s important that the MDT and mobile radio(s) be mounted so as not to obstruct the operator’s view of the officer’s side mirror.

Putting the MDT on a slide-out tray can help to bring the unit off of the dash and closer to the officer.

Other items that can be mounted in these locations include mobile radios, arrow stick controllers, Knox Box systems, preemption systems, headset controllers and AM/FM stereos.

Power requirements also must be carefully considered for these units as well as any accessories, such as GPS. Each requires its own 12-volt power supply. Note: Cowl-mounting the officer’s side mirror also can help with the operator’s view of the mirror.

ELECTRICAL COMPONENTS

I’m a proponent of allocating for future growth in apparatus design. This not only includes space but electrical components, too. With the multiplexed generation of fire apparatus, you don’t want personnel getting into the chassis wiring system if at all possible. Specifying 12-volt marine-grade power panels at various locations on the apparatus can keep this from happening. This allows for future additions without

getting into the main wiring of the apparatus down the road. Additional radio power studs in the dash are another good idea and allow for future electrical growth for radio components. We often specify one being “ignition hot” and the other “battery hot” for versatility.

VEHICLE LIFETIME

Spending time at the initial stages of the specification process by the apparatus committee can allow a significant amount of customization to the interior cab at a relatively low cost. This is the case for storage of valuable fire and EMS equipment that can be safely stored or mounted. Additionally, smart dash layouts and electrical components allow for better operator visibility and modifications over the life of the unit without getting into the onboard chassis wiring.

THE CHANGING FIRE SERVICE

Fishers Fire District Dissolves After Over 100 Years Of Service; Here's What's Next For Victor

Kristi Blake, News 10NBC

At 7 a.m., the district is lowering its flag for the final time. This district has been battling blazes for more than 100 years but the fight to stay open is one it couldn't win.

It all came down to money. Over the last 10 years, the Fishers Fire District tax levy has [more than tripled](#), rising from \$1.6 million in 2015 to \$5.3 million this year, according to the Board of Fire Commissioners. The board says those taxes are too high, even though many neighbors News10NBC spoke with said they'd pay them if they got to keep their firefighters. Town Supervisor Jack Marren says he never expected this.

“I always thought that, during my tenure here, the pandemic was the biggest challenge I've ever faced. This was the biggest challenge, no question about it,” Marren said. “When we went through the pandemic, everyone was going through the same thing. Has anyone else ever gone through this? It's been extremely hard.”

The shutdown leaves 26 full-time firefighters without a job. The Town of Victor will cover the 26 square miles that Fishers used to cover. Ontario County 911 will dispatch whoever is closest – that may be Victor, Bushnell's Basin, or Henrietta Fire.

For right now, the Fishers Fire building will sit empty. The town board will make future decisions about whether to repurpose the building, sell, or lease it. Some equipment may be transferred to the town for continued use.

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!!

<<<DATA SUBMISSION IS ON HOLD DUE TO THE FEDERAL GOVT. SHUT DOWN!>>>

HOME FIRE FATALITIES REPORTED BY THE MEDIA FROM THE US FIRE ADMINISTRATION FOR 2025	
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	53
Last fire death 8/9/25 Eaton, Madison Co., Female 69	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	88

Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	733
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA/60
	#2 NY/53
	#3 IL /43
Civilian home fire fatalities in 2025: 1480 2046 civilian home fire fatalities in 2024	
Week 36 of 2025, fire has claimed on an average 41 lives PER WEEK.	
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?	

Four Takeaways From Investigation That Found Safety Flaws After MA Assisted Living Fire

Hadley Barndollar – masslive.com

After a deadly fire at the Gabriel House assisted living facility in Fall River killed 10 people this summer, a MassLive investigation published last month revealed critical loopholes in the fire sprinkler inspection system in Massachusetts.

The reporting highlighted a haphazard “honor system,” significant staffing shortages in fire departments and a lack of centralized oversight, all of which can compromise public safety.

These are four takeaways from MassLive’s reporting.

