



CAPITAL SHORTS:

- Both the fire district election schedule and the budget development schedule are posted to the web site at www.CAFDA.net
- 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.

- FOLLOW UP: Blood test results show that alcohol was

not involved in a fatal crash involving a Wood Lake (MN) Volunteer Fire Department fire apparatus, a Minnesota State Patrol spokesperson said Monday, Oct. 13, 2025, the state patrol and Yellow Medicine County Sheriff's Office say the investigation into the crash is ongoing.

- Congratulations to Latham Fire Department for your FEMA, SAFER grant to hire 4 more full time firefighters.
- Congratulations to Saratoga County on the receipt of the new Haz Mat response unit.

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

NY Gov. Hochul Vetoes EV Fire Training Bill

Dave McKinley, Cam Mueling

NY Governor Kathy Hochul has vetoed a bill passed by the state legislature (A247/S5848) which calls on the state to establish an emergency response training program specialized for electric vehicle fires.

Hochul's veto comes at a time when she continues to push mandates moving more New York drivers to electric vehicles and just a little over a year before school districts will be forced to buy new electric busses. It is also a time when the number of EVs on the road is growing and when, consequently, there will be more fires involving them. [EDITOR'S NOTE: IN OTHER WORDS, SHE DOESN'T WISH TO CAST EV'S IN A BAD LIGHT, BUT THE FIRE SERVICE RECOGNIZES THE HAZARDS AND CHALLENGES THAT EXIST. WE CAN ONLY HOPE THE ELECTRIC BUSES DON'T RESULT IN A DISASTER IN NY OR ANY OTHER STATE. PROVES THE PEOPLE REALLY DON'T MATTER IT'S ALL ABOUT THEIR AGENDA!]

WE NEED TRAINING

"Honestly, it's disappointing that that bill was vetoed," said Jonathan Schultz, who serves as the fire coordinator for Niagara County as well as its Director of Emergency Services.

Firefighters will tell you that an EV fire is not only dangerous but even more so if they're not trained precisely on what to do. A recent national survey indicated that 40 percent of firefighter in the country have received no training.

"The training right now is very limited," said Schultz, who believes that with more state mandates regarding EVs looming, the day when training is available to all firefighters across the state can't come soon enough. "A lot of it is trial by error right now and your seeing a big push to get to these EV mandates to certain levels right now and unfortunately, as first responders, we're not the priority for training," Shultz said.

MAYBE SOMEDAY

Hochul doesn't appear to be against the idea of a state training program and in fact in her veto message she called the concept "laudable."

However, she said because there's no money for it included in the state's current \$254 billion budget it will have to wait, while suggesting it could perhaps be negotiated into next year's spending plan.

Schultz's concern though, is that even if funding for a plan is included in next year's budget, and even if the budget is passed on time, the training program might not be developed, approved, and implemented until well after schools will be forced to start buying electric busses -which are nearly triple the price of a conventional bus and have been demonstrably unreliable in cold weather- in 2027.

"There's varying techniques and technology out there right now that can be used for fighting these EV fires, some not proven, and it's so new and it's moving so fast that some of the mandates are actually moving faster than we are with the training and the technology coming out unfortunately," Schultz said.

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, 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.

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

NYS OSC FIRE AUDITS

MONTROSE FIRE DISTRICT – CLAIMS AUDITING

Audit Objective

Did the Montrose Fire District (District) Board of Commissioners (Board) properly audit claims?

Audit Period

January 1, 2023 – August 31, 2024

Understanding the Audit Area

The claims audit is often the last line of defense for preventing unauthorized, improper or fraudulent claims from being paid. A fire district board must audit the claims against a fire district before they are paid. A proper claims audit ensures all claims are subjected to an independent, thorough and deliberate review that, among other things, determines that the fire district complied with its written policies, and that each purchase was for a proper fire district purpose. Purchases made using credit cards are also subject to claims audit and approval.

The District's 2024 budgeted appropriations totaled \$932,853 and, during the audit period, the District processed 828 claims totaling \$1,143,725. These claims included purchases totaling \$32,896 made with District credit cards.

Audit Summary

We reviewed 166 claims totaling \$712,696 and determined that the Board did not properly audit 78 claims (47 percent) totaling \$47,836. Specifically, the Board approved:

- 21 claims totaling \$23,789 without documentation indicating that the services outlined in the rental agreement were rendered.
- A claim totaling \$17,812 for an automatic defibrillator (AED) without obtaining quotes in accordance with the District's purchasing policy or providing sufficient proof that it was a sole source purchase.
- 13 claims that included sales tax totaling \$228. District officials told us they were aware that sales taxes were paid on certain purchases and have taken measures to ensure sales taxes are not paid going forward.

- *42 out of 60 credit card claims (70 percent) totaling \$5,117 without adequate supporting documentation that purchases were for legitimate District purposes.* These claims included purchases totaling \$484 made through an online payment system and at a local coffee chain. Although officials claimed that the purchases were fraudulent, they did not provide documentation to support that fraud claims were filed with the bank to dispute the charges.
- A credit card claim that included a \$288 purchase from an online data backup services vendor that may have been a duplicate.

By not properly auditing claims, the Board's ability to effectively monitor District financial operations is diminished and errors and irregularities may continue to occur and remain undetected and uncorrected.

The report includes five recommendations that, if implemented, will improve the District's claims auditing practices. District officials disagreed with certain aspects of our findings. Appendix C includes our comments on issues raised in the District's response.

THE COMPLETE AUDIT REPORT IS AT THIS LINK:

<https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2025/pdf/montrose-fire-district-2025-53.pdf>

Port Ewen Fire District – Financial Management

Background

The District is located in Ulster County. All District firefighters are volunteers.

The District is governed by the Board which includes five elected fire commissioners. The Board is responsible for managing the District's financial operations.

The Board appointed a Treasurer and secretary who drafted the District's budgets. Board members then reviewed, discussed and approved or revised the budgets.

Audit Objective

Determine whether the Port Ewen Fire District's (District) Board of Fire Commissioners (Board) properly managed the District's financial operations.

Key Findings

The Board and officials did not properly manage District's financial operations. Specifically, the Board did not:

- Ensure that the District Treasurer (Treasurer) maintained adequate accounting records. As a result, the Board did not have sufficient information to adequately oversee the District's financial activities and make informed financial decisions.
- Annually review the District's investment policy and seek legal investment options that align with the District's investment needs and benefit taxpayers. However, soliciting investment options may have resulted in greater investment earnings. For example, the District's investment earnings totaled \$968, but had officials solicited interest rate quotes and considered other investment options, they may have realized investment earnings ranging between approximately \$42,000 and \$51,000.
- Develop realistic budgets, which caused appropriations to be overestimated by an average of \$190,817 (35 percent) each year from 2019 through 2023.
- Adopt a written multiyear financial or capital plan.

Key Recommendations

- Maintain adequate accounting records.
- Consider all four objectives of a comprehensive investment program – legality, safety, liquidity and yield – when investing available funds.

THE COMPLETE AUDIT REPORT IS AT THIS LINK:

<https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2025/pdf/port-ewen-fire-district-2024-157.pdf>

STEP INTO THE CHIEF'S OFFICE

Commanding Alone: Fireground Leadership When You're All You've Got

Bobby Drake

The fireground doesn't wait for perfect conditions. Textbooks and training scenarios often include a robust command structure with the incident commander (IC) supported by operations, logistics, safety, and sector officers. However, for most departments, the reality is much leaner. Due to ongoing staffing challenges, rural

geography, or sheer call volume, it's not unusual for a single officer to arrive, assume, and maintain command...alone.

THE WEIGHT OF THE RADIO

The lone IC faces a uniquely difficult set of challenges. Often these individuals are faced with managing the chaos of an unfolding incident with limited immediate support. As a result, they are ultimately forced to make life-and-death decisions in real-time while simultaneously communicating with incoming units, monitoring fire conditions, and trying to maintain situational awareness. It's far from ideal, but far from rare. And *succeeding requires more than technical know-how—it demands preparation, trust, and confident leadership under pressure.*

But how do you succeed when commanding alone? This will require an understanding of your dynamic staffing model, decentralized decision making, and the critical importance of trust built well before the tones drop. As with any skill set you must learn, train, utilize, and apply previous experiences to become comfortable with being uncomfortable.

THE CHANGING FIREGROUND AND THE RISE OF THE SOLO IC

The fire service has evolved dramatically in recent years. Regardless of what type of department you are serving in, most are faced with increasing service demands, overlapping EMS responsibilities, and shrinking budgets. These factors are forcing more departments to do more with less. As a regular day-to-day operation in many regions, the first officer may arrive with a single company or even ahead of the first suppression unit. If mutual aid is required, it could be minutes or even hours before another officer arrives to assist with command.

While the Incident Command System (ICS) remains the national standard, the real-world application often requires adaptation. The system is built for scalability, but scalability assumes the eventual arrival of additional resources. What happens when those resources are delayed or don't come at all?

Enter the solo IC. Whether a seasoned battalion chief or any member of the organization who fills this role, these members naturally become the tactical and strategic head of the incident. Success hinges on their ability to apply foundational ICS principles with agility and discipline, supported by relationships, crew readiness, and simple, effective tools.

DYNAMIC STAFFING MODELS: PREDEFINED ROLES

One of the first areas to examine is staffing. Traditional fireground assignments are often based on structure type. For some, a single-family residence will get more resources and people than a commercial structure. However, in many localities, the same people and the same rigs are responding to both. The assumption associated with staffing models is that reality often outweighs policy and predesignated responses. Thus, ICs and personnel of all ranks need to remain dynamic and have a full understanding of their organizational reality. *Given this gap, departments should embrace dynamic staffing models and use preassigned roles by riding position, automatic tasking by apparatus type, and scalable tactical benchmarks.* For the lone IC, this allows for better predictability of task completion and crew performance, even from a distance. It's not enough to assume everyone "knows what to do." That knowledge must be built intentionally into your operations with clear expectations and used from the training ground to the fire scene.

For some, this may seem elementary, but there are many departments who do not have predefined roles and responsibilities laid out in their operational expectations. Therefore, if crews find themselves waiting for a "decision-maker," valuable time is lost for the citizen. For departments to be successful, these expectations must be built into the culture of your organization. Then, through repetition, training, and after-action, crews will learn to function with an autonomy that complements command rather than competing with it.

THE RISKS OF COMMANDING ALONE

Being the only command-level officer on the scene isn't just logistically challenging—it's cognitively exhausting. The solo IC carries the burden of tactical decision making, resource tracking, communications management, and safety oversight simultaneously. This creates the perfect storm for decision fatigue, tunnel vision, and missed cues.

Key risks related to this burden include:

- *Span of control overload:* The IC may be tracking too many units or fireground functions simultaneously.
- *Delayed decision making:* Waiting for more information can result in action paralysis.
- *Communication gaps:* Without a command aide or support officer, radio traffic can become overwhelming.
- *Mental and physical fatigue:* Especially on extended operations, the single IC may lack the bandwidth to rest, hydrate, or even take a breath. This mental fatigue can also lead to guilt and decision regret.

It's important to note that these risks are validated through numerous NIOSH firefighter fatality reports. One that specifically deserves mention is the 2018 Maryland line-of-duty death of Lieutenant Nathan Flynn, which highlighted contributing factors such as:

- Lack of defined incident action plans
- Inadequate fireground communications
- Missed critical incident benchmarks
- Task saturation of the incident commander
- Lack of personnel accountability

In many of these cases, the incident began with one officer trying to manage too much, too soon, with too little. These tragedies underscore the importance of developing practical tools and empowering leadership throughout the organization to share the load.

DECENTRALIZED COMMAND: TRUSTING THE COMPANIES YOU LEAD

The answer isn't to expect more of the solo IC—it's to build more around them.

Decentralized command is a military-derived philosophy that encourages leadership at all levels. *It relies on clear intent from the top, but execution from the bottom. In the fire service, this means that company officers and senior firefighters understand not just what to do, but why.* When crews are trained and trusted to act based on the commander's intent, the IC can focus on the big picture. Rather than assigning every task, they validate the overall direction. This reduces micromanagement and allows faster action at the task level.

Some practical applications:

- Teach crews to interpret the IC's objectives and apply them independently within their scope.
- Train on tactical priorities and operational benchmarks, not just checklists.
- Encourage company officers to lead boldly, while staying inside the guardrails of department standard operating procedures and incident priorities.

A decentralized command structure doesn't work without trust, and trust isn't built on the fireground—it's built in the firehouse, in training, and at the kitchen table. When the IC knows the capabilities and mindset of his or her crews, and those crews know the expectations of the IC, trust becomes the bridge between chaos and control.

TRAINING FOR THE INEVITABLE

Every department must train for the reality of the lone IC. Regardless if you are a small rural department, a one-station city department, or even a large urban or metro department, there will come a time when an IC finds themselves alone. Waiting for or expecting the perfect command scenario is a gamble. Normally what can go wrong, will. To help combat this, *departments should develop officer development programs that provide an emphasis on command-and-control training.* Aspects such as these should be included, at a minimum:

- Undertake tabletop simulations with delayed command support.
- Assign rotating officers as "acting command" during drills.
- *Debrief actual incidents where one officer ran the show. Identify what worked, what didn't, and what could be done better next time.*
- Build isolated responses into training exercises where companies act independently and are required to make split-second decisions without direction.

When we fail to provide continued training for our members or remove their ability to grow, we destroy the confidence of those we trust in these positions. This lack of confidence or feeling of support from the organization can make some question if promotion is for them. And just like with our new members,

recruitment and retention isn't the problem, it's a symptom of something deeper. For officers, this deeper problem is organizations not investing in their growth and development.

TECHNOLOGY AS A FORCE MULTIPLIER

When you're the only one wearing the white helmet, staying ahead of the incident is everything. A well-integrated, technology-based Common Operating Picture (COP) can serve as a true force multiplier for the solo IC. With today's tools such as rugged tablets, smartphone apps, and vehicle-mounted displays, the IC can visualize unit locations, access preplans, track assignments, and monitor benchmarks in real time.

But this isn't just about data—it's about decisions. A functional COP platform pulls together dispatch feeds, automatic vehicle location, hydrant locations, personnel accountability, and more, all into one intuitive interface. For the IC, that translates to reduced radio traffic, faster decisions, and reduced mental overload. And when reinforcements do arrive—whether mutual aid, a safety officer, or a division supervisor—they plug directly into the same operational picture, reducing the need for lengthy briefings or confusion.

Still, technology doesn't replace leadership. It enhances it. A COP is only as good as the training that backs it up. Departments must treat tech like any other tactical tool: train on it regularly, build confidence in its use, and ensure it supports, not replaces, command instincts. In the world of the lone IC, a well-integrated COP isn't just a screen, it's a second set of eyes and a lifeline in moments where clarity is critical and second chances are rare.

PREPARED, NOT ALONE

Commanding alone isn't about being the smartest or the loudest. It's about being the most prepared. It's about creating systems, building relationships, and cultivating trust so that when the moment comes, you're not truly alone. The work and effort you invest will ensure you're supported by a team of trained, empowered professionals operating from a shared set of values and expectations.

I've commanded from the front seat of an engine, from the passenger door of a chief's buggy, and a couple of times from the tailboard of a brush truck. Although my command experience is not nearly as robust as some, my experiences have allowed me the opportunity to be the only officer on the scene, with nothing but a handheld radio and a gut feeling. I've made mistakes. But each one has taught me that solo command isn't a disadvantage, but a responsibility—one we must prepare for.

Given the dynamic makeup of our fire service, many of us will never have the luxury of full command teams with even more support personnel behind the scenes. For this reason, we must engage with our crews, attend and lead training, and build an environment of trust and empowerment so "commanding alone" doesn't mean being alone.

STEP INTO THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

The Fire District needs to move funds from our Capital Reserve account to our checking account to pay for repairs needed to one of our engines, what type of voter approval is needed?

Assuming that the repair to apparatus is an authorized expenditure defined by your capital reserve account, the Board needs to first pass a resolution at a meeting indicating that the expenditure is subject to a permissive referendum pursuant to Section 6-g of the General Municipal Law, once the resolution is passed publish a copy of your resolution in your official newspaper within 10 business days and wait 30 days from the passage of your resolution to see if any taxpayers come forward with the required petition. If they don't; you can then move forward with the transfer of funds and the expenditure.

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

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

County Legislature Adopts Jared Lloyd Act Honoring Fallen Firefighter

The Rockland County Legislature has unanimously approved the Jared Lloyd Act, a newly expanded law honoring the legacy of fallen firefighter Jared Lloyd while extending benefits to a broader group of emergency service volunteers and their families.

The legislation, previously known as the Rockland County Volunteer Benefit Act, was renamed and strengthened to reflect Lloyd's heroism and the sacrifice of countless others who serve their communities. The new Jared Lloyd Rockland County Volunteer Benefit Act extends coverage beyond volunteer firefighters to include members of Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Auxiliary Police, Hazardous Materials (HazMat) teams, and Technical Rescue units.

"Jared made the supreme sacrifice as he carried out his firefighting duties, and naming this law after him is the right thing to do," said Legislator Paul Cleary, chair of the Legislature's Public Safety Committee and lead sponsor of the bill.

Lloyd, a 35-year-old second lieutenant with the Spring Valley Volunteer Fire Department, lost his life on March 23, 2021, while ensuring all residents had been rescued from the Evergreen Court Home for Adults during a devastating fire. His bravery helped save 112 lives that day.

The expanded law provides enhanced financial support for survivors of volunteers who die in the line of duty. Importantly, it now designates the assistance for survivors rather than dependents, ensuring that all loved ones — including children born after the volunteer's passing — are eligible for support.

Under the act, total benefits for each fallen volunteer's beneficiaries are capped at \$1 million, distributed directly to recipients in annual installments over ten years. Each beneficiary will receive 10 percent of the total amount annually.

Cleary said the measure was inspired by the hardship families often face after the loss of a volunteer who dies in service. "I was shocked and appalled that the families of volunteers who put their lives on the line for the community were left struggling — often greatly — because the main breadwinner had died in service to their neighbors," Cleary said.

In developing the law, Cleary sought feedback from Rockland's firefighting, EMS, and auxiliary police communities, along with input from the County Executive's Office and members of the Rockland County Fire Advisory Board, including Chairman Frank Bifulco, Howard Gerber, and George Cich.

The act clearly defines what constitutes a line-of-duty death and outlines who is eligible to receive financial support. It underscores Rockland County's recognition of the invaluable contributions made by its volunteer emergency responders — individuals who risk their lives daily to protect others.

"The Jared Lloyd Act ensures that the ultimate sacrifice made by our volunteers is never forgotten — and that their families are never left behind," Cleary said.

Two San Francisco Firefighters Call 'Mayday' After Plunging Through Floor

Dominic Fracassa

The firefighters, who were searching *the unoccupied* San Francisco building for victims, are in stable condition. Two San Francisco firefighters were hospitalized Wednesday morning after falling through the floor of an unoccupied building while battling a blaze on the 2500 block of Chestnut Street, fire department officials said. "At one point during the fire a mayday was called" after the two firefighters, who were not identified, fell from the third floor to the second floor of the building, San Francisco Fire Chief Dean Crispen said. They were pulled from the dwelling and hospitalized for evaluation of injuries sustained in the fall, Crispen said. Both were listed in stable condition Wednesday morning.

Firefighters first received a report of the fire in the city's Marina District around 4:15 Wednesday morning, Crispen said. Flames could be seen on the second floor of the building when firefighters arrived.

The building was apparently under construction, Crispen said, where uncovered walls and ongoing plumbing and electric work "probably... led to the rapid advancement of the fire."

Homes on either side of the burning building sustained damage, Crispen said.

By 7 a.m., the fire department reported that the blaze was contained and that four people in an adjacent house had been displaced.

The cause of the fire was not immediately clear, but I guess we can guess what the cause might have been.

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

Jail for Ex-Treasurer who Stole \$450K from Tonawanda, NY, Fire Department

As he prepared to sentence a man for stealing close to \$450,000 from a volunteer fire department that he used to feed his gambling habit, Erie County Judge James Bargnesi said he had mixed emotions.

"This court does understand the complexity of gambling," Bargnesi said to James Hoffman, former treasurer of the Sheridan Park Fire Company. "This court also understands the importance of stating 'Stealing is not OK, whether it's in your control or not.'" Hoffman was sentenced by Bargnesi to two to six years in prison on his guilty plea to second-degree grand larceny, and one to three years for repeated failure to file personal income and earnings taxes.

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.
- 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:

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****Virtual Ride-Alongs for Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment: How Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok Can Grow Your Roster**

Walter Campbell

Ever wish you could bottle up the adrenaline, teamwork, and pure excitement of a fire call and hand it to someone thinking about joining? Good news: you can. Well, not literally (imagine the liability paperwork and OSHA forms). A virtual ride-along is the next best thing. This social media tool lets viewers experience the action, the camaraderie, and yes, the coffee-fueled chaos of volunteer life, all from their phone.

WHY VIRTUAL RIDE-ALONGS WORK FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT

People are naturally curious about what happens behind the station doors. They hear the sirens, see the lights, and wonder what goes on after the truck disappears down the road. Virtual ride-alongs answer that curiosity. They give potential members a first-person perspective of firehouse life, from hearing the tones drop to rolling hose back on the engine.

For many people, joining the fire service feels intimidating. They picture Hollywood-level action or assume they need to be in peak physical shape before they even apply. A virtual ride-along shows them the reality: that your members are neighbors, parents, students, retirees, and people just like them. When viewers see someone who looks like them donning gear, laughing with the crew, or taking a training drill seriously, they start thinking, “Maybe I could do this too.”

Virtual ride-alongs are also a great equalizer. Instead of asking people to show up to the station for an open house, you bring the experience to them. That matters for younger audiences and busy parents who are already glued to their phones. Think of it like a reality show where the audience can interact live, ask questions, and get to know your department’s culture before they ever walk in the door.

BEST PLATFORMS FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT VIRTUAL RIDE-ALONGS

Facebook Reels and Videos, Instagram Live, and TikTok are your new recruitment partners. Each platform has its own strengths and audience, which means you can tailor content to reach a variety of potential recruits.

