Capital Area Fire District's Association

THE WEEKLY CAFDA

BULLETIN

October 4th, 2025

Editor, Tom Rinaldi, Tom@rinaldi1.com

Serving the fire service community since 2004

CAPITAL SHORTS:

- **A letter of intent for those wishing to run for CAFDA officer or director must be in to the Secretary prior to the start of the October General Membership Meeting.**
- **Both the fire district election schedule and the budget development schedule are posted to the web site at www.CAFDA.net**
- Nearly 200,000 BMW owners are being told to park outside due to a risk of fire that is present whether the cars are being driven or not. The engine starter relay may corrode, leading to overheating and short circuit, increasing the risk of a fire, the NHTSA said. The issue affects multiple models, including the 2019-2022 Z4, 2019-2021 330I, 2020-2022 X3, 2020-2022 X4, 2020-2022 530I, 2021-2022 430I (standard and convertible), and 2022 230I, as well as the BMW-made Toyota Supra.
- Kia America is recalling over 39,500 US vehicles over a faulty HVAC system that could cause a fire and increase the risk of injury, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The recall includes certain 2021-2023 Sorento vehicles that contain heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems that may have a faulty wiring assembly.
- Congratulations to Boght Corners, Albany County on the new Seagrave, aerial scope.
- Congratulations to the Caroga Lake FD, Fulton County on their AFG award for $142,000 going toward the purchase of PPE.
- New York State has issued a temporary statewide burn ban that began this week, in response to rising fire danger and prolonged dry conditions and will remain in effect until October 15th.
- **I just want everyone to understand that I have no intention seeking a position in any of the major NYS fire service organizations, I am happy to remain as the President of the Capital Area Fire District's Association and continue with the amazing educational programs that we have developed for our members.**

LEARN WITH CAFDA – OUR EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

WWW.CAFDA.NET

1. ***NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING Thursday October 9th, in person or Zoom in. 7PM. Nominations for 2026 Officers and Directors will occur.***

ZOOM LINK FOR THE OCTOBER MEETING:

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89890135454?pwd=XvaEknHQzJ8kiTq937xbUQlY12brdV.1

Meeting ID: 898 9013 5454

Passcode: 248739

One tap mobile 646-558-8656, 89890135454#,,,,*248739# US (New York)

NOTE: According to our By-Laws Article 7 (C) "Letters of intent to be nominated for President, 1st Vice Preside, 2nd Vice President and Board of Directors must be submitted to the Secretary in writing by the ***OCTOBER*** meeting."

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

2. *CONTINUE BELOW:*

Capital Area Fire Districts Association

FALL EDUCTIONAL 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

Proposed Amendments to the State Association By-Laws

The State Association will be voting on a number of By-Law amendments at the October Annual Meeting. A review of the proposed amendments can be found here:
https://d15k2d11r6t6rl.cloudfront.net/pub/8ziy/udmzgsxm/n3z/6je/n41/PROPOSED%20AFDSNY%20BYLAW%20AMENDMENTS_3.pdf
CAFDA's Officers and Board of Directors supports these amendments and urges delegates to vote "Yes".

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

THE LATEST FROM THE STATE CAPITAL

Legislative Commentary

To see what the fire service accomplished during this legislative session go to the following LINK:
https://cafda.net/what-did-the-fire-service-accomplish-during-the-2025-legislative-session/
Now that the legislature is out of session, the ScoreCard will be reviewed for activity monthly.

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

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.

CFSI Executive Director Bill Webb Announces Retirement

After serving as CFSI Executive Director for the past 30 years, Bill Webb announced his retirement effective December 31, 2025. He made the announcement at a reception attended by members of the CFSI National Advisory Committee and other associates he has worked with throughout the years.
CFSI President Jim Estepp announced that CFSI Director of Government Affairs Michaela Campbell, a seasoned leader with a strong track record, will serve as the organization's next Executive Director. Her experience

working in Congress for Senator Susan Collins, combined with her time as a lobbyist and legislative assistant, as well as her tenure at CFSI, makes her a strong fit for the role.

Federal government shutdown: What happens now?

Kevin Freking, AP

Washington is bracing for what could be a prolonged federal shutdown after lawmakers deadlocked and missed the deadline for funding the government.

Republicans supported a short-term measure to fund the government generally at current levels through Nov. 21, but Democrats blocked it, insisting the measure address their concerns on health care. They want to reverse the Medicaid cuts in President Donald Trump's mega-bill passed this summer and extend tax credits that make health insurance premiums more affordable for millions of people who purchase through the marketplaces established by the Affordable Care Act.

Republicans called the Democratic proposal a nonstarter that would cost taxpayers more than $1 trillion.

Neither side shows any signs of budging.

Here's what to know about the shutdown that began Wednesday:

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE SHUTDOWN?

Now that a lapse in funding has occurred, the law requires agencies to furlough their "non-excepted" employees. Excepted employees, which include those who work to protect life and property, stay on the job but don't get paid until after the shutdown ends.

The White House Office of Management and Budget begins the process with instructions to agencies that a lapse in appropriations has occurred and they should initiate orderly shutdown activities. That memo went out Tuesday evening.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that roughly 750,000 federal employees could be furloughed each day of the shutdown, with the total daily cost of their compensation at roughly $400 million.

WHAT GOVERNMENT WORK CONTINUES DURING A SHUTDOWN?

A great deal, actually.

FBI investigators, CIA officers, air traffic controllers and agents operating airport checkpoints keep working. So do members of the Armed Forces.

Those programs that rely on mandatory spending generally continue during a shutdown. Social Security payments still go out. Seniors relying on Medicare coverage can still see their doctors and health care providers can be reimbursed.

Veteran health care also continues during a shutdown. Veterans Affairs medical centers and outpatient clinics will be open, and VA benefits will continue to be processed and delivered. Burials will continue at VA national cemeteries.

WILL FURLOUGHED FEDERAL WORKERS GET PAID?

Yes. In 2019, Congress passed a bill enshrining into law the requirement that furloughed employees get retroactive pay once operations resume.

While they'll eventually get paid, the furloughed workers and those who remain on the job may have to go without one or more of their regular paychecks, depending upon how long the shutdown lasts, creating financial stress for many families.

Service members would also receive back pay for any missed paychecