



Capital Area Fire District's Association
THE WEEKLY CAFDA

BULLETIN

October 25th, 2025

Editor, Tom Rinaldi, Tom@rinaldi1.com
Serving the fire service community since 2004

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.
- The Albany Fire Department was the winner of the

9th annual CDTA Pink Bus Pull. The competition supports the American Cancer Society's Men Wear Pink campaign and raises money to help [fight breast cancer](#). They also won last year.

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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 NOVEMBER MEETING: CAFDA November General Membership Meeting Time: Nov 13, 2025 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88171243348?pwd=rvkK8ojfyrbiszd8rz4PvLm63WuTuZ.1>

Meeting ID: 881 7124 3348

Passcode: 602778

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

NY Gov. Hochul Vetoes EV Fire Training Bill

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: LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT, WE HAVE \$4.3 BILLION ALLOCATED FROM 2022 TO 2027 TO CARE FOR ILLEGAL MIGRANTS IN NYS, NOT INCLUDING NYC, BUT WE DON'T HAVE THE FUNDING TO PAY FOR A TRAINING CURRICULUM FOR A PROBLEM CREATED BY SHORT SIGHTED POLITICIANS WHO DREAMT UP THE ENERGY PLAN FOR THE STATE. THAT TELLS ME THEIR LOVE OF THE FIRE SERVICE IS DISINGENUOUS AT BEST.]

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

The nonsense continues, the shutdown hurts everyone but we are being held hostage.

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

Grants To The Rescue: Fire Station Financing That Won't Break Your Budget

Jerry Brant

Constructing a new fire station requires substantial financial resources. In fact, in most cases, you will need to string together several different financial sources to complete a new fire station.

While traditional methods such as municipal bonds and local taxes are common ways to finance these projects, grant funds and other innovative resources are becoming an increasingly viable option to support the construction of fire stations. These sources can provide essential funding without the need to drastically increase local taxes or wreak havoc within your budget.

FIND YOUR FIRM — AND YOUR BUDGET

For a project of this size, it's essential to hire a fire station architect before approaching any funding agency. The architectural firm you select should have experience with fire station design and construction.

Before you start shopping your project to funding sources, it is essential that you have at least a preliminary design and a cost estimate that you are comfortable with. The cost estimate is crucial since it sets a fixed budget for the project — this is difficult to alter once funding has been granted.

GRANT FUNDING OPTIONS

Let's start with grants — everyone's favorite way to finance projects. Grants are financial contributions provided by government entities, private organizations, or foundations to support specific projects or initiatives. These funds are typically awarded based on specific criteria and do not require repayment, making them an attractive option for fire departments seeking to build or renovate fire stations.

From a federal grant standpoint, there are two funding sources for fire station renovation or new construction projects: the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) program and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Community Facilities Program.

- **Community Development Block Grants:** This program provides annual grants on a formula basis to states, cities and counties to develop viable communities. Yes, CDBG funds can potentially be used to finance the construction of a new fire station, but it depends on your community's specific demographics. The primary focus of the CDBG program is to benefit low- and moderate-income individuals, eliminate slums or blight, or address urgent community needs. A fire station project could qualify if it meets one of these objectives. For instance, if the fire station serves a primarily low- and moderate-income area or helps address an urgent public safety need, it might be eligible. Additionally, some local governments prioritize funding for community facilities like fire stations as part of their overall CDBG allocation. If you're considering this program for funding, I recommend checking with the administering agency in your area like your city or county government.
- **USDA Community Facilities Program:** This program is a possible source of funding for rural fire departments to consider for a station construction or renovation project. This program provides grant and loan funding for essential community facilities in rural areas, including public safety services like fire departments. Eligible areas are rural communities with populations of 20,000 or fewer, and priority is given to smaller, low-income communities. Funds can be used for construction, equipment purchases and related project expenses. It's a great option for rural fire departments looking to enhance their facilities and services.

Unfortunately, both grant programs are currently on the chopping block for the proposed fiscal year 2026 budget. Read more about the planned cuts, and reach out to your federal legislators about working to save these essential grant programs.

Additionally, several states have programs that can be used to finance fire station construction projects. For example, Pennsylvania has a program called Local Share that uses proceeds from statewide gambling to fund such projects. Under this program, you can apply for up to \$1 million. The catch is the application must be filed by a unit of local government.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDANCE

Securing grant funding for fire station construction involves several steps:

- Research and identify grants that are applicable to fund fire station construction.
- Hire a fire station architect for design and cost estimate.
- Review the eligibility criteria for each grant. Ensure that the project meets all the requirements and that the fire department or municipality is qualified to apply.

- Develop a well-prepared proposal. The proposal should include:
 - Project description: Outline the scope of the construction project, including the size of the fire station, the services it will provide, and the expected benefits to the community.
 - Budget: Provide a detailed budget that includes all costs associated with the construction, such as materials, labor, permit fees and equipment.
 - Timeline: Develop a timeline that outlines the key milestones and completion dates for the project.
 - Supporting documentation: Include any necessary documentation, such as architectural plans, environmental impact assessments, and letters of support from community leaders.

Follow the specific submission guidelines for each grant. Ensure that all required information is included and that the application is submitted by the deadline.

After submitting the application, follow up with the granting agency to ensure that it has been received and to address any questions or concerns.

ALTERNATIVE AVENUES

If grant funds aren't available for your project or they won't fund your entire project, consider some alternative ideas:

1. **Public safety bonds**
 - a. Issue municipal bonds specifically for fire station construction.
 - b. Use general obligation bonds (backed by taxes) or revenue bonds (backed by station revenue or fees).
2. **Tax increment financing (TIF)**
 - a. Capture future increases in property tax revenue from the area surrounding the new fire station to finance the project.
3. **Lease-to-own agreements**
 - a. Partner with a private developer who finances and builds the station, then lease it with an option to buy after a set period.
4. **Build-operate-transfer (BOT)**
 - a. A private firm builds and operates the station for a fixed term, transferring ownership back to the municipality afterward.
5. **Joint-use facilities**
 - a. Partner with other police, EMS, or public health agencies to share costs or even commercial developers (i.e., integrate a public safety center into a mixed-use development).
6. **Naming rights and sponsorships**
 - a. Offer naming rights for training rooms, apparatus bays or other public spaces.
7. **Energy efficiency and renewable incentives**
 - a. Include solar panels and energy-efficient building designs to qualify for federal/state energy credits and utility company rebates.
8. **Carbon offset and green bonds**
 - a. Issue green bonds to finance eco-friendly construction and operations.
 - b. Partner with environmental groups for carbon offset incentives.

While exploring these diverse funding options, it's essential to evaluate which works best with your project's goals and values. With the cost of today's fire stations, you may have to combine multiple sources to increase the likelihood of securing the necessary funds for your project. Juggling several funding sources will create another set of headaches for you, but it may be the only way to keep your project on track to completion.

FINAL THOUGHTS

These are several funding sources available to help with your unique fire station construction project. By understanding the types of resources available, preparing detailed proposals, and navigating the application process, you can successfully secure funding for your fire station project. Good luck, and remember, this process isn't going to happen overnight so have patience.

Local Government and School Accountability Contact Information:

NYS OSC FIRE AUDITS

Schonowe Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. – Audit Follow-Up

Purpose of Review

The purpose of our review was to assess the Schonowe Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.'s (Company's) progress, as of April 2025, in implementing our recommendations in the audit report *Schonowe Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. – Board Oversight* (2021M-185), released in April 2022.

The audit determined that the Company's Board did not develop financial procedures for collections and disbursements, periodically monitor the budget or ensure the constitution (bylaws) were followed. The audit included eight recommendations to help the Board and Company officials monitor and improve the Company's financial operations, and to help the Board provide adequate oversight of financial operations.

Recommendation 1 – Develop and Implement Written Financial Procedures

Recommendation 2 – Ensure Adequate Collection Documentation Is Maintained

Recommendation 3 – Follow Bylaws, Establish a Voucher System

Recommendation 4 – Provide Annual Directors' Report

Recommendation 5 – Review Monthly Budget to Actual Reports

Recommendation 6 – Ensure Collections and Disbursements Are Supported

Recommendation 7 – Provide the Board with Monthly Budget to Actual Reports

Recommendation 8 – Review and Approve Disbursements Before Payment

Background

The Company is located in the Town of Rotterdam, Schenectady County and is composed of volunteer members and is governed by its adopted bylaws and a membership-elected four-member Board. The Board is responsible for managing and overseeing the Company's financial activities and upholding and enforcing the bylaws.

The Treasurer is responsible for maintaining custody of financial assets, disbursing, depositing, and accounting for the Company's financial operations, preparing and filing financial reports as well as other reporting requirements.

Results of Review

Although the Board and Company officials were aware of the prior audit, were familiar with the recommendations and conveyed in the Company's CAP what actions they would take to implement the audit's recommendations, the Board and Company officials did not implement any of the audit's recommendations.

[YOU CAN BET YOUR ASS THEY ARE ON THE NAUGHTY LIST NOW]

READ THE FULL REPORT AT THIS LINK:

<https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2025/pdf/schonowe-volunteer-fire-company-2021-185-f.pdf>

STEP INTO THE CHIEF'S OFFICE

The Impact Of Policy And Procedure On Fire Command

Jon Dorman

Effective command is the backbone of any emergency response, ensuring that incidents are managed with coordination, efficiency and safety. However, the success of command is largely dependent on well-defined policies and procedures that govern decision-making, resource allocation and inter-agency collaboration. These are not merely administrative formalities; they shape the way fire departments respond to emergencies, maintain control, and account for the safety of personnel and the public they are sworn to protect.

INCIDENT COMMAND AND CONTROL

One of the most critical steps in emergency response is the establishment of incident command. A well-written and practiced incident command policy and procedure will outline how the first-arriving unit should take

command, perform an initial size-up, and communicate with dispatch and other responding units. This early stage sets the tone for the entire response operation. As Chief Alan Brunacini was known to stress to firefighters, “the first five minutes are worth the next five hours.” So, what does that mean? In the context of incident command and control policies and procedures, it means setting expectations like:

- Immediate assignment of an incident commander (IC) to maintain control;
- Implementation of the personnel accountability system to track personnel;
- Best practices for determining the appropriate mode of operation;
- Structured transition from fast attack mode to a formalized command mode when necessary;
- Proper handover of command when a higher-ranking officer arrives; and
- Best practices for what information should be included in the verbal report when transferring command.

These directives help create a clear leadership structure, reduce confusion and ensure that resources are used effectively from the outset.

FIREGROUND COMMUNICATIONS

Effective communication is a critical component of effective command. Ideally, policies and procedures related to communications will standardize how emergency scene communications should be handled, emphasizing:

- Clear and concise radio transmissions during the incident, with an emphasis on accurate scene size-up by the initial IC;
- Assignment of fireground channels to prevent radio traffic congestion;
- Emergency traffic and mayday procedures; and
- Use of National Incident Management System (NIMS)-compliant language to facilitate coordination among multiple agencies.

Standardized communication procedures reduce response delays and ensure that vital information reaches all personnel operating at the scene.

FIREGROUND ACCOUNTABILITY

A critical component of firefighter safety is accountability. Many NIOSH reports on fire service line-of-duty deaths indicate a lack of fireground accountability as a contributing factor in the death of personnel.

Well-crafted accountability policies and procedures play a crucial role in ensuring personnel tracking and reporting. Common components should include language requiring:

- The use of a standardized personnel accountability system to track all members on the scene;
- Routine Personnel Accountability Reports (PARs) to confirm the location and status of responders;
- Supervisors to maintain oversight of their assigned crews at all times; and
- Emergency reporting measures in the event of missing personnel or hazardous changes in fire conditions.

UNIFIED COMMAND

We’ve covered some key policies and procedures that every fire department should have on the books to address everyday incidents — but we can’t stop there. What happens when the incident is complex and involves multiple jurisdictions or agencies? This is when unified command becomes essential. A solid unified command policy and/or procedure will cover:

- When to implement a unified command structure;
- How to identify key agencies and personnel involved in decision-making;
- How to select a spokesperson for external communication; and
- How to develop a coordinated Incident Action Plan (IAP) and resource allocation strategy.

TRAINING TIME

Even the biggest contrarian in the fire department is going to have a challenging time trying to negate the need for policies and procedures related to incident command. Having these things in place just makes good sense. It’s up to leaders to ensure that their personnel are properly trained on and understand the contents of these documents.

These policies and procedures are not ones that get dusted off every couple of years when personnel are preparing for a promotional exam. They are the ones that should be implemented and enforced on all

applicable scenes. Sure, not everything is going to require unified command. But, *every* call should have the crews applying the critical aspects of the department's incident command, communication, and accountability policies and procedures.

As for training, try to focus on regular, organized training events that can that be accomplished without forcing crews to endure an overly formal training session that may be mundane at best and morale-killing at worst.

Ask yourself these questions to guide your training:

- Does your agency require command to be established on ALL scenes?
- Does your department have a set communication model that units are supposed to use?
- Is that model something that is easily remembered and can be repeated on every call so that it just rolls off the tongue almost like muscle memory?
- Does your department expect officers and acting officers to maintain crew accountability and integrity?

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, consider how the everyday operations of your agency can be leveraged to change those answers. For example, you can work ICS-related training into other drills. This makes it part of a more interesting experience and allows the learner to apply the concepts in a practical manner. Think of things like a "First Few Minutes" drill where members are given a simulated incident and need to operate as they would in the first few minutes of an actual incident. Be sure to require members to use proper NIMS-compliant ICS methods as they conduct their drills. This gives the opportunity to "work the bugs out" and identify potential problems in a training environment.

Encourage members to step outside their comfort zone during training and participate in ICS roles they don't normally hold. This gives them an idea of what other members are experiencing during an incident and can help them be better team players in ICS. It can also help members understand why crafting their radio traffic in the department's identified manner can help eliminate confusion.

A simple game of "telephone" with the crew sitting at the kitchen table can do wonders for illustrating how messages can become convoluted when they aren't repeated back to the sender. This can give personnel firsthand experience seeing the difference that missing one or two "small" details can have on the entire message. Hopefully, these non-scene related experiences will translate into more complete radio traffic when it's needed on the emergency scene.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Policies and procedures are the foundation of effective fire command. They provide structure, enhance coordination, and ensure safety for both responders and the public. By adhering to standardized guidelines, fire departments can execute efficient emergency responses, mitigate risks and save lives. As fire command continues to evolve, continuous training and policy refinement will be essential in maintaining operational excellence and firefighter safety.

STEP INTO THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Who is able to vote in a fire district election?

Pursuant to section 175 of the Town law an individual must be a registered voter of the town in which the fire district is located and a resident of the fire district for 30 days prior to election date to vote.

NY Supreme Court Reverses Discipline of Fire Chief

Curt Varone

The Nassau County Supreme Court has reversed the disciplinary suspension of a fire chief in New York state. *While the case itself is of little consequence outside of the department and individuals involved, it serves as a good example of the problems that can arise when the elements of due process are ignored in a disciplinary matter.*

Let's start with the facts. Fire Chief Andrew Greig was suspended from the Glenwood Hook & Ladder, Engine & Hose Company, Inc. for "violating department By-Laws Article III Section (I) paragraph (a) for conduct unbecoming a member and creating a hostile work environment in the aggressive, harassing and intimidating manner."