- **Facebook Reels and Videos:** This is still the go-to platform for parents, community leaders, and people who want to stay plugged into what is happening locally. Posting your ride-alongs here means they will be shared in neighborhood groups and seen by the people who often encourage others to volunteer.
- **Instagram Live:** Perfect for interactive sessions. Think station tours, live Q&A nights, or ride-alongs during training. Instagram’s live chat lets you answer questions in real time, making it a great way to connect with people who are already following your department.
- **TikTok:** This is where you can get creative and playful. TikTok rewards short, entertaining clips that hook viewers in the first few seconds. Use trending sounds or clever text overlays to make your content stand out. A good TikTok video might be the first time a teenager or college student even considers that volunteering is an option.

The goal is to meet people where they are, on the platform they use most. A three-minute live tour might perform well on Instagram or Facebook, but TikTok will thrive with a 20-second “day in the life” clip. Repurpose your content to maximize reach – one recorded live session can be turned into multiple short clips for other platforms.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT IDEAS FOR FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT

Need inspiration? Here are some proven ideas to make your virtual ride-alongs more engaging:

- **The Gear-Up Challenge:** Show a firefighter going from zero to turnout gear in under 60 seconds. Time them, add music, and encourage viewers to try it at home with household items.
- **Meet the Crew:** Introduce your members with quick Q&A videos. Ask questions like, “What was your first call?” “What is your go-to coffee order?” or “Who makes the best chili on duty night?” This humanizes your department.
- **Call Prep POV:** Capture crews checking equipment or getting the engine ready. Even washing the truck can look heroic with the right camera angle and soundtrack.
- **Training Highlights:** Share ladder drills, live fire evolutions, or EMS scenarios with permission and safety in mind. Explain what you are doing so viewers learn while they watch.

- **Station Life:** Show the downtime too. Post clips of dinner night, gear inspections, or the friendly debate over who hid the good coffee. This lets people see that the firehouse is a second family, not just a workplace.
- **Myth-Busting Moments:** Create short videos debunking common misconceptions about volunteering, such as “You have to be a firefighter to join” or “Training takes years.”
- **Community Spotlight:** Feature local events, fire prevention education, or charity drives to show that your department does more than respond to calls.

TIPS FOR SAFE AND ENGAGING VIRTUAL RIDE-ALONGS

When you are inviting the public into your world, there are a few things to keep in mind.

- **Keep It Real:** People are not looking for a Hollywood production. Let the camera shake a little and let personalities shine. Authenticity builds trust.
- **Stay Professional:** Never share patient information, home addresses, or anything that could compromise safety or privacy. Blur identifying details if needed.
- **Be Respectful:** If you are responding to someone’s worst day, videos of firefighters laughing or goofing off at the scene is not a good look for your department.
- **Promote Ahead of Time:** Post teasers and countdowns to let your audience know when you are going live. Build excitement the same way you would for a special event.
- **Engage Viewers:** Have someone monitoring comments to answer questions in real time. This turns a passive viewer into an active participant.
- **Save and Reuse Content:** After the live session ends, save the video and upload highlights to other platforms. This multiplies your reach without extra work.

BUILDING A RECRUITMENT FUNNEL WITH VIRTUAL RIDE-ALONGS

A virtual ride-along should not be the end of the story. Use it as the first step in a recruitment funnel. During the live stream, share the link to your application page or invite viewers to sign up for a station tour. Afterward, follow up with short posts thanking viewers for joining and sharing next steps, like when your next open house or orientation session is happening.

The goal is to make it easy for someone to go from curious to committed. If they watch your ride-along, they should know exactly where to click next to take action.

TURNING VIEWERS INTO RECRUITS

Virtual ride-alongs create a connection that no flyer or banner can match. They turn “someday I might volunteer” into “where is the application link?” These experiences meet potential members where they already spend time, on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, and make your department feel approachable and exciting.

Your community is already scrolling. Give them a reason to stop, watch, and imagine themselves on the crew. Grab your phone, grab a crew member who does not mind being on camera, and hit “Go Live.” Your next recruit might be watching right now – and the best part is, you just showed them what it would feel like to join.

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH & SAFETY; PROTECTING OUR OWN

68

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.)

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

- Susan Smith, 67, died Friday night after suffering critical injuries when the medical helicopter she was on, operated as Reach 5, crashed into Highway 50 in East Sacramento.
- In New Jersey, six Glen Rock and four Hawthorne firefighters were exposed to hydrochloric acid and other pool-cleaning chemicals while extricating a driver at a crash scene.
- The fire chief in Iva, South Carolina, was airlifted after being struck by a vehicle on Monday. The Iva Fire Department said Fire Chief Curt Brickle was hit by a vehicle while on the job, he is now in stable condition with rib fractures.

FIRE APPARATUS ACCIDENTS FOR THE WEEK

- Two firefighters have been sent to hospital after a tractor-trailer collided into a fire truck. The fire truck was on the scene of an earlier collision blocking a live lane - WB #Hwy401/Newtonville Rd. 2:30am. The fire fighters were inside their vehicle at the time of the collision. The injuries are considered non-life threatening.
- Firefighters in Susquehanna County responded to a fire on I-81 South after an electrical failure ignited the cab of a Harford Volunteer Fire Company rescue engine. Something went down behind the officer's seat where the main electrical comes into the truck and shorted out the electrical system, and almost instantly, with that many batteries and everything going to it, we had sparks and flame almost immediately. Less than three minutes elapsed from notifying dispatch of the fire to when the fire's growth forced the crew to retreat.
- A man died after being hit by a fire truck, according to troopers with the North Carolina State Highway Patrol. A pickup truck was traveling on U.S. 421, towing a utility trailer, around 6:20 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025, the report said. Officials said the trailer became detached from the truck. Once the driver noticed this, he moved to the shoulder and parked near an abandoned vehicle, leaving the truck's left rear side slightly over the fog line, according to the report. As the man exited his truck, officials said a fire truck hit the trailer, which was then thrown into the abandoned vehicle, the report said. The fire truck then hit the left corner of the pickup truck and struck the truck driver who had stepped out to retrieve the trailer, according to the report.

FIRE APPARATUS

Snippet of the Congressional Apparatus Manufacturer Hearings::Interesting

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

Apparatus Innovations: Spotter Mirror & Backing Intercom-Quicker, More Effective & Safer Apparatus Operation

Rick Mosher

I believe in the premise that smaller, simpler apparatus are the key to a more efficient and effective fireground and emergency scene. That said, some apparatus that we operate have changed, including in regard to size, as our role has expanded. Size increases can complicate maneuverability in certain areas. The cab spotter mirror and the backing intercom, which can be added onto a current vehicle or as an option on a new apparatus purchase, increase members' ability to respond and to return to service quickly, effectively and safely.

OFFICER'S SIDE SPOTTER MIRROR

The larger, taller fire apparatus cabs of today, whether conventional or cab forward, with flat or extended front bumpers, can create visual challenges for the engineer. (Note: I recommend departments choose a flat bumper or a maximum of a 19-inch front bumper extension. Front bumpers that exceed 19 inches tend to create challenges for approach angles, turning in tight spaces and backing into tight spaces.) The officer's side spotter mirror increases an engineer's ability to see during parking, turning and backing.

Convex spotter mirrors are used in many industries to increase operator visibility. When it's used on a fire apparatus, a convex spotter mirror allows the engineer to see people, animals and objects that are within 1–7 feet of the front bumper when the rig is parked. The distance that's desired plays into the specification of the mirror when department personnel communicate with suppliers or apparatus manufacturers.

Furthermore, the engineer has a full view of the topside of the front bumper. This allows that member to see loose or unsecured equipment. The engineer also can view the nearby pavement to ensure that children and animals aren't in close proximity of the apparatus.