1. INSPECTIONS RELY ON A FLAWED ‘HONOR SYSTEM’

At the core of Massachusetts’ fire safety oversight for sprinkler systems is a model that places the legal responsibility of inspections and maintenance on building owners, who most often hire contractors to do the work.

Fire departments, often lacking the resources for independent verification, largely trust the documentation provided by building owners, which shows the inspections had been completed. This “honor system,” codified in national fire safety standards beyond Massachusetts, creates an inherent risk where critical safety checks can be missed or neglected.

As seen in the Gabriel House fire, where a mandatory five-year internal sprinkler inspection was overdue, relying on owner compliance can have serious consequences if deficiencies are not detected.

2. SYSTEMIC UNDERSTAFFING AND A LACK OF CENTRALIZATION HURT ENFORCEMENT

The state’s ability to enforce fire codes is severely hampered by systemic issues. A recent survey found that *nearly every fire department in Massachusetts reports being understaffed, with fire prevention units often being the first to face budget cuts.* This shortage makes it virtually impossible for inspectors to conduct thorough investigations at all of the buildings they are responsible for in their respective cities and towns. Compounding the problem is the absence of a centralized statewide mechanism — such as a database — for tracking fire code violations. Enforcement of violations is left to individual municipalities, resulting in a scattershot approach where follow-up on noncompliant building owners varies drastically from one jurisdiction to another.

3. THE GABRIEL HOUSE FIRE HIGHLIGHTS SYSTEM LOOPHOLES

The July fire at Gabriel House in Fall River serves as a tragic case study of the system’s weaknesses.

Sources with knowledge of the ongoing investigation told MassLive *that a sprinkler failed to activate in the room where the fire started.* A comprehensive five-year internal inspection of the system was overdue, they also said, and several lawsuits allege the sprinklers contained parts that had been recalled decades ago.

Despite these issues, the building had repeatedly passed annual inspections conducted by the Fall River Fire Department. Fall River’s fire chief admitted that inspectors rely on licensed contractors and would not necessarily notice a missing five-year inspection tag, for example, underscoring how easily critical deficiencies can be overlooked.

4. FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS ONLY ADVANCE AFTER TRAGEDIES — AND OFTEN FACE OPPOSITION

One Boston Fire Department official told MassLive that fire safety regulations are often “written in blood,” meaning significant changes are almost exclusively implemented in response to catastrophic events that result in a large number of deaths, like the historic Cocoanut Grove and Station Nightclub fires. *This reactive*

approach can be exacerbated by a national anti-regulatory movement, with industries such as homebuilding actively lobbying to weaken fire codes and block new mandates, such as requirements for sprinklers in new single-family homes.

This creates a constant tension — one where municipal budget concerns and industry interests often stall public safety improvements, until a tragedy forces the issue.

GREEN TECHNOLOGY & THE FIRE SERVICE

Volney Fire Chief Says Lithium-Ion Battery Fire Caused 'Labor Intensive' Fight At Fulton Landfill

An improperly disposed lithium-ion battery caused a fire at a landfill in Fulton, Oswego investigators say. A driver passing by the Bristol Hill Landfill called 911 at approximately 3:55 a.m. on October 3, to report visible flames in the area.

Volney Fire Chief Kevin Hayden arrived at the scene at the landfill about 15 minutes later and found an active fire. The flames had spread across an estimated 200-foot by 200-foot area, reaching nearly 20 feet in height. "[It was] very labor-intensive to try to get it under control," Hayden said.

Firefighters from the Volney Volunteer Fire Department, along with mutual aid fire departments and Oswego County Solid Waste personnel, worked to extinguish the fire. They contained the blaze by 6:30 a.m.

No injuries were reported as a result of the incident. All units cleared the fire scene by 10 a.m.

Fears of Massive Battery Fires Spark Opposition to Energy Storage Projects

MICHAEL HILL Associated Press

More and more, big arrays of lithium-ion batteries are being hooked up to electrical grids around the U.S. to store power that can be discharged in times of high demand.

But as more energy storage is added, residents in some places are pushing back due to fears that the systems will go up in flames, as a massive facility in California did earlier this year.