Quoting from the decision:

- *Petitioner, who was Chief of the Department at the time, and its highest ranking operational officer, requested that Kaitlyn Papasidero (“Papasidero”), a firefighter, EMT, and secretary of Respondent, attend a standby at the High School football game at 2:00 p.m.*
- *Papasidero declined stating that she could not “make it” because she was going shopping with her cousin. Although she informed Petitioner that she was unable to attend the standby because she was going shopping, Papasidero returned to the firehouse at approximately 3:20 p.m. to “hang out” with other members.*
- *Later that evening, there was an emergency call for an “automatic alarm” at 10:49 p.m., which Papasidero responded to along with other members. When Papasidero returned to headquarters and walked through the bay, Papasidero heard Petitioner shout twice: “how was shopping.”*
- *Petitioner and Papasidero subsequently had an exchange of words during which it is alleged that Petitioner shouted, among other things: “you made up a bullshit excuse.”*
- *The charges also assert that Petitioner looked at Papasidero and “then looked at Farrell Sheridan and shouted “Good luck in November because this is what you will be dealing with everyone wants everything fucking handed to them.”*
- *Petitioner was subsequently suspended on or about October 7, 2024.*
- *In its Decision, the Committee determined “that at the time of the incident, Chief Andrew T. F. Grieg was on duty on Department property and was guilty of violating department By-Laws Article III Section (I) paragraph (a) for conduct unbecoming a member and creating a hostile work environment in the aggressive, harassing and intimidating manner he spoke to Firefighter/EMT Kaitlyn G. Papasidero on October 5, 2024 at approximately 22:49 PM. He also violated By-Law Article III section (I) paragraph (a) for conduct unbecoming a member in the manner in which he spoke during this conversation to Firefighter/EMT Kaitlyn G. Papasidero in the use of profane and indecent language.”*

Chief Greig filed an Article 78 action to challenge his suspension, alleging the department failed to follow its own procedures and in doing so violated his due process rights. Judge Danielle M. Peterson agreed, concluding:

- *Respondent [fire department] does not contest its failure to adhere to its own Constitution and by-laws, and concedes that “the Disciplinary Committee was established in early November 2024 following the voluntary resignation of two Disciplinary Committee Chairpersons.”*
- *Moreover, the committee evidenced a lack of impartiality by assuming a prosecutorial role during the trial proceedings.*
- *As Petitioner correctly argues, nothing within the Respondent’s Constitution and by-laws allows the Committee to take on a prosecutorial function. Instead the Committee’s role is limited to “keep[ing] minutes of the trial and all evidence presented,” and “[a]fter hearing all the evidence and after giving all the parties an opportunity to present any witnesses or evidence on their behalf the committee shall decide in private the guilt or innocence of the accused.”*
- *Here however, instead of remaining neutral, a review of the hearing transcript indicates that the Committee, as opposed to the Papasidero, conducted the proceedings by deciding which evidence to present and which witnesses to call.*
- *The charges as drafted by Papasidero are also deficient as initially filed in that while they described the incident and detailed a verbal exchange of words between Petitioner and Papasidero, they failed to identify a specific rule that Petitioner allegedly violated.*
- *Upon review of the record and the submissions before it, the Court further finds that the Committee’s decision is arbitrary and capricious.*
- *Papasidero acknowledged in her testimony at the hearing that Petitioner’s comments were directed at her not because of her gender or any other protected characteristic, but rather because she declined to attend the standby.*
- *Although Petitioner was charged with using “profane and indecent language,” Papasidero admitted at the disciplinary hearing that she heard other members use the same profane language, however, these members were not brought up on charges.*
- *Thus, it appears the Petitioner was the subject of selective enforcement of these provisions.*

- Lastly, the Court finds the measure of punishment imposed is so disproportionate to the offense of yelling and sarcastically inquiring about Papasidero's shopping trip "as to be shocking to one's sense of fairness."

With that, [Judge Peterson reversed the discipline and ordered that Chief Greig's record be expunged.](#)

Those who have attended Managing Disciplinary Challenges in the Fire Service will recognize several due process issues mentioned in the court's ruling. These include

- The adjudicator must be impartial (neutral). By assuming a prosecutorial role, the Grievance Committee abdicated its role as a neutral. This was a violation of procedural due process.
- The notice of hearing failed to inform Chief Greig of the rules he was accused of violating. Many departments fail to distinguish between complaints about misconduct (which are essentially allegations that need to be investigated) and charges (which are formal allegations by the organization that specific rules have been violated). This lack of proper notice was a violation of procedural due process.
- Chief Greig was disciplined for swearing and yelling when others in the department were not disciplined for such conduct. Selective enforcement occurs when the department targets one employee for engaging in conduct, while ignoring the same conduct in others. This was a violation of substantive due process (arbitrary and capricious).
- The punishment was disproportionate to the infraction (a version of selective enforcement, premised on arbitrary and capricious conduct). This was a violation of substantive due process and typically is a violation of just cause as well.

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

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

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Tool for the Winter Season Toolbox

"Winter is coming! And that means here in Upstate New York, the harsh weather and threat of severe snow and ice storms and dangerous, life-threatening blizzard conditions like what Erie County and Western New York experienced during Christmas 2022 is just around the corner. The STELLA Snow Rescue Sled can help our emergency first responders better mitigate future loss of life and prevent a tragedy from occurring. I'm proud that this innovative rescue apparatus was created and built right here in Saratoga County in the 44th Senate District and it's an invention that can not only help save lives here in New York but in other areas that experience harsh winter weather," said Senator Jim Tedisco.

KEY FEATURES OF THE STELLA:

- Towable by snowcat;
- Units can be linked together;
- Patent-pending suspension designed for maneuvering in extreme snowfall conditions;
- Hot swappable skis/wheels for quick deployment;
- Full utility package: Safety Lights, Heat, Power, GPS, Fire Extinguisher, First Aid Kit; and
- ADA Compliant.

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

Water Loss Leads to Flashover that Injured 10 Firefighters at Hillsdale, NJ, House Fire

Ten Hillsdale firefighters suffered minor injuries while battling a house fire in the Bergen County borough early Tuesday morning, the chief said.

The fire on Ellen Court broke out around 3:45 a.m. on the rear deck of a home and spread into the attic, Chief Bill Farrell said in a statement.

While working to extinguish the fire, firefighters briefly lost water supply. That led to a “flashover” which occurs when all combustible materials in an area quickly ignite.

A mayday was called and all firefighters inside were then forced to exit the house, Farrell said.

[Paid Department in Financial Stress](#)

The well managed city of Harvey, Illinois is facing more than \$100 million in debt, Harvey will place employees, including firefighters, on unpaid leave and temporarily shutter at least one fire station. What could go wrong?

[NFPA 1970: Are Firefighters Trading Cancer For Heatstroke?](#)**

Marc Bashoor

In April, a group of industry affiliates — which included firefighters and other fire service representatives, manufacturers and researchers — met at NFPA headquarters to discuss the looming deadline for implementation of **NFPA 1970: Standard on Protective Ensembles for Structural and Proximity Firefighting, Work Apparel, Open-Circuit Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) for Emergency Services, and Personal Alert Safety Systems (PASS)** — the new PPE and gear standard consolidating NFPA standards 1971, 1975, 1981 and 1982. A [follow-up report on the meeting](#) provides a unique perspective on the hot button issue and what’s next.

The bottom line is that implementation of NFPA 1970 will ultimately provide long-term benefits for firefighters’ health and wellness, but there are several hurdles to overcome before the standard can make its mark. The current issue: Due to significant gaps in testing and potential manufacturing/supply chain impediments, a request to delay the implementation of the standard has been filed by several entities, including manufacturers looking for more time to research options to comply. Those requests won’t be acted upon until August, one month prior to the deadline.

So, what does this mean for fire departments? Let’s address what’s happening with NFPA 1970 at “street level,” leaving the science to the scientists.

PPE: PFAS VS. NON-PFAS

The subject of cancer-causing PFAS chemicals in our PPE has been a hot and heavy topic for several years now. As the discussion has unfolded, industry partners including NFPA, UL, NIST, garment manufacturers and other stakeholder groups have invested a tremendous amount of work into finding a balance that reduces or removes PFAS from firefighting PPE, while still protecting firefighters from thermal intrusion.

While some believe this should be as easy as simply removing these chemicals, it is important to understand that there is nothing easy or simple about the issue.

PFAS chemicals are a key element of protection in our PPE and are infused into the fabric during the manufacturing process. The chemicals provide the repellency we need for intrusion by both water and external chemicals, like diesel fuel. The uniqueness of the PFAS chemical interaction is that it still allows the material to breathe from the inside, further protecting firefighters from thermal burns and cardiovascular stress.

Years and years of trials and studies have gone into getting the protection level where it is today – and I actually participated in some of those trials. We didn’t know then that PFAS was ultimately what provided part of the protection we needed.

According to the report posted to the NFPA blog, early comparisons of non-PFAS PPE purchased by the District of Columbia Fire and EMS Department (DCFEMS) have shown significant cleaning and degradation deficiencies compared to PFAS-treated PPE. However, the San Diego Fire Rescue, which is also using non-PFAS gear, is *not* reporting the same deficiencies.

While the two coasts tell different stories, no quantitative or comparative studies have been completed to analyze the results. It is important to note that none of the non-PFAS gear was certified as NFPA 1970-compliant. This issue was captured in the report this way: *“Since NFPA 1970-compliant gear has not yet hit the market, there are no real-world studies to rely on, but lab research suggests that the new garments will have*

trouble repelling oil, and very likely will be less breathable and degrade faster.” There are clearly more questions than answers, which means more studies are needed.

ACCURATE RISK ASSESSMENTS

At the April meeting, the group discussed the critical need for accurate risk assessments when addressing the comparison of firefighter protection in PFAS-treated vs. non-PFAS-treated PPE. One manufacturer representative underscored a key consideration: “The risk assessment really needs to be all-encompassing. If we see the chemicals in garments as risks, we need to balance being exposed to trace amounts of those chemicals with the risks that firefighters experience out in the field. Are chemicals in the gear worse than the chemicals we are trying to protect them from? That is a much broader risk assessment than we typically think about.”

METRO Chiefs Executive Secretary Otto Drozd posed a similar sentiment as a rhetorical question: “Are we exchanging the long-term health impact of PFAS with the immediate health impact of heat exhaustion, heat stroke, cardiac arrest and some of the others?”

Again, there are far more questions than answers.

FINANCIAL IMPACT OF NFPA 1970 IMPLEMENTATION

What has not been widely discussed is the fiscal impact this standard will have on fire departments across the country. *Early results from DCFEMS suggest a 50% reduction in service life for non-PFAS PPE compared to current gear. That alone should signal a fiscal red flag for fire leaders everywhere.*

Manufacturers were careful to hedge on the question of whether ensemble prices would increase for non-PFAS gear. While there is still a testing and certification process to pay for, there is no concrete manufacturing solution to get us there — yet. More unanswered questions.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Manufacturers have confirmed there is no “latest and greatest” material that will provide our current level of protection without the addition of PFAS chemicals. While the manufacturers and Chief Drozd said it more eloquently than I can, this really does feel like a “pick-your-poison” moment in fire service history. But how can we possibly vote for anything other than removing the cancer-causing chemicals from our gear?

In addition to the wholesale replacement of our PPE, this will also mean a wholesale change in our training regimen. I recall the time before safety was a priority, when blistering ears were your sign to start thinking about a way out, and taking off a glove to feel the heat gradients was the way we trained. I am *not* suggesting we return to these caveman days. However, as it stands today, non-PFAS PPE will require us to teach tomorrow’s firefighters much more about thermal balance and how to read their gear and their bodies. *While our encapsulation today has allowed us to go further and further into the fire, it’s now clear that came at a dangerous cost.*

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT



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:

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

11 Meaningful Ways To Say Thank You To Firefighters, EMTs And Police

Richard Engel

First responders are the people who show up when everything falls apart — the ones running toward smoke, chaos and danger while the rest of us move away. They don’t do it for recognition, but that doesn’t mean they don’t need it. Gratitude can’t replace funding or proper staffing, but it can go a long way toward letting responders know their work matters.

1. SHOW UP AND LEND A HAND

Support starts with presence. Volunteer with your local fire department, EMS squad or emergency management agency. Not everyone can ride an engine or an ambulance, but many departments need help with community outreach, CPR classes, social media, logistics or fundraising. Your time and skill set can be as valuable as any check.

2. GIVE DIRECTLY — AND INTENTIONALLY

Departments often stretch limited budgets to cover gear, training, vehicle maintenance and wellness programs. Donations targeted to those needs can have an immediate impact.

Coordinate a community fundraiser or promote a department’s verified online donation page. Even small financial contributions can add up to new radios, turnout gear or defibrillators that keep responders safer and more effective.

3. CELEBRATE THEM IN PUBLIC

A public thank-you makes a private burden feel lighter. Host or attend an appreciation event at the station, school or community park. Invite families, share stories, offer lunch or dessert — and most importantly, listen to responders talk about what they actually need from the community.

Tie your event to [National First Responders Day](#) (Oct. 28) or local milestones, like a department anniversary or public safety open house.

4. BACK THEM DURING THE HARD CALLS

When disaster hits — a structure fire, tornado, mass-casualty crash — responders push themselves past exhaustion. Coordinating donated meals, water or relief supplies with emergency leaders or local departments shows tangible support in those moments.

Partner with local businesses, faith groups or civic clubs to help sustain crews working long hours in extreme conditions.

5. ADVOCATE FOR THEIR FUTURE

Gratitude matters. So does policy. Speak up for sustainable public safety budgets, adequate staffing levels, mental health resources and retirement protections.

Attend city council or county meetings. Write letters. Vote for candidates who understand emergency services aren’t optional line items — they’re essential infrastructure.

6. INVEST IN EDUCATION AND THE NEXT GENERATION

Scholarships or training grants for future firefighters, EMTs and paramedics build long-term strength in the profession. Departments and community foundations can partner to create funds for recruits, or for the children of fallen or injured responders.

These programs send a message that the community values both service and those who dedicate their lives to it.

7. USE YOUR PLATFORM TO RECOGNIZE THEIR WORK

If you run a business, manage communications or lead a civic group, use your channels to highlight local responders.

Create a newsletter, podcast segment or social media feature that introduces the public to the people behind the uniform — their training, their challenges, their impact. Awareness leads to appreciation, and appreciation drives support.

8. MAKE APPRECIATION VISIBLE

Signs, flags, decals, murals, lights — symbolic gestures matter. When entire towns “go red” or display banners thanking first responders, it reinforces civic pride.

Businesses can offer discounts, restaurants can sponsor meals, and schools can display artwork or host thank-you assemblies. Public gratitude sets a tone that ripples through a community.

9. KEEP IT PERSONAL

In the age of hashtags, a handwritten note still means something. Encourage kids, students or community groups to write cards thanking local responders. Drop them off at the station or mail them.

When someone takes the time to write, responders notice — and remember.

10. MOVE FOR THE MISSION

Join or sponsor charity runs, stair climbs or memorial rides that raise funds for first responder causes.

Events like these unite communities, honor fallen responders and generate resources for peer support, rehab or survivor programs.

11. KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

Public safety appreciation shouldn’t be limited to a single day.

Use social media to share posts during [Fire Prevention Week](#), [EMS Week](#) or [National Police Week](#). Attend station tours and safety events. Ask how your neighborhood can collaborate with local responders on prevention, preparedness or mental health initiatives.

The more connected a community is to its responders, the stronger and safer it becomes.

BONUS: MAKE IT A HABIT

Showing appreciation isn’t about grand gestures — it’s about consistent recognition that the people answering 911 calls are human beings with families and have immense pride in what they do. Small, steady acts of gratitude help them feel seen, supported and valued.

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH & SAFETY; PROTECTING OUR OWN

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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!

- Rescue Technician/Advanced EMT Fred Kemp was instructing a high-angle exercise Wednesday afternoon in the Blue Hole Falls, Tennessee area when he fell from a significant height. State OSHA officials are among the agencies investigating.