When making left turns while moving forward in tight parking lots and on congested city streets, streets that have obstructions and rural roads, the mirror allows the engineer to spot the left turn. This is critical, given that apparatus cabs now are commonly 100 inches (8½ feet) wide. Neighborhood streets can be as narrow as 20 feet in an urban setting and 24 feet in suburban areas. Add in parked cars, and the street size is even more cramped.

In the case of a 19-inch front bumper, an additional 8 inches of bumper swing should be accounted for when turning or backing left or right. When backing on streets and in parking lots, the mirror allows the engineer to account for the bumper swing.

One additional point: All departments that are specifying a new fire apparatus should request a turning performance analysis report from the manufacturer.

BACKING INTERCOM

Rearview cameras are becoming a more common option on fire apparatus. Some models include one-way audio capability. This allows the engineer to hear the directing member call out commands as the apparatus is backing. Of course, the downside to this technology is the engineer or officer doesn't have the ability to communicate back to the directing member.

Specifying a basic backing intercom system on an engine or aerial apparatus provides for two-way communication.

Place the master intercom box between the engineer and officer, ideally at an angle on the motor house closest to the engineer and within arm's reach of the officer.

The master intercom box contains a speaker, a push-to-talk button and a volume knob. A master power switch for on/off capability is recommended on the hard-wired switch panel. This allows the system to be turned off when it isn't in use, thus reducing unneeded noise/distractions in the cab.

A second speaker is placed at the tailboard of the engine or aerial apparatus. When the master switch is activated, the member at the tailboard has hands-free voice communication with the engineer and officer in the cab. If needed, the officer can activate the push-to-talk button to allow him/her or the engineer to communicate with the directing member.

Use of the system isn't limited to backing. On arrival at an incident, if a member exits the cab to forward lay from a hydrant, the system can be used to notify the member that an audible was called and he/she must return to the cab or reposition elsewhere.

NEW OR RETROFIT

The spotter mirror and backing intercom can be specified on a new apparatus purchase or added onto an existing apparatus to increase member safety while maintaining an aggressive, all-hazards response when responding to and returning from an alarm.

THE CHANGING FIRE SERVICE

'These Kids Can't Even Hitch A Horse': It's Time To Move Beyond Judgment Of New Firefighters

Trevor Frodge

Twenty years ago, there would be hundreds of applicants for just a few open positions. Today, a handful of applicants (if we are lucky!) are applying for dozens of open positions. Our pool of potential members is shrinking, which means we must improve how we train new recruits — and how veteran members relate to this younger generation of firefighters.

Is this a new phenomenon? Today's revered, salty veterans were once probies themselves. What did the salty veterans of their day say about them?

Picture yourself as a new firefighter in 1920 — an entirely different lifestyle, schedule and training regimen. Two years into unionization by the AFL-CIO and IAFF, many departments still weren't a professional firefighting force. Most were transitioning to motorized fire apparatus, but some departments still had horse-drawn pumpers. (For the history buffs, the last horse-drawn pumper in operation was Engine 18 in Washington, D.C., in 1924.)

Now, imagine stepping into the engine house where the horses are fed and kept. Imagine that you grew up in the city, where your father had some type of labor occupation, and your mother stayed home to care for you and your several siblings. At 18 years old, you've joined the local fire department — a mediocre job, but a job, nonetheless. What do you know about horses? And what would the old-timers know about this new machine that transports crews faster than a horse but needs gasoline instead of feed? Imagine that level of change — replacing the horses with a machine — and navigating the transition between younger and older members. The more senior members may have judged the new firefighter for not knowing how to care for the horses, and the younger members may have shaken their heads at the older members for not embracing the motorized option. Clearly this dynamic has been playing out for a very long time.

I'll fully admit that all I know about horses is that they are large, have four legs and cowboys ride them. The point is, we are often hard on our new people — and likely unfairly so. Some of our new firefighters may lack some life skills, sure — but they have heart. Similarly, some of our veterans may be reluctant to change, from who we are hiring to the all-hazards direction of the fire service.

We've always overcome new challenges, from integrating EMS into fire response, answering the call for acts of terror, or training on lithium-ion battery fires. But do we accept these challenges at face value and find solutions, or do we first meet them with skepticism and reluctance? And how is that skepticism affecting firefighter recruitment and retention of younger members who may not feel welcomed because they are seen by veteran firefighters as the human embodiment of change?

HOW TO RETAIN YOUNG RECRUITS

I've been very fortunate to work with a recruit academy of young prospective firefighters. I've seen the extent of their work ethic and, though they lack many fire service skills, they are eager to get to work and quick to learn. Today's new firefighters need motivation in manual labor, but that is because they've grown up in a digital age. They listen to podcasts, watch YouTube shorts and TikTok videos of fires, and crave information. These firefighters question everything because they've grown up knowing they can find an answer in seconds — and this is where the fire service is diverging. These younger recruits tend to fear making mistakes, so we must coach them that mistakes in training are part of the building blocks to success, because we cannot make mistakes when it counts. When the tones drop, our citizens expect perfection and deserve 100% of our effort every time.

Bottom line: If we don't harness these new firefighters quickly, we will lose them. They will either defect to more progressive organizations or they will leave the career field completely. While some veteran firefighters might say "good riddance," I would counter that if we aren't recruiting and retaining, then we are one generation away from losing the fire service completely. Like the military, if we aren't filling our ranks with new blood, who will staff the trucks when all of us are retired? We must cultivate the new generation, grow them, mold them and set them up for success.

It takes patience and grace to mentor a new probationary firefighter. It takes courage to lead someone along the right path, versus berating them for not knowing what they don't know. Ignorance is common with new firefighters — they simply do not know how the job works. But as is the case for all of us, we don't know what we don't know. It's up to us to train them, teach them, coach them, support them and correct them. Otherwise, the legacies that we have spent our careers developing will be gone. We need them to know how to search, how to stretch lines, how to mask up quickly, deploy ladders and be compassionate. They must understand that they are public servants and serve the citizens above themselves. They must witness good officers and emulate their traits, so when it's time to promote, they maintain the same traits and traditions as us.

EMBRACE FRESH-FACED NEW RECRUITS WITH ENTHUSIASM

Public safety is struggling to recruit, and most of us simply don't have the numbers of decades past. I don't have a solution to the complex problem of recruitment and retention, but I do believe that if the fire service continues to function the same as in the past, we are doomed to fail. The fire service must adopt and change our training, not to lower the bar but to elevate our standards so that we prepare new firefighters for the current realities of the job. In their growth, we must show compassion, patience and grace, or else we won't have anyone to train.

Like it or not, nobody else is coming to preserve the fire service — it's up to us to teach, train, mentor, educate, correct and propel the new generation of firefighters forward to allow our communities to survive and thrive. Or, we can complain and criticize as keyboard warriors when we see an engine company mess up the stretch, or a ladder company look like buffoons when it matters most, and ultimately drive away eager, mistake-averse probies. The choice is ours.

The new kids want to learn, they just don't know how — but we can compassionately teach them. I've seen it firsthand, and it does work.

Now, who is with me?

Two PA Fire Departments Merging

Ron Devlin – Republican & Herald, Pottsville, Pa.

Passersby in the 700 block of West Mahanoy Street might have thought that West End Fire & Rescue and Washington Hook & Ladder were the same fire company.

After Washington's station was destroyed by fire in 2013, the company built a new firehouse right next to West End in 2017.

In fact, the two stations are attached and, from the street, appear as one building.

Well, now they are.

The companies are merging under the banner of West End Fire & Rescue Company.

Joe Gavala, left, West End Fire & Rescue chief, and Shane Finneran, Washington Hook & Ladder captain, in Mahanoy City. Their fire companies are merging. RON DEVLIN, STAFF PHOTO (RON DEVLIN/STAFF PHOTO)

On Aug. 25, West End petitioned the state Attorney General's office for approval of the merger. Authorities expect the approval process will be completed in the coming months.

The merger comes as volunteer fire companies struggle with declining membership, more intensive training standards and the escalating cost of equipment and fire apparatus.

Citing similar concerns, two Pottsville fire companies — Phoenix and Humane — recently merged as Pottsville Fire Company No. 1.

Shane Finneran, a Washington captain, said the company has only 10 members, about half of whom are active. "We have the equipment and the building," he said, "but we don't have the people."

Known as "The Hookies," Washington's 75-foot E-ONE aerial ladder truck rounds out West End's component of fire, rescue and diving equipment.

"The merger makes us a multifunctional facility," said Larry Levy, West End's vice president and chief engineer.

"At the end of the day, it enables us to provide better service to the borough and Mahanoy Twp."

Joseph Gavala, West End's chief, said the merger brings the company's staff to about 40 trained firefighters. Gavala, who's 80 and has been a member of West End for 48 years, said it takes about three years to train a new firefighter.

West End has three state-certified instructors and five Emergency Medical Technicians with two more in training.

During a tour of the station, Gavala displayed some of the company's 30 air packs, which cost up to \$12,000 each. He remembers when the company had two air packs.

The recent replacement of an LED light on its 2006 KME engine cost \$2,800, he said.

Fortunately, the company's 1999 KME rescue truck and 2017 Squad 48-65 rescue vehicle are in excellent condition.

With rising cost of materials and fewer manufacturers, a new fire engine can cost over \$1 million and have to be ordered years in advance.

Kovatch Mobile Equipment, the manufacturer of two of West End's trucks, closed its plant in Nesquehoning in 2022.

“Like all fire companies,” Gavala said, “we’re constantly engaged in fundraising efforts to survive.” West End runs sportsmen’s raffles, pizza sales and, consistent with its Eastern European roots, sells pierogi and halushki at Mahanoy City’s Community Day. Both fire companies share a rich history of service to the community. Founded in 1925, West End observed its 100th anniversary with a weeklong celebration, memorial service and a parade in June. Formed after an upper story fire highlighted the need for a ladder company in 1886, Washington is one of the borough’s oldest fire companies. Mahanoy City has three other fire companies: Citizens, Humane and Good American.

NJ Fire Chiefs Warn: Volunteer Shortage at Crisis Level

Dan Landrigan

Some South Jersey fire chiefs say their departments are in urgent need of help as the number of volunteer firefighters continues to drop.

CBS Philadelphia reports that across the state, volunteer firefighter numbers have decreased about 20% in the last 15 years. More than 30,000 volunteered for the fire service in 2010; that number is under 25,000 today, according to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

Fire officials say increasing training requirements and families juggling multiple jobs have made it harder for people to commit to volunteering. In Washington Township, the number of volunteers has plunged from 150 in 2005 to just 16 today. The shortage has already led to slower response times and concerns from residents about public safety.

To help address the problem, state lawmakers are considering new incentives, including a 15% property tax reduction and a \$500 tax credit, to encourage more people to join. But fire chiefs warn that without more recruits, taxpayers may eventually have to fund full-time, paid firefighters to keep communities safe.

BUILDING CODE ISSUES AND REPORTED FIRE FATALITIES

The New ICC Code-NYS Edition will go into effect on December 31st 2025. The effect of the updated NYS Energy Code on residential occupancies is profound and will drive the cost of homes up extensively.

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?

12 Story Wood Building?

On Mass. Ave. north of Porter Square, a new 12-story building may soon rise above the bustling streetscape. The design is cutting edge; it would be built nearly entirely from laminated wood, a relatively new concept called mass timber that is both more cost effective and energy efficient. It would have a rooftop terrace and the sort of recreational space typically found in luxury apartment buildings that have sprung up in the Seaport and along Revere Beach.

Perhaps the most unique feature: all 73 apartments planned there will be set aside for low- and middle-income residents.

The project at 2072 Mass. Ave. has been in the works since 2018, and is one of the most prominent buildings yet proposed under Cambridge's landmark (AHO) Affordable Housing Overlay, which allows fully-affordable buildings up to 12 and 15 stories tall in key stretches of the city to be permitted without special approval from a zoning board. It also reflects a broader shift in Cambridge from skepticism over taller, denser housing as a means of promoting affordability to embracing it.

"We're hoping that people will look at this as the sort of project that is possible when the city gets really intentional about writing policy for the kind of housing they want to see," said Sean Hope, principal of Hope Real Estate Enterprises, one of the project's developers. "We're hoping to build 73 units of affordable housing that families will be able to live in right in the heart of Porter [Square]."

Hope and affordable housing developer Capstone Communities bought the parcel at 2072 Mass. Ave. — what is today a single-story Indian restaurant next to an older, six-story affordable housing development — in 2018, with funding from the city's affordable housing trust.

In 2021, they proposed a nine-story affordable housing project on the site, but were met with stiff opposition from neighbors, including residents of the building next door who were concerned about shadows. They encountered similar skepticism from the city's Zoning Board of Appeals, which asked them to scale the project down significantly. The developers later withdrew the project.

"Financially, we probably could have made the tax credits and everything work at six stories," said Jason Korb, principal of Capstone Communities. "But collectively, we and some folks at the city thought that it would be a huge lost opportunity to just do six stories on a site like this."

The project stalling set off alarm bells for some city councilors, who wondered why the city would reject such a significant influx of affordable housing on a prime parcel on Mass. Ave. At the time, the city's AHO only allowed affordable buildings by-right up to seven stories in major squares.

Several councilors and city staff pursued an update to the overlay, and asked Korb and Hope to hold tight; they even cited the project as a reason to expand the overlay. Two years later, a new version passed, allowing buildings up to 12 stories tall on major corridors and up to 15 stories in major squares.

Earlier this year, the developers reintroduced the project, and feedback this time around has been much more positive, though there are still a few skeptics who are concerned about the height of the building and that it will not come with any additional parking spaces.

"I'm very happy to have the affordable housing being built here ... but 12 stories is an extremely tall building for this area," nearby resident Sean Smeland said at a recent planning board meeting. "At that height, it would be a bit of an eyesore."

The AHO, the developers say, enabled the project to work.

Financing an affordable housing project is a tricky endeavor, typically requiring funding from dozens of private and public sources. The bigger the building, the trickier the math, and lengthy permitting processes can ultimately sink a project. By allowing tall affordable housing projects to be built by-right, affordable developers can bypass the slowest parts of the permitting process, giving them a leg up on market-rate developers who still must seek a special permit to build tall projects.

Today, at least 16 affordable housing projects are in the pipeline under AHO rules, totaling more than 920 affordable units.

In the case of Korb and Hope's project, the additional flexibility under the AHO has allowed them to focus less on permitting and more on design, including studying mass timber. By building almost entirely with laminated wood, the developers will be able to avoid more energy-intensive materials like steel and concrete, said Jason Forney, principal of Bruner/Cott Architects, which helped design the project. Mass timber buildings are also lighter, and can be constructed more quickly, he said.

If built as planned, the project would be one of the tallest mass timber projects in the state (Boston University has plans to construct a 12-story mass timber building on its campus to house its school of global studies). It will also be meeting "Passive House" standards, meaning it will be extremely energy efficient and have a low carbon footprint.

The developers will also widen a section of Walden Street to help improve the traffic flow through the area. Korb and Hope still need the city's sign-off on design. Then they will pursue financing. Despite the zoning advantages, it remains expensive, with a current projected cost of around \$77 million, a little more than \$1 million a unit, fairly typical for affordable housing in Cambridge these days.

But if all goes to plan, they said, the project will serve as a symbol for what is possible when cities are intentional about making room for the sort of affordable housing projects they want to see.

"At our public meetings, we used to have a lot of people talking about how they didn't want the project," said Korb. "Now, people are more focused on ways we can improve the design of it to benefit the community."

[EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS IS ALL GREAT UNTIL IT ISN'T, TIME WILL TELL.]

GREEN TECHNOLOGY & THE FIRE SERVICE

4 Injured In High-Rise Apartment Fire In Queens; E-Bike Found At Scene

Investigators are working to determine if an e-bike sparked a fire at a NYCHA complex in Flushing, Queens. The fire started on the 10th floor of the James A. Bland Houses around 2:15 a.m. Thursday. Four people were hospitalized with non-life-threatening injuries. FDNY Hazmat units secured an e-bike and will determine what role it may have had in the blaze. Residents were seen exiting the complex building, as one man got on a stretcher before he was rolled away and put in an ambulance. Most residents were back inside their apartments around 4:30 a.m.

Video Captures NC Firefighter's Dog Starting Fire with Lithium-Ion Battery

Dan Landirgan

Video captured a dog belonging to a Chapel Hill firefighter chewing on a lithium-ion battery and starting a fire. Home security video captured the moment the David Sasser's 5-year-old rescue dog, Colton, chewed on a battery-powered device, breaking its safety seal and then chewing on its battery, triggering a fire in the living room rug, WRAL reports. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RN61bEa003Q&t=13s>)

The fire was extinguished quickly and no one was injured. Sasser took the opportunity to share the video to help educate people about the hazards of the batteries and spread tips for using them safely.

Safety Standards Boosted at CA Battery Storage Facilities after Fire

PK Hattis, Santa Cruz Sentinel, Calif.

Less than a year after the Moss Landing Power Plant fire, Gov. Gavin Newsom has signed a bill strengthening safety standards for the development of new battery storage facilities across the state.

Senate Bill 283 was authored by state Sen. John Laird and pushes for greater coordination with fire officials during project development and construction phases.

"California must prioritize safety at every step when expanding battery storage to meet its clean energy goals," Laird, who represents Santa Cruz County and the Moss Landing area in the California Assembly, said in a release. "SB 283 ensures that future battery storage facilities are developed with safety and the community in mind, and that our fire officials are involved in every step along the way. I thank Governor Newsom for signing this bill to protect first responders, local communities, and the integrity of our renewable energy transition."

The bill was signed by Newsom on Oct. 7, and its provisions will take effect Jan. 1, 2026.

The Moss Landing storage facility, owned by Texas-based energy company Vistra, was the world's largest of its kind until Jan. 16 when a fire erupted inside the plant and consumed about 55% of the facility's 100,000 battery modules over the course of five days. The site, which also experienced a flare-up a few days after the original fire, is currently the subject of the largest lithium-ion battery cleanup in the Environmental Protection Agency's history.

Included within the bill are requirements that battery storage developers engage with local fire authorities prior to submitting an application in order to address facility design, assess potential risks and integrate emergency response plans, such as what was already required by Senate Bill 38 also authored by Laird and passed in 2023.

The new law also calls for a facility safety inspection before battery storage plants officially go online and the owner must cover the cost of inspections. It also directs the state to review the configuration of facilities including limitations on development within combustible buildings, a provision that is meant to prevent another incident similar to Moss Landing.

The bill, which was sponsored by the California Professional Firefighters and the California State Association of Electrical Workers, was introduced with a requirement that facilities adhere to the National Fire Protection Association 855 standards. But these standards, widely recognized as the most robust for battery storage development according to Laird, were adopted in March by the Office of the State Fire Marshal — also with a Jan. 1, 2026, effective date — so the conditions were dropped from Laird's bill to avoid duplication.

"Senate Bill 283 is a critical step forward in protecting both our firefighters and the communities they serve," President of California Professional Firefighters Brian Rice said in the release. "By strengthening safety standards for battery storage facilities and ensuring local fire authorities have a seat at the table through the meet-and-confer process, this law puts responsibility where it belongs — on the owners and operators of these facilities — and helps prevent disasters before they start."

The Moss Landing fire prompted an immediate wave of scrutiny when it comes to battery energy storage projects across the region, particularly for a development that has been proposed at 90 Minto Road near Watsonville. For months, community groups and local advocates have questioned the safety of battery energy storage systems and voiced concerns about health and environmental consequences.

Developers and advocates on the other end of the issue have stressed the importance of battery energy storage to the state's power grid and clean energy goals. While the Moss Landing plant had many of the batteries arranged in an open-air configuration inside a repurposed building, advocates have pointed to newer storage system standards that group the batteries together in compartmentalized steel containers with fire suppression systems. They also said modern systems use a battery chemistry that is more resistant to thermal runaway.

Santa Cruz County's Commission on the Environment held a series of three meetings this summer that were devoted entirely to exploring battery energy storage systems from technology, safety and regulatory angles.

STUFF FOR YOUR OFFICERS AND MEMBERS!



Rare Emergencies Demand, Total Crew Readiness

WATCH ON-DEMAND WEBINAR AT THIS LINK:

<https://tracking.police1.com/t/9561414/187515077/7947786/0/1006865/?b44ed14b=YmY5NWQ4NzktNW RmOC00MWJkLTkzMDctNzg0Y2VhZTNjMzYy&x=6b50af4e>

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.

LEARN HOW TO:

- **Assess Your Jurisdiction**

Conduct community risk assessments for effective emergency responses

- **Optimize Training**

Identify and prioritize training gaps instead of relying on trends

- **Ensure Crew Readiness**

Use COs to drive meaningful, consistent training efforts

Get ready for anticipated changes in the OSHA Emergency Response Standard by learning HOW TO!



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 to 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](#).



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

Start a Tool Maintenance Program

Steve Shupert

Tools enhance our ability to perform our duties and represent a large investment of taxpayer money. Keeping these tools in a high state of readiness is part of our job and is evidence of our professionalism as firefighters. Good maintenance reduces downtime and saves money for other needs. A tool maintenance program, including preventive maintenance, will help ensure having safe, functioning tools that won't let you or your community down when you need them the most. Being good at keeping tools running is as important as being a good tool operator.

Begin with documenting inventory. Categorize (i.e., hand or power), count, and describe every tool and its assigned location. Include a copy of the purchase record, operating manuals, and any maintenance records. Create a unique identification marking for each tool. This will make it easier to track each tool's maintenance history.

Assign specific staff to be responsible for tool maintenance. Provide training through seminars or manufacturers' workshops. Tool rental/local repair shops are a great resource for information and troubleshooting tips/ advice. Equip staff with a tool kit and diagnostic instruments to facilitate troubleshooting and repair. Basic diagnostic tools include an electric multimeter, gas engine compression gauge, tachometer to check engine rpm, and spark tester. Get a work bench with a vise, adequate lighting, and a supply of maintenance items such as lubricants, cleaning solutions, and spare parts. Start a "Tag Out-of-Service" procedure accessible to all staff. The "Do Not Use" tag needs to list the problem, who tagged it out, the date, and the tool assignment.

Assess the condition of each tool and list and prioritize deficiencies. Budget to keep tools to factory specifications and sustain them. Power tools such as electric generators, air chisels, reciprocating saws, and chain rotary saws need to be on a preventive maintenance/inspection program. At least once a year, cycle these tools through your "tool person" for an in-depth inspection, testing, cleaning, lubrication, tuning, and fastener check. When maintaining, inspecting, or adjusting any power tools, make sure the equipment is deenergized, the pressure is safely bled off, the tool is unplugged, and the sharp edges are guarded. Be sure the tool can't be turned back on while you are working on it.