Proponents maintain that state-of-the-art battery energy storage systems are safe, but *more localities are enacting moratoriums.*

"We're not guinea pigs for anybody ... we are not going to experiment, we're not going to take risk," said Michael McGinty, the mayor of Island Park, New York, which passed a moratorium in July after a storage system was proposed near the village line.

At least a few dozen localities around the United States have moved to temporarily block development of big battery systems in recent years.

Long Island, where the power grid could get a boost in the next few years as offshore wind farms come online, has been a hotbed of activism, even drawing attention recently from the Trump administration. Opponents there got a boost in August when Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin visited New York to complain that the state was rushing approvals of sites in order to meet "delusional" green power goals — a claim state officials deny.

BATTERY GROWTH SPURT

Battery energy storage systems that suck up cheap power during periods of low demand, then discharge it at a profit during periods of high demand, are considered critical with the rise of intermittent energy sources such as wind and solar.

Known by the acronym BESS, the systems can make grids more reliable and have been credited with reducing blackouts. A large battery system might consist of rows of shipping containers in a fenced lot, with the containers holding hundreds of thousands of cells.

China and the United States lead the world in rapidly adding battery storage energy systems. However, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Australia, Netherlands, Chile, Canada and the U.K. have commissioned or started construction on large projects since 2024, too, according to research from BloombergNEF.

In the U.S., California and Texas have been leaders in battery storage. But other states are moving quickly, often with privately developed systems. While the Trump administration has been unsupportive or even hostile to

renewable energy, key tax credits for energy storage projects were maintained in the recently approved federal budget for qualified projects that begin construction in the next eight years.

Developers added 4,908 megawatts of battery storage capacity in the second quarter of 2025, with Arizona, California and Texas accounting for about three-quarters of that new capacity, according to a report from American Clean Power Association, an industry group. That's enough to power nearly 1.7 million households. New York has an ambitious goal to add 6,000 megawatts of energy storage by 2030, half of it large-scale systems.

LITHIUM-ION FIRE WORRIES

Opposition to the storage systems usually focuses on the possibility of thermal runaway, a chain reaction of uncontrolled heating that can lead to fire or an explosion. Opponents point to past fires and ask: What if that happens in my neighborhood?

A battery storage system in Moss Landing, California caught fire in January, sending plumes of toxic smoke into the atmosphere and forcing the evacuation of about 1,500 people..

Experts in the field say battery systems have become safer over the years. Ofodike Ezekoye, a combustion expert and professor of mechanical engineering at The University of Texas at Austin, notes that failures are relatively infrequent, but also that no engineered system is 100% foolproof.

"This is a relatively immature technology that is maturing quickly, so I think that there are a lot of really thoughtful researchers and other stakeholders who are trying to improve the overall safety of these systems," Ezekoye said.

Battery storage proponents say a facility like Moss Landing, where batteries were stored indoors, would not be allowed *in New York, which has adopted fire codes that require modular enclosure design with required minimum spacing to keep fires from spreading.*

People who live near proposed sites are not always assured.

In Washington state, the city of Maple Valley approved a six-month moratorium in July as a way "to protect us until we know more," said city manager Laura Philpot.

Voters in Halstead, Kansas, which has a moratorium, will be asked this Election Day whether they want to prohibit larger battery storage systems inside the city limits, according to Mayor Dennis Travis. He hopes the city can one day host a safely designed storage system, and said local opponents wrongly fixate on the California fire.

The number of localities passing moratoriums began rising in 2023 and 2024, mirroring trends in battery storage deployment, with a notable cluster in New York, according to a presentation last year by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.

Winnie Sokolowski is among area residents against *a proposed 250-megawatt lithium-ion storage system in the Town of Ulster, New York, contending it is too close to schools and homes.*

"They're banking on nothing happening, but I don't think you can place it where they're proposing and assume nothing's going to happen," Sokolowski said. "It's just too risky if it does."

The developer, Terra-Gen, said the design will keep a fire from spreading and that the system "poses no credible, scientific-based threat to neighbors, the public or the environment."

New York State Energy Research and Development Authority President Doreen Harris said she's confident the state has the right safety rules in place, and that scaling up the use of battery storage systems will "strengthen and modernize our grid."

She noted there also were local concerns in the early stages of siting solar farms, which have since proven their benefits.

Battery Fires and Micromobility Bans: When Will MTA Act?

John Orlando

July 4th in New York City is usually a festive day, celebrating America's Independence. Large crowds gather along the rivers in anticipation of the annual Macy's Fireworks celebration.

This year in Queens, New York, a 76-year-old resident walked into a pizzeria to use the bathroom. While inside, a lithium-ion powered e-bike that was parked in the hallway next to the bathroom began to off-gas and went into thermal runaway. The flame, high heat, and toxic gases trapped the patron. The Fire Department of New

York (FDNY) was called. Companies responded quickly and rescued her. The lady was taken to hospital and intubated. Sadly, she never recovered from her injuries and died a few days later. She was the first lithium-ion battery related fatality in New York City in 2025, and the 35th since 2021.

Imagine if this event transpired inside a subway car? This is not an unfamiliar story in New York City, with people storing and charging their devices inside occupied buildings. In February, I wrote an Op-Ed calling for a ban on e-bikes inside transit. Within the first responder community and those following this issue, it has gained much support. However, it fell on deaf ears among New York City and state officials, who run the largest transportation network in the country.

The week before it was published, on Saturday, February 8, the first lithium-ion powered mobility device fire happened inside a New York City Transit subway car. The video footage shared on social media shows passengers sitting calmly, the train in motion, waiting for the next stop. The passengers were unaware of the toxicity of the smoke from the actively burning fire. This e-scooter did not exhibit explosive and violent—reaction associated with thermal runaway incidents. We believe the reason for this was due to the e-scooter being at a low state of charge. The FDNY responded and extinguished the fire, but the owner and e-scooter were no longer present when the fire marshals arrived to investigate.

AN ONGOING THREAT

As the former supervising fire marshal of the FDNY's Lithium-Ion Task Force, I know all too well the dangers posed by lithium-ion-powered micromobility devices. Unfortunately, despite all the efforts to educate the public, the danger of serious injury still exists, particularly during travel on transit. While the number of fire fatalities caused by lithium-ion powered devices has decreased, the number of these fires has increased year after year. *Presently, lithium-ion battery fires remain the third-highest cause of accidental fires in New York City.*

FDNY members who traveled on mass transit, especially those involved in the lithium-ion conversations, started to notice an increased number of people bringing these devices on mass transit. Discussions centered around the possibility of one of these devices going off in a crowded subway car. This was not limited to New York City Transit but also included the authority's Metro-North and Long Island Railroad commuter trains. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority and New York City Transit saw severe decrease in ridership during the COVID-19 pandemic. In those early COVID days, they were ambiguous about the restrictions on e-bikes and e-scooters. In April 2023, after consultation with FDNY, the MTA passed an official policy allowing e-bikes and e-scooters, within certain weight limits, on all mass transit except express buses. MTA claimed their research found these fires only occurred when these devices were charging. Therefore, charging would not be permitted on MTA buses or trains, or inside facilities.

FDNY leaders were not pleased with this new policy, nor were New York City Transit ridership safety staff. On one Zoom meeting with city agencies and the MTA, retired Chief of Hazmat Division Daniel Murray commented on how destructive and deadly a thermal runaway incident would be on a crowded subway car. Other major commuter rail carriers were paying attention and shared their concerns with the FDNY as well.

THE RESEARCH

At the same time, case studies and research being done by the FDNY Bureau of Fire Investigation found most of the fires occurred when the devices were NOT charging. This was later corroborated with similar findings by other fire departments tracking lithium-ion battery fires in Arizona.

FDNY members, working with colleagues at New York City Transit, enlisted [UL Solutions Fire Safety Research Institute \(FSRI\)](#) to conduct fire testing on a subway car. FSRI was already working with fire departments and validating their findings with the increase in lithium-ion battery fires. The plan was to separately burn three different types of lithium-ion powered mobility devices (e-scooter, e-bike, and e-moped).

Each would have different kilowatt hours, voltages, and intensity. The burn experiments would occur on one subway car, with each incident recorded, and gas and temperature meters in place recording the readings. Real tested data and video would be available.

The testing was scheduled for the second week of May 2024 in a New York City subway car at a train yard in Brooklyn. The research organization incurred the expense of collecting and analyzing the data. The FDNY provided the manpower, suppression, security, drones, and video support along with technical advisement. A small select group of safety professionals, researchers, academics, and engineers were invited to observe.

After months of planning, MTA executives canceled the test a week before it was scheduled. Everyone involved was stunned, and the MTA never gave a reason. Rumors were that the MTA press office got wind of the testing and didn't want pictures or video of a mobility device burning on the subway car to go public. Perhaps, they wanted plausible deniability: no data, no video, no pictures, and no witnesses. Then they really wouldn't know how bad a fire on the subway could be.

Big Lots Truck Carrying Lithium Batteries Catches Fire On Rt. 422 In Upper Providence

A truck carrying electronics and lithium batteries caught fire in Upper Providence, Pennsylvania, closing a stretch of Route 422 and causing air quality concerns in the area, officials said.

The Big Lots tractor-trailer — which was carrying phones, laptops and chargers powered by lithium batteries to a recycling center — was traveling on Route 422 westbound at mile-marker 184.1 on Tuesday shortly after 8 a.m. when a fire started in the front corner of the vehicle.

Firefighters and hazmat crews responded to the scene and were eventually able to get the flames under control.

Salisbury House Fire Believed to be Linked to Lithium Batteries

A house fire on Dutchtown Road in the Town of Salisbury, Herkimer County, is believed to have been ignited by lithium batteries. When a NEWSChannel 2 crew arrived at around 1 p.m. Wednesday, flames were visible along the roof of the house.

The Salisbury Fire Department faced challenges from gusty winds that intensified the fire. To combat the blaze, the fire department called in assistance from neighboring departments. Once power to the house was cut, firefighters were able to approach the flames more closely. The house appears to be a total loss.

A malfunctioning lithium-ion battery caused a fire in the home. Salisbury fire officials said the home had no power for months, and the residents relied on solar panels to charge lithium-ion batteries. One of these batteries exploded, leading to the fire. Officials added that two people were living in the home, and both managed to escape safely.

STUFF FOR YOUR OFFICERS AND MEMBERS!



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Fire and EMS leaders face a tough reality: you have to be ready for everyday calls, but if you only train for those, you're setting your department up to fail. And when rare turns real, **every moment counts**.

All crew members need to be prepared to optimize resources and mitigate danger. What's your department's "shark attack" protocol?

In Lexipol's latest webinar, tenured fire service leaders share field experience with "shark attacks" and discuss how chiefs can align training priorities with operational realities.

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2nd Annual Lake George Training Symposium

The 2nd Annual FASNY Lake George Training Symposium returns to the beautiful shores of Lake George from Saturday May 15th to Sunday May 17th, 2026!

Whether you're returning or attending for the first time, this weekend is designed to help volunteer firefighters enhance their skills, develop leadership, and connect with a statewide community.

Be sure to make time for the Annual Golf Tournament at Cronin's Golf Course — a weekend highlight featuring a fun scramble format, BBQ dinner, and a fantastic atmosphere.

Save Me a Seat for Lake George 2026

<https://fasny.com/training/annual-firetraining-symposium/>



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) • **Jefferson** (October 15) • **Nassau** (November 5)

• **Rensselaer (October 20)** •

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

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

Attend an NVFC Training Near You!

The NVFC hosts in-person trainings at locations across the country on topics including hazardous materials response, electric vehicle response, leadership, fire service culture, and much more. View upcoming courses [here](#). Don't see a training near you? Consider hosting a training at your department or regional event. View a listing of available courses and request a training [here](#).

ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Coming Attractions:

- **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

Gansevoort Fire Department Breakfast

The fire company thanks you for your support!! Breakfast will be served starting at 8AM on **Sunday October 19th**.

Clifton Park Fire Department Breakfast

See you **Sunday December 7th**. Thank you for your support!

GENERAL INTEREST

The 2026 Budget Calendar and the 2025 Election Schedule are posted to our Website at CAFDA.net

Read this in the vein in which it is meant and give it some serious thought!

☺☺Cantankerous Wisdom: How Old Is Too Old? Part 1

Bill Adams

To escape boredom many moons ago, a few of the younger members in the fire company would purposely harass older members, including some deserving line officers. Asking questions they didn't want to answer or broaching "sensitive" topics that could be detrimental in maintaining firehouse decorum would send them into a full-tilt mode. We were accused of stirring the pot that, in reality, meant making aggregate (gravel) by busting large stones into smaller ones. It was fun back then and still can be today.

Raisin Squad members have accused me of maintaining the stir-the-pot tradition because every four or five years I write about old people being in the fire department. My last column mentioned that old age is a contentious fact of life that many volunteer departments cannot or will not address. I really wasn't trying to stir the pot—too much. Old age is a fire service concern.

One morning I said, "There might be a place for seasoned citizens in the fire department, but not on a fire truck." Some Squad members who want to remain relevant were unmerciful in their rebuttals. My comments turned into self-immolation—I was making the ultimate sacrifice with my own words. Later, I brought the topic up with some out-of-town chiefs and some of them joined in the attack. The busted-up stones turned into dust.

MY OPINION

It is problematic that an allowable advanced maturity level (old age) for active firefighters may affect the effectiveness of the fire service. It may have already happened and should be addressed before someone gets hurt. *Old folks serving on the line may give a department a false sense of security and be a potential disservice to the taxpayers.* Likewise, having too many past-their-prime players dictating policy, fireground tactics and strategy, and the kind of fire apparatus to purchase may also be detrimental. That last sentence should create a firestorm with active gray hairs.

Although my dissertation is directed at smaller volunteer fire departments, it could be applicable to small combination departments and very small career entities. Firefighters in career departments whose members are represented by professional organizations usually have well established rules and guidelines for their members' health and safety. Included may be mandatory retirement ages and meeting yearly physical requirements—perhaps required by legal contract with the governing political subdivision. I am not qualified to comment on requiring volunteer departments to establish and follow similar protocols. That's a bridge too far. It is each fire department's decision, albeit a difficult one.

OBSERVATIONS

My commentary is void of influence by any firefighter requirements of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards; staffing provisions established by the Insurance Services Organization, Incorporated (Verisk); or any entity's established firefighter requirements. My service as an active volunteer ended in 2014. My pro and con comments are based on what I've experienced and what I think rather than what I would propose. There're usually two sides to every story and I'll try to show both.

HUMILIATING

Let's get the embarrassing stuff out of the way. Humiliating is having past words and previous actions come back to haunt you. I always write about the Raisin Squad's white hairs, old-timers, and geezers talking about the good old days. And, sometimes it's hard to remember that I wasn't always old. When I said I didn't think old people should be riding the load, one Raisin asked me if I remember riding the officer's seat of the LaFrance going down Main Street when I told the two guys in the jump seat (one sitting and one standing) behind the driver which hydrant we were going to hit. An older past chief in the jump seat behind me leaned over and tapped me on the shoulder and discreetly said the hydrant on the other side of the street was on a 12-inch main. The one I was going to hit was on an 8-inch main. That was nice to know.

Another white hair said he remembered when I was driving the ladder truck to the old school complex and was pulling in close between two buildings. The old-timer sitting next to me said not to pull in too close because there used to be an underground tunnel connecting the two buildings. That was better to know.

At one morning coffee with older but still active members, a few agreed if it wasn't for the retirees and older guys, they could have a tough time getting a full crew on the first rig out the door. I guess that's true for a lot of volunteer outfits.

In Part 2, I will give some possibilities that might make the hierarchy do some soul searching. And, there's an email from an out-of-town active chief who is experiencing the problem and is looking for a solution to it. What if the tones dropped and no one showed up?

LAUGH OUT LOUD!!

**I just fired myself from cleaning my house.
I didn't like my attitude and I got caught drinking on the job.**

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Plotterkill Fire District Seeks Treasurer

The Plotterkill Fire District is seeking a **part-time treasurer** to oversee the financial operations of the fire district in compliance with New York State laws and regulations.

Responsibilities include:

- Receive and disperse monies as authorized
- Maintain financial records, including spreadsheet for monthly expenses, Quickbooks, vouchers, and fuel usage
- Assist in preparation of annual budget
- Reconcile bank statements
- File required financial reports with the Office of the State Comptroller and other agencies
- Process payroll quarterly and prepare and distribute W-2 forms at year-end
- Review and sort incoming District mail and maintain and monitor District's email box
- Attend monthly Board of Fire Commissioners meetings to present financial updates.

Qualifications:

- Prior experience in Fire District or municipal finance preferred.
- Proficiency in accounting software and Microsoft Office
- Strong organization skills and attention to detail.
- Ability to work independently and meet deadlines.

Compensation:

- Annual salary of \$3,000, paid quarterly

Interested candidates should submit a resume and cover letter to Tonya Hall, the District Secretary at thallfd8@gmail.com.

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

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

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Long Way to Travel? Zoom into the General Membership Meetings!

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

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

Welcome new member Hawkins, Delafield & Wood Bond Attorney

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..

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*The Weekly Capital Bulletin is reaching well over **700+** 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://cafdanet.com/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 — Saturday, 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 Elections



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

By Dave Denniston NVFC OSHA 1910.156 Taskforce Chair

The NVFC continues to meet with the IAFC and IAFF as we wait for next steps from the Department of Labor and OSHA. There have been significant changes in leadership at these organizations. We are under the belief that they continue to digest the large volume of information and feedback offered during the process and are modifying the proposed standard into something that is much more agreeable. The proposed standard as written does not work for anyone, volunteer, combination, or career departments. All three organizations agree significant changes are needed from the proposal. *We anticipate that they will craft a new standard that is technically and economically feasible using what is referred to as logical outgrowth from the process.* The representatives from the IAFC, NVFC, and IAFF all agree that the best of all worlds would be to remove the NFPA standards by reference, bring a lot of the regulations back to the control of the home state and authority having jurisdiction, and make logical requirements that will help protect our first responders. We continue to monitor progress and are ready to pursue the next steps if the process does not yield a document that we can all live with. *We have also voiced our opposition to a pure exemption of volunteer firefighters as*

we feel that the move would be counterproductive and further divide the two major factions of our emergency services. We have long fought for parity in items such as presumptive heart, cancer coverage, workers compensation benefits, equal representation, and firefighter safety. To simply exempt the volunteer fire service would be a huge disservice to these initiatives and leave combination departments in an extremely awkward, if not unmanageable situation. It would also be extremely difficult for municipalities to manage with two different sets of rules.

The three organizations are also hard at work building resources to support emergency services organizations moving forward. These resources include training, sample emergency action plans, risk management plans, community assessment forms, sample policies, and advocacy materials. The right tools will aid everything from a small rural volunteer department with a \$50K budget all the way up to the large municipal all-career city department, and everything in-between. We are very excited by the working relationship being built by these national organizations and all involved in the process feel we are seeing ground-breaking results. If you have any questions or concerns about the process, we encourage you to reach out and get involved in the discussions. I can be reached at 607-423-1636 or ddenniston@afdsny.org. By working together, we can help build a fire service that will serve us well for years to come.

IT IS TIME TO MOVE FORWARD WITH A WORKABLE OSHA 1910.156 REVISION

Dave Denniston, 1st VP AFDSNY

As the process to update OSHA 1910.156 continues, it is important that we understand where we have been, and options for the process moving forward. Since the proposed rule was published for review 18 months ago, there has been a significant amount of input and feedback from stakeholders addressing possible concerns about the economic and technical feasibility of the proposal. Stakeholders from across the country participated in the process and offered suggestions. One of the early possible solutions suggested was to simply exempt volunteers, and other parties, from the proposed rule as written. The mindset was that if it didn't affect "us" it was not our problem. While this concept appeared to be a quick solution, it fell short of addressing the true needs or problems.