FIRE APPARATUS ACCIDENTS FOR THE WEEK

- While responding to an emergency call with lights and sirens, a Polk County Fire Rescue (PCFR) battalion chief was involved in two-vehicle crash. Five individuals, including one trauma alert patient,

received treatment and transport by ground ambulances. Due to the number of patients, PCFR members triggered a Level One Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) response.

FIRE APPARATUS

*****Repair or Replace? Making the Call on Aging Apparatus***

Michael Huber

For fire departments across the country, one of the most difficult and often debated decisions is whether to continue repairing aging fire apparatus or to invest in replacements.

With budgets tight, demands high, and safety always the top priority, this choice can't be made lightly. Knowing when to say "enough" to ongoing repairs and "yes" to new equipment is a key component of effective fleet management.

THE TRUE COST OF REPAIR

It's common for departments to try and squeeze a few extra years out of an aging engine or ladder truck. On the surface, it might seem more cost-effective to keep repairing a vehicle that's already paid off. *However, the true cost of repair goes beyond the invoice from the maintenance shop.*

Downtime is one of the most underestimated expenses. When a frontline unit is out of service—whether for days, weeks, or in extreme cases months—it forces the department to rely on reserve units, mutual aid, or delayed response. This can negatively impact service delivery and increase risk to both firefighters and the public.

Frequent breakdowns also contribute to operational fatigue. Crews lose confidence in unreliable equipment, which can affect morale and increase the stress of already difficult situations.

LIFE CYCLE CONSIDERATIONS

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends that frontline apparatus be replaced after 15 years and reserve apparatus after 25 years. While some departments successfully stretch these numbers depending on call volume, it often comes with a trade-off in safety and performance.

Departments should be tracking the life cycle of each vehicle in their fleets, not just by years but by usage metrics—miles driven, engine hours, pump hours, and total repair costs. *A good rule of thumb is this: If a vehicle's annual repair costs exceed 10% of the cost of a new vehicle, it's time to consider replacement.*

SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE

Modern apparatus are built to higher safety and emissions standards. Older vehicles may lack rollover protection, air bags, electronic stability control, and clean diesel technology. This makes them more dangerous for crews and less environmentally responsible.

In addition, departments that want to remain compliant with NFPA standards or ISO rating criteria may find that maintaining outdated equipment works against them during audits or recertifications.

WHAT CAN BE FIXED AND WHAT SHOULDN'T

Not every repair signals the end of a truck's useful life. Components like pumps, electrical systems, warning lights, and body panels can usually be serviced or replaced effectively. *However, when repairs begin to affect core systems—frame integrity, suspension, drivetrain components, or the aerial structure—it may be a warning sign that you're investing in a losing battle.*

Rust, especially in critical frame or suspension areas, can be a death sentence for older vehicles. That is one reason you should insist on some type of frame protection. Personally, I believe galvanized frame rails are superior. Similarly, persistent electrical issues in older wiring harnesses often become time consuming and costly to troubleshoot.

Another factor is parts availability. As manufacturers change platforms or discontinue product lines, it becomes harder—and more expensive—to source replacement parts for older apparatus, not to mention manufacturers going out of business like we have seen in the past.

BUDGETING AND LONG-TERM PLANNING

The cost of a new fire apparatus is substantial. Depending on the type and customization, engines and aerials can range from \$800,000 for an engine to well over \$2 million for a ladder truck. But, departments don't have to be caught off guard.

A long-term capital replacement plan is the best way to prepare. Departments should build a rolling 10- to 15-year forecast that maps out replacement cycles for each piece of apparatus. This allows time for grant applications, budget approvals, and vehicle specifications well in advance of critical failures. In the case of government, it is difficult to budget outside of the political cycle; as politicians change, so do their priorities. Leasing (if allowed) and cooperative purchasing programs (if allowed) can also help departments manage the financial burden of replacement by spreading costs over time and leveraging group buying power.

CONSIDERATIONS

A structured apparatus evaluation process should combine technical inspection, financial analysis, and operational review. Many departments use a weighted scoring system or checklist that incorporates these criteria to guide decisions.

1. Age and service life

- Frontline apparatus: Typically replaced at 15 years.
- [Reserve apparatus: Typically replaced by 25 years.](#)
- Follow NFPA 1910, *Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Refurbishment, Testing, and Retirement of In-Service Emergency Vehicles and Marine Firefighting Vessels*, recommendations for apparatus retirement.
- **Why it matters:** Older apparatus may not meet current safety, performance, or emission standards and may lack compatibility with newer equipment.

2. Maintenance and repair history

- Frequency of repairs: Are breakdowns becoming routine?
- Annual maintenance costs: Are they exceeding 10% to 15% of replacement cost?
- Repeat failures in major systems—e.g., engine, transmission, electrical.
- **Why it matters:** High repair frequency increases downtime, reduces reliability, and can signal a decline in overall system integrity.

3. Downtime and operational impact

- How often is the apparatus out of service?
- Is it causing delays in response or reliance on reserve or mutual aid units?
- **Why it matters:** Unavailable apparatus can compromise emergency response, increase liability, and strain other units or neighboring departments.

4. Safety standards and compliance

- Does the apparatus meet current NFPA 1900, *Standard for Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Vehicles, Automotive Fire Apparatus, Wildland Fire Apparatus, and Automotive Ambulances*, safety standards?
- Are critical safety features missing (air bags, rollover protection, stability control)?
- Is it compatible with self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) brackets, warning lights, or seat belt requirements?
- **Why it matters:** Apparatus without modern safety features increase risks to firefighters and may reduce insurance or ISO ratings.

5. Performance and reliability

- Decrease in pump performance or water tank issues?
- Aerial drift, turntable delays, or lifting capacity concerns?
- Slow or unreliable engine start, shifting, or braking?
- **Why it matters:** Performance deficiencies reduce operational effectiveness and increase firefighter exposure during emergencies.

6. Parts availability and manufacturer support

- Are OEM parts still available?
- Has the chassis or body manufacturer gone out of business or changed product lines?
- **Why it matters:** Difficulty sourcing parts increases repair time and costs. Unsupported apparatus may be unrepairable in the future.

7. Technological obsolescence

- *Are onboard electronics (e.g., scene lighting, radios, MDTs, multiplex systems) outdated or incompatible with current systems?*
- **Why it matters:** Technology gaps can affect communications, situational awareness, and interagency coordination.

8. Structural integrity

- Is there frame or subframe corrosion?
- Are there visible signs of body separation, rust, or stress fractures?
- **Why it matters:** Structural damage may be beyond safe repair and could result in catastrophic failure during use.

9. Operational fit

- Has the mission or staffing model changed?
- Can it still access new developments, turnarounds, and bridges in your response area?
- Is the apparatus too large, too small, or not configured for current needs?
- **Why it matters:** Apparatus must match current and anticipated response demands, including urban, rural, and specialty operations.

10. Cost-benefit analysis

- Compare projected repair costs vs. replacement cost.
- Include soft costs: training, downtime, reserve use, and liability exposure.
- Consider grants, financing, and cooperative purchasing opportunities.
- **Why it matters:** Sometimes, the long-term costs of keeping an old truck exceed the cost of replacing it, especially when factoring in safety and service delivery.

Bonus: crew feedback

- Operator and crew input on drivability, reliability, and comfort.
- Reports of low confidence in the vehicle or near-miss incidents.
- **Why it matters:** The people who rely on the apparatus daily often detect problems early and can provide practical insight into their condition and suitability.

The decision to repair or replace should never rest on a single person. Fleet managers, operators, crew, finance staff, and command leadership all bring essential perspectives to the table. Operators often notice problems first, while maintenance teams can provide detailed cost histories and projections. Together, this information builds a clearer picture of when the cost of repairs is no longer justifiable.

At some point, every department faces the inevitable question: Is it time to move on from this apparatus? While the answer isn't always simple, approaching the decision with data, safety considerations, and long-term planning leads to smarter, safer outcomes. Repairs have their place, but there's wisdom in recognizing when replacement is the right call—for the equipment, the department, and the community it serves. Replacing a fire truck is a major investment but, when made at the right time, it protects lives, improves service, and saves money in the long run.

FIRE STATIONS

Station Design: Fire Station Renovation Benefits & Pitfalls

Joshua Mandell

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Renovation of a firehouse or any public safety facility typically costs less per square foot than new construction.
- Sustainability plays a key role in consideration of renovation of a firehouse or other public safety facility.
- Pitfalls of a renovation of a firehouse or other public safety facility include hidden structural, code and systems issues, red tape regarding permits, and cost to temporarily house personnel and apparatus elsewhere.

Many public safety buildings are aging, inefficient and out of step with modern building codes and today's first responder needs. With construction costs skyrocketing, municipalities, counties and districts can turn to a time-honored construction alternative: strategic renovation, or upgrading and remodeling, rather than new construction. It's a decision that's rooted in fiscal responsibility and operational excellence.

Benefits are immediate as well as long-lasting. Renovation allows agencies to extend the life of existing infrastructure while bettering conditions for personnel and staying in the same neighborhood that they call home. This includes safer apparatus bays that can accommodate larger rolling stock; contaminant control and zoning best practices; private living quarters and locker facilities that promote gender equity; wellness rooms; and versatile fitness amenities. All of this can contribute to improved morale, staff retention, and mental and physical well-being. Renovation also preserves and reinvigorates building stock that might be historic, frequently is stout and serves as the very fabric of a community. Yes, older structures might pose challenges (e.g., working around an existing foundation or overcoming regulatory compliance hurdles, such as conforming to preservation guidelines or remediation of hazardous materials), but renovation safeguards the legacy for future generations.

COST BENEFITS

Cost-effectiveness is a major driver of renovation. Renovation typically costs less per square foot than new construction. This particularly is the case when combining reused infrastructure with reduced operational disruptions and quicker project durations.

Renovation typically doesn't require property acquisition. Owners can take advantage of existing general and capital funding, supplemented by options for grants and low-rate federal financing.

A variation on this theme is [adaptive reuse](#), wherein an agency acquires a new-to-it structure and adds onto and/or renovates it—sometimes quite intensively—to bring it into alignment with the agency's mission, vision and values.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability plays a key role in consideration of renovation. Upgraded systems, such as LED lighting, efficient HVAC units and photovoltaic solar arrays, reduce long-term energy costs and environmental impact and preserve more budget for personnel, apparatus and training.

Also figuring into this are weighing options and selecting actions that reduce building waste to landfills and minimizing emission of greenhouse gases and light, heat and stormwater burdens.

MEMBER WELL-BEING

For existing firehouses and ambulance base stations, renovation is an opportunity to incorporate critical cancer risk reduction elements and advanced alerting systems that weren't in existence when these buildings were constructed. This directly contributes to member safety through stopping unnecessary exposures, evacuating harmful off-gassing and particulates, and mitigating circulatory shock.

HOW TO BEGIN

By treating renovation as a pivotal, durable investment rather than a stopgap fix, organizations future-proof their building while respecting their budget and enhancing their community.

For public safety operators that seek to modernize, start with a needs assessment and verification. Look down the road to where your agency is headed. Collaborate with code officials and neighbors to address zoning and site concerns. Prioritize energy efficiency and staff wellness. Build a steering committee that's aligned with improving facilities. Don't wait for building failure to force your hand and limit your options.

RENOVATION PERILS AND PITFALLS

Despite all of the good that can come from a station renovation, it isn't all smooth sailing. Renovations come with their own roster of perils and pitfalls, from hidden structural, code and systems issues, to staffing and supply chain delays and permitting red tape. In a case in which a site will be occupied during renovation, the project must be phased and arranged to intricately balance access, action and capability to respond to calls for service while construction is underway. Logistics and cost to temporarily house personnel and apparatus must be accounted for accurately in these circumstances.

The solution? Rigorous upfront assessments and planning, strong project management and a collaborative team of experienced architects, engineers and agency representatives to work hand-in-glove and realistically prepare for the eventualities and challenges that accompany construction.

THE CHANGING FIRE SERVICE

Two More Pennsylvania Departments Talk Merger

Crews from the neighboring Marguerite and Dryridge fire departments in Unity are dispatched together on the vast majority of their emergency calls.

If all goes as planned, by next year, they'll be responding as one department.

The top line officers for the two departments say the intended merger makes sense for the volunteer organizations that each are facing staffing challenges while maintaining some similar vehicles at stations that are less than 2 miles apart.

"The merger is happening because of manpower issues, mostly," said Wayne Forsyth, Marguerite's acting fire chief. "It's also happening because it's expensive to keep two buildings operating when they're a mile-and-a-half apart.

"We're hoping by consolidating that the manpower will stay at least stable but the cost of operating will decrease."

The Marguerite department was formed in 1939 and has its station on Continental Drive in that former coal town. Dryridge's department had its start in 1966 and is headquartered along White School Road.

As with many volunteer organizations, including other fire departments, recruiting new members is difficult at the Marguerite and Dryridge stations — even though representatives of the Unity Township Bureau of Fire look to inspire interest by making local school visits.

Marguerite has 20 active firefighters, nine of whom typically respond on calls, Forsyth said.

Dryridge fire Chief Rich Levay said his department has 22 active members — supplemented by two junior firefighters, down from six. In Pennsylvania, junior firefighters ages 14 to 17 can participate in non-hazardous training and some other department functions, but they can't operate fire vehicles or enter burning buildings. "At high school, they're into track, they're into clay shooting, they're into football, so it's dwindled down," Levay said of the junior contingent. "Recruiting is very hard."

"Our average response is 4.36 firefighters per call," Levay said of the Dryridge crew. Forsyth cited a similar response level.

With the merger and a pooled crew, Levay said, "Hopefully, that's going to go up. That will be better for the whole community.

"We'll still be looking for new members. We're not only looking for firefighters; we're looking for people to help write grants and do the administrative work."

The combined crew is expected to operate from the Dryridge station, which is in better condition than its older counterpart in Marguerite. That would eliminate insurance and utility costs for one building.

Unity covers liability insurance for local fire departments and provides some funding through a 2-mill fire tax, but the local volunteers must raise the remainder they need to meet expenses.

Forsyth expressed hope that fundraising events for a single department will be more effective than the existing state of two departments competing for dollars in the same general section of the township.

"What we raise will all come to one place instead of being split," he said.

As part of the merger, Forsyth said, Marguerite's 2001 pumper truck would move to the Dryridge station. But Marguerite's rescue and squad trucks likely will be sold since Dryridge already has similar apparatus.

That will mean fewer vehicles to maintain and keep fueled.

"Our diesel fuel price is more than regular gas, and we get 2 to 4 miles per gallon on a truck," Levay said.

Forsyth estimated the merger would save about \$50,000 in building and vehicle-related costs including insurance and fuel.

According to Forsyth, the Marguerite station likely would be placed on the market.

Unlike the Dryridge station, it has a social hall, but that space has not been rented for events since the arrival of the covid-19 pandemic, he said.

Forsyth said the intent is that adjacent recreational property the Marguerite department leases to the township for a nominal fee would be turned over to the municipality, which has been maintaining it. The site includes a playground, basketball court, pavilion and a ball field — which hosts youth flag football practices as well as games for the West Point Little League and an adult Old Timers League. He said the department would like to replace a war memorial that's on the station property and is the centerpiece of Marguerite Memorial Day services. He suggested an updated version acknowledging sacrifices in recent wars might be erected near the pavilion.

A firefighter locker set aside at the Marguerite station in honor of fallen member Keith Firment is slated for relocation to the Dryridge station. Firment, who was a township road crew worker, died in 2004, at 35. He suffered a heart attack after returning from a structure fire.

The merger of the fire departments has been under discussion for close to two years, with the members of each organization voting to begin the process.

Levay and Forsyth hope to get a final vote of approval from their respective members and begin joint operations by the year's end.