BEST PRACTICES FOR MAINTAINING TOOLS

Keep your tools clean inside and out. Wipe dirt and debris from tools and also contamination from smoke. Use compressed air to blow into tool vents. Brushing accumulated dirt from vents could force dirt deeper into the tool. Keep all blades clean—rotary saw blades/chain saw chains are notorious for getting "gunky," resulting in reduced performance.

Heat is the main source of tool malfunction. Overheating a tool puts a lot of stress on all components. This condition is a cumulative injury to the tool, like most of the conditions described here. You can get away with it a few times, but eventually it will catch up with you—likely at the worse time. Keep the bits/blades sharp. A dull bit/ blade can reduce tool efficiency by 30%. When the bit/blade dulls, many of us will try and push on through, worsening the situation and rarely speeding up the operation. Keep extra bits and blades handy. Do not block tool vents with your hands while operating. Let the tool breathe.

We often have to push our tools hard. Proper lubrication is a must to keep all the moving parts on your tools working properly. It keeps the parts from excessive wear and overheating and prevents rust and corrosion.

Check the maintenance section of your owner's manual and follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to lubricate and the type of lubricant to use. Lube pneumatic tools after each use with pneumatic oil. Vehicle rescue hydraulic tools' pivot points are under tremendous pressure. Ensure the correct fuel-to-oil mix for two-cycle saws, and use rated "bar" oil in the bar oil reservoir. Change the oil in four-stroke engines every 25 hours or annually. Signs that you need to lubricate the tool include new vibrations, knocks/squeaks, and smoky exhaust.

Make sure you are using the properly matched bit/blade to the material you are working on. As stated, a worn bit/ blade will overwork/heat you and the power tool unnecessarily.

Maximum electrical amperage draw through 100 feet of 12-gauge cord is 15 amps. Know your tools' amperage and use the correct size cord. A voltage drop of 3.6 volts on a 120-VAC circuit is enough to lower the efficiency of the tool and cause it to overheat. The same is true for air hoses and hydraulic lines too: Excessive length can cause performance problems and premature wear. For example, a 50-cfm air chisel running at 200 psi will have 32 psi friction loss in 50 feet of 3/8-inch hose.

Tools need to be stored in a dry, clean place. Storing tools in a moist environment can lead to problems with electrical components and corrosion. When you purchase a tool, get the case too to help protect it and then secure the tool/case so it is not sliding around in the compartment. Keeping tool compartments clean is also the best way to rapidly identify leaks.

As your tool gets used, some parts will eventually need to be replaced. Don't wait until the tool breaks; inspect it regularly. One of the most common replacements is an electric motor's carbon brushes, which are responsible for conducting electricity through the motor. If your tool has a drive belt, like a rotary power saw, monitor it for wear. Power cords, recoil starters, and switch assemblies are parts that tend to become damaged over time.

Lithium-ion batteries are becoming the standard for power tools. One of the most important factors to keeping your lithium-ion battery well maintained is to manage heat. Allowing a battery to overheat can fry it beyond repair. Store your batteries in a climate-controlled area and avoid leaving them in places where the temperature spikes (such as in the back of an enclosed truck). Try not to let the battery run completely down before recharging it. Write in-service dates on all batteries and fuel cans. Gasoline fresh out of the pump is generally OK for three to four months (adding a stabilizer can extend one to two months). Canned mixed (gas/oil) fuel for two-cycle engines is good for about a year.

When your tool is new, get a feel for how it pulls through a work piece and how it sounds. It will never work better than when it is brand new. The tool will give you notice that something is wrong when you listen—new sounds, vibrations, and weak response when operating are warning signs that the tool needs attention.

If you are unsure of how to maintain your tool, the first place to look is the owner's manual. Nothing replaces reading this document. If you are still unsure, take the tool to an authorized repair center. Use authorized manufacturer replacement parts. Too much is riding on our duty and the performance of our tools to settle for anything less than a fully operational tool.

GENERAL POWER TOOL TROUBLESHOOTING

The troubleshooting process includes the following six steps:

1. Gather information, read manuals, interview witnesses to the problem, determine what the application was, etc.
2. Understand the breakdown; recreate the situation and the failure.
3. Identify the part/source of the system that malfunctioned.
4. Correct/repair the part of the tool/ system that failed or was misapplied.
5. Verify proper operation.
6. Apply corrective action to prevent future problems.

When your tool system is malfunctioning, typically there will only be one thing wrong. The most efficient way to find the problem will be to start at one end (usually the power source) and work toward the operational end of the tool (without making assumptions). Inspect, isolate, and test each component until the problem is identified. Trace out the flow of energy, find where it stops, and determine why. Be logical and methodical; test individual components of the system by swapping them out with a known good part. The problem is

usually something simple. Following this process every time will quickly identify the problem or multiple problems in a timely manner rather than through time-consuming trial and error.

COMMON POWER TOOL BREAKDOWNS

Below are some common breakdowns and solutions.

1. Won't turn on. Check your power supply by testing the source, confirm the voltage/pressure is correct, then try plugging in another tool—electric, hydraulic, or pneumatic—and determine if it's the tool or the power transmission (cord/hose). Use the same technique if it's a battery tool.

2. Low power. The tool is running weak/ slow. Check your power source. Do you have the air regulator pressure set properly? Low on hydraulic fluid? Extension cord/hose too long, motor brushes worn out, fuel out of date? Check connections and couplings.

3. Burning smell. Does it smell electrical or oil based? It could be bearings, lack of lubrication, or debris caught in the motor case. Does your tool have a drive belt like a rotary saw? Turn the tool off immediately and start digging into it.

4. High-pitched noise. Gears are not meshing or the tool got dropped, and now something is bent. Something stuck in the motor/gears, underlubricated. Check to make sure all the fasteners are tight.

TWO- AND FOUR-CYCLE ENGINES

There are four things needed to start and operate a two-cycle or four-cycle engine.

1. Cylinder compression—when you pull the starter cord, you feel the “pop-pop” of the piston cycling in a tight engine.

2. Fuel delivered to the carburetor, a functioning fuel line, clean filter (observed or smelled), etc.

3. Spark via a functioning spark plug.

4. Air coming through a filter into the carburetor.

To tune a gas engine—either two- or four-cycle—perform the following:

- Check for any loose parts/connections.
- Clean engine cooling fins, recoil starter, etc.
- Dump old fuel; fill the fuel tank with fresh fuel.
- If there is a starter cord, check for any fraying.
- For a four-cycle engine, drain oil and replace, change oil filter if equipped, and check the manual for proper type of oil.
- Change the spark plug.
- Change or clean the air filter.
- Change the fuel filter.
- If there is a battery, check for leaks and corroded terminals; clean as needed.
- Check the fuel cap, gasket, and vent.
- Check engine rpm, and adjust as needed.

The best way to start is to begin. If the tool is already broken, it is unlikely you will make it worse. And, you will never get better by not trying. Odds are you will fix it. As the tool maintenance program develops, bring in new staff to sustain it and increase tool awareness.

LAUGH OUT LOUD!!

All of my childhood punishments have become my adult goals:

- Eating vegetables
- Staying home
- Taking a nap
- Going to bed early.

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

Chaplain: Fred Richards, Commissioner, Harmony Corners Fire District

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

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

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

CAFDA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063

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

518-407-5020

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

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

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

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



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.