The real issue at hand is that the proposed rule as written had challenges for everyone and you would be hard pressed to find any department, career, combination, or volunteer, that could meet the intent of the standard. The proposed standard also took a one-size-fits-all approach. We know that the emergency service agencies across this country are very different. They have different resources, different exposures, different concerns, and different levels of risk. It is true that emergencies, fires, and hazards are the same regardless of the type of responder. What is different is the likeliness that a particular event will occur in any jurisdiction. Local jurisdictions must be required, and empowered, to address significant risk, and the needs of a community, at a local and state level with just enough federal oversight to give it teeth and ensure safety for all of our responders. The bottom line is that the current 1910.156 is outdated and needs significant revision to address the needs and safety concerns of today's first responders. The proposed standard, as written, went too far in trying to address these needs. What we need is a middle ground solution that is designed to relieve significant risk and does so at a level that is economically and technically feasible for local communities, organizations, and the municipalities that govern and fund them.

Some are asking why simply exempting the volunteers is not in the best interest of volunteers across the country. First, by exempting the volunteers, we are failing to address the growing concerns and exposures facing this group of responders. Second, the largest growth area for most of our local fire departments is a move toward combination and career departments. How would it be possible to have one set of rules apply to part of an organization and not the other? Does it make sense to have volunteer responders face one set of rules, while career responders on the same truck follow another? Are we not all responding to the same emergencies with the same exposures? The approach of exempting volunteers would add both confusion and resentment moving forward. The third part of the issue is that the standard, as written, is just as problematic for the communities that have career departments as it is for those that only have volunteers. We need a standard that brings us all together, not one that drives us further apart.

So, what do the solutions look like? Where should OSHA and the Department of Labor go from here? After pouring through the thousands of comments brought forth during the process, an opportunity is right in front of us. There were a multitude of comments throughout the process that carried common themes. By using logical outgrowth of the process, OSHA now has the opportunity to massage the rule into one that we all can live with, and provide the level of safety they are tasked to provide the workers of this country.

It is now in OSHA's hands to finalize the rule as proposed, make logical changes, scrap it, or go back to the drawing board. During the process, OSHA continuously asked for proposed solutions, and many excellent solutions were entered into the record from those that participated. We would suggest that OSHA and the Department of Labor use the extensive input from the process to make necessary changes to the document and work to finalize the rule. A rule that meets the intent of reducing significant risk in a manner that is reasonable and responsible for our first responders and communities.

Using logical outgrowth, OSHA now has the opportunity to remove the incorporated NFPA standards. Many of the participants and the NFPA itself asked for this to be done in their comments. The incorporation of those standards brought many of the pain points organizations were concerned about. The NFPA standards instead should be used as a tool for compliance, not a weapon of enforcement. By removing the incorporation of dozens of NFPA standards, the rule would also become far less confusing and economically infeasible. The next step is to transfer as much of the obligation of providing safety down to the local jurisdiction and state levels as possible. These are the people that know the nuances of the local responders and hazards in any given area. This, too, was supported by the comments throughout the process. The third opportunity is rather than exempting anyone, to build a baseline standard that applies and protects everyone, and then increase the requirements where the data shows increased exposure and risks. All of these changes are supported by the logical outgrowth requirements and would alleviate most of the pain points addressed by the participants of the process.

Regardless of the solution, we would be remiss if we failed to realize there will be opposition to any action taken moving forward. We also need to realize that any solution, or even no solution at all, will have pain points for some that it will affect. It has often been said that firefighters hate two things, change and the way things currently are. Hopefully, we realize that we are at a historic time, with an amazing opportunity to get this right. This process has been fair and offered plenty of opportunities for those interested in participating to make their opinions and feelings known. It is time to move the ball over the goal line and continue to work together for the betterment of emergency services in this country.

I encourage you to speak to your local elected officials. Let them know there is a workable solution right in front of us, and ask them to encourage the Department of Labor and OSHA to continue this opportunity and finalize a reasonable OSHA 1910.156 that applies to all fire departments, regardless of the composition of their staff.