A mailing with information about the merger will be sent to residences in the departments' combined service area.

A consultant has been assisting with required paperwork — including reviews at the county level and by the state Attorney General's Office.

The township supervisors also must give their formal approval.

"It makes sense and it's something that needed to be done," supervisors Chairman Mike O'Barto said. "I commend both fire departments for their ability to look to the future. Both are working diligently to get the merger in place by the first of the year."

Among details still to be determined are how the line and administrative officers of the two departments will come together as one and how joint responses with other neighboring fire departments will be affected. When an emergency calls for multiple fire departments to respond, Forsyth noted, another nearby company may be added to the response once the Dryridge and Marguerite crews have become one department instead of two.

But, Forsyth said, "We're not foreseeing any issues as far as coverage."

Last year, Marguerite firefighters responded to about 320 calls while the Dryridge department answered about 390.

Levay said that difference may be partially explained because Dryridge — unlike Marguerite — has a ladder truck and a tanker truck that can get called to assist with fires far afield from Unity Township.

"We run a lot of mutual aid calls with our tanker," Levay said. "It's been in the city of Monessen for calls."

He said the ladder truck must be refurbished because it was damaged while responding to a house fire where "a propane tank let loose."

The Dryridge-Marguerite merger would reduce the number of fire departments in Unity from seven to six, but it won't be the first such local combination.

In 2021, the Youngstown Volunteer Fire Department, located in the small adjacent borough of the same name, merged with Unity's Whitney-Hostetter Volunteer Fire Department.

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?	

- A 29-year-old woman and an infant died Saturday morning in a house fire in the Elmwood Village, and a 30-year-old man was taken to Erie County Medical Center by ambulance.
- A woman and a dog were found dead after firefighters extinguished an RV [fire](#) that also spread to a nearby home in East Dallas Sunday morning, firefighters said.
- One person has died in a house fire Thursday in the town of Elk Mound, Wisconsin.

GREEN TECHNOLOGY & THE FIRE SERVICE

Battery Catches Fire on Air China Plane

Meher Dhanjal

An emergency landing was made by an Air China flight after a lithium battery caught fire in the overhead bin of the plane on Saturday, October 18.

The flight, numbered CA139, had taken off from Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport at 09.47am local time and was scheduled to arrive at Incheon International Airport at 12.20am. The flight was then forced to perform an emergency landing in Shanghai. In a statement, Air China confirmed that a lithium battery in a passenger's carry-on luggage stored in the overhead compartment "spontaneously ignited".

Mayday in Lithium-Ion Battery Fire: Firefighter Trapped as Fire Engulfs CA General Motors Plant

Clara Harter – Los Angeles Times

More than 100 firefighters and a hazardous materials team were working Wednesday night to combat a fire involving lithium ion batteries and prototype cars at General Motors' design studio in Pasadena, authorities said.

At one point, a firefighter was trapped in the structure amid the ferocious blaze and sent out a mayday call. The Pasadena Fire Department responded to the fire in the 600 block of Sierra Madre Villa Avenue at 5:50 p.m., according to department spokesperson Lisa Derderian. The incident was declared a four-alarm fire — signifying a catastrophic blaze that requires the mobilization of significant fire department resources — due to the scale of the structure and the hazardous materials involved.

"This is one of the largest structure fires we've had in Pasadena in many, many years," Derderian said. Preliminary reports indicated that lithium ion batteries and concept cars burned inside the building; however, the incident remained active Wednesday evening, and the cause of the fire is under investigation, she said. Some of the burned cars appeared to be gasoline-powered vehicles.

It took firefighters more than an hour to track down the source of the blaze as thick smoke engulfed the 149,000-square-foot campus. General Motors [invested more than \\$71 million](#) in 2021 to build the three-building facility as a new base for its Advanced Design Center.

The blaze is challenging to combat as crews cannot use water to extinguish lithium ion battery fires. Doing so can cause a destabilizing chemical reaction, leading more batteries to catch fire or explode.

"Firefighters on scene have trained in scenarios like this, but it does put a different twist on extinguishing fires," Derderian said.

Large lithium ion battery fires can take several hours or even days to render safe.

When one battery cell overheats, it can trigger a chain reaction where nearby cells also overheat. This reaction releases heat and toxic gases and can continue deep inside the battery pack long after visible flames are put out.

There was a mayday call when a firefighter became trapped inside the fire-engulfed building Wednesday evening. But fire crews were able to locate him and pull him out of the structure without injuries.

"He did not wish to be transported [to a hospital], but it was a very scary few minutes there until they determined that he was OK," Derderian said.

Fire crews are searching the entire campus to ensure there is no one else trapped inside, she said. Crews will remain on scene overnight as they continue to deal with the hazardous materials involved in the blaze.

STUFF FOR YOUR OFFICERS AND MEMBERS!

Duties & Deadlines is Back!

Join Us on November 18th 7:00 pm

We heard you and we're back! Join us for Duties & Deadlines, **training for Fire District Secretaries**. Gina Marrone, Amy Speech & Donna Marano will host a live webinar on Meeting Minutes and Annual Cancer Reporting. This is an interactive webinar so bring your questions and suggestions for future Duties & Deadlines. Join us on **Tuesday, November 18th beginning at 7:00 pm**. It's easy to join us, just click the registration button below to get the Zoom link.

REGISTER AT THIS LINK:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_B1jhRXX5RcCcy19cqxyknw#/registration



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!

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 November 16th**

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

****Apparatus Crashes: Don't Let The Intersections Control You**

Chief, Marc Bashoor

This article was previously published, but is very much worth repeating!

My passion for fire apparatus driver safety traces back to a fatal ladder truck wreck in 1988. I was a career firefighter for Prince George's County, and my wife was a volunteer at the Bowie Volunteer Fire Department's Station 39, where I started my own career seven years prior.

I was off duty, and we heard the call go out on my Bearcat scanner: "Truck 39 to communications. We've been involved in an accident in front of Bowie High School. We're going to need a squad."

The ladder truck was en route to a call that was later canceled, when they entered an intersection with lights and sirens blaring. The 16-year-old driver whose vehicle collided with the apparatus, and who reportedly had a green light, never had a chance.

Upon arrival, we parked my car in the high school parking lot, and I jumped in the back of the medic unit, while Laura jumped in the driver's seat. I performed compressions on the young girl for the long and bumpy ride to Prince George's trauma center, while both medics did what medics do. Despite their efforts, the girl passed away.

I have had a healthier respect for intersections from that day forward.

Ladder trucks and fire engines can always be replaced. The lives they impact cannot. The apparatus driver (a friend of ours who has since passed away), along with everyone else involved in that incident, will live with that girl on our minds for eternity.

LESSONS LEARNED OR PROBLEM IDENTIFIED?

The incident was the catalyst for the Maryland State Highway Administration to finally accept traffic light preemption as an option across the state. You could consider the outcome of the wreck a true lesson learned, if only we *never* had another wreck at an intersection. I'll still chock it up to a positive step forward in intersection safety; however, traffic light preemption is just one of many possible solutions for intersection

control. *The automatic digital mapping notification system HAAS is in most of our apparatus today, and civilian drivers can manually input our locations. These are important tools available to us all.*

While I fully recognize that distracted civilian drivers may inadvertently sabotage the efforts emergency drivers take and technology provides to safely navigate the roadways, I also firmly believe that most factors in intersection control lie within the emergency vehicle driver's direct control. *Bottom line: We must do more ourselves to prevent these crashes, as this has become a growing problem, as you will see below.*

A GROWING PROBLEM — AND SURPRISING TREND

Civilian drivers dying in intersections after being struck by fire apparatus is not just a problem from the 1980s — “the way it used to be.” It's very much a “here-and-now” problem.

I've noticed an uptick of significant emergency vehicle intersection wrecks, many of them fatal. *What surprised me in my review of incidents was that 100% of the fatal wrecks occurred during calm and dry weather.* Of the six fatal emergency vehicle intersection wrecks that I have found so far in 2025, all occurred on dry roads, and three of those happened during daylight hours — the same conditions as the 1988 crash.

This revelation prompted me to look back at the last five years of incidents involving fire apparatus. Before we delve into the research, let me be clear that I recognize the thousands of intersections that are safely cleared by great emergency vehicle drivers every day. Regardless of those thousands of success stories, we have a responsibility to prevent every death we can, especially those within the direct control of our actions.

Incident snapshot from the past five years:

- All 26 fatalities were civilians. Many firefighter/EMS injuries also occurred and are listed where known.
- In two cases, the fatality was a patient in an ambulance.
- In all but two cases, the emergency vehicle was responding to another incident.
- In all but one case, the wreck occurred at a signalized, stop sign or stop-controlled intersection.
- Of the 17 incidents listed, 100% occurred on dry roads.
- All but five (70%) of the incidents occurred during daylight hours.

2025 incident breakdown:

- New York City; May 25 at 11:55 p.m.: Responding fire engine and motorcycle collide. **One civilian dead.** Conditions: Dry, dark.
- St. Louis, Missouri; April 26 at 11:20 p.m.: **One civilian dead** after she fell off the roof of a car that turned in front of the responding fire engine, at an intersection. Conditions: Dry, dark.
- Los Angeles; March 30 at 10:45 a.m.: **One civilian dead.** Conditions: Dry, light.
- Lewistown, Pennsylvania; March 23 at 12 p.m.: Fire department vehicle overturned, struck an apartment building and took out power to town. **Two firefighters injured.** FD driver charged with “careless driving” — entered the intersection against a red light at over 40 mph. Conditions: Dry, light.
- Medford, New York; March 20 at 12:30 p.m.: **One civilian dead** at incident in a reportedly preemption-controlled intersection. Conditions: Dry, light.
- Austin; March 4 at 1 p.m.: **One civilian dead.** Conditions: Dry, light.
- Plant City, Florida; Feb. 7 at 12 a.m.: Ambulance in non-emergency mode at a stop sign was struck by a tractor-trailer. FD driver was charged with failure to yield the right of way, resulting in **one ambulance patient dead.** Conditions: Dry, dark.

2024 incident breakdown:

- Delray Beach, Florida; Dec. 28 at 10:45 a.m.: **FD driver charged after apparatus-train collision,** resulting in **15 injured** (12 on a train). Conditions: Dry, light.
- Newton, Missouri; Sept. 16 at 3:28 p.m.: The civilian driver was charged after collision at an “uncontrolled” intersection, with the engine was in response mode. **Five civilians injured.** Conditions: Dry, light.
- St Paul, Minnesota; Aug. 3 at 6:45 p.m.: **One civilian dead.** Conditions: Dry, light.
- Tulsa; Feb. 26 at 5:30 p.m.: Civilian driver was charged with failure to yield the right of way and tested positive for THC. **Five civilians dead.** Conditions: Dry, dusk.

2023 incident breakdown:

- Los Angeles; Sept. 5 at 12:38 a.m.: **Two civilians dead** in incident involving cars racing, deemed as NOT the fire department's fault. Conditions: Dry, dark.

- Pasco County, Florida; Aug. 8 at 7:24 p.m.; **One ambulance patient dead**. Conditions: Dry, dusk.

2022 incident breakdown:

- Magnolia, New Jersey; Jan. 19 at 9:40 a.m.; Fire department driver crossed yellow line and entered red light at high speed. **Two civilians dead, three firefighters injured**. FD driver charged with vehicular homicide. Conditions: Dry, light.
- Jersey City, New Jersey; Sept. 10 at 5:30 p.m.: **Eight firefighters injured** when two fire engines wreck. Conditions: Dry, light.

2021 incident breakdown:

- Kansas City, Missouri; Dec. 15 at 10:30 p.m.: FD driver entered the red-light intersection at 51 mph in a 35-mph zone. **Three civilians dead**. FD driver convicted on three counts. Conditions: Dry, dark.
- Denham Springs, Louisiana; June 13, 2021, late morning: **One civilian dead**, FD driver charged. Conditions: Dry, light.

DRY ROADS, DAYLIGHT HOURS

We tend to talk a lot about slowing down during bad weather, when it's dark, or when the roads are wet. It's safe to say that most drivers — emergency operators and others — pay at least a little more attention during inclement weather and in the dark than they do when it is dry and sunny.

I surmise that this current glut of dry road/daylight wrecks is a combination of increasing traffic congestion and driver distractions, but it may be related to us all driving faster and more aggressively during more favorable conditions. The evidence from the past five years does not suggest that people are dying in fire apparatus wrecks during inclement weather; I believe we have succeeded in getting our people to use more caution when the weather is bad. It's time to start working on safer driving during good weather.

RED LIGHTS, STOP SIGNS AND RAILROAD CROSSINGS: ORDERS, NOT SUGGESTIONS

Gone are the days when firefighters got the proverbial "pass" in the legal system. Several of the incidents listed above resulted in convictions of fire department drivers. Beyond the legal convictions, the psychological trauma on fire and EMS personnel, the families involved, departments and communities has deep and long-lasting effects. And we haven't even touched on the financial implications of the wrecks and lingering legal cases that can drag on for years.

With this in mind, let's consider some of the legal verbiage at play here. State laws vary in language; however, most give emergency drivers permission to run red lights and stop signs if they're responding to a call with their audible and visual warning devices are in use, as long as drivers use "due caution" or "care." Because of this type of verbiage, some firefighters even say "the law is on your side" when you've got lights and sirens on. But tell that to the families of the lives lost at intersections across the country.

Most state statutes use language that puts the onus on both the civilian vehicle driver (e.g. "yield the right of way to an emergency vehicle") and the emergency driver (e.g. "use due care"). Here's a sampling of the legal language or its synopsis from various states:

- California: "Give the right-of-way to any law enforcement vehicle, fire engine, ambulance, or other emergency vehicle using a siren and red lights."
- Maryland: "... can pass a red or stop signal, a stop sign, or a yield sign, but only after slowing down as necessary for safety, according to Maryland Transportation Code Section 21-106."
- Florida: "... authorized emergency vehicles can proceed through red lights when enroute to an emergency, but they must also exercise due diligence for the safety of others." They are permitted to proceed through red lights, according to Florida Statute 316.126.
- New York and Iowa: Proceed past a steady red signal, flashing red signal, or stop sign, but only after slowing down as necessary for safe operation.
- Utah: The operator of an authorized emergency vehicle may proceed past a red light or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation.

THE RIGHT OF WAY IS NOT AUTOMATIC

Every one of the laws I found talks about the emergency driver using some level of "due diligence" or "care for safe operation." Most statutes say the other drivers must "grant right of way" to emergency vehicles. To avoid

wrecks or mishaps, we still have a responsibility to wait until that other driver *actually* grants us the right of way. Slow down, pay attention and make sure other drivers have granted you the right of way.

The best tool we have available to reduce these wrecks is *us*. We need to pay better attention to the intersections, no matter the road conditions or time of day, and we need to understand that *we do not own the road*. Early warning and pre-emption options are the next most important tools available to us. But remember, traffic light preemption is simply a tool, not a law. We still have the responsibility to ensure the intersection is clear before we blast through.

Ending other driver distractions will be a constant education effort that we can influence in our public education efforts — but one we cannot directly control. Yes, we’ve got to get “there” quickly, but we can’t help those who need us if we don’t get there in the first place.

We can keep sticking our heads in the sand and blaming “those other distracted drivers,” or we can slow down a bit and make sure that we are controlling the intersections.

The intersections must not control us!

LAUGH OUT LOUD!!

There are people out there training for marathons...here I am on the couch trying to lasso the remote with my phone charger cable.

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.

CAFDA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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

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Treasurer: Tony Hill

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

Chaplain: Fred Richards, Commissioner, Harmony Corners Fire District

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

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

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

CAFDA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063

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

518-407-5020

EMAIL SECRETARY: SECRETARY@CAFDA.NET

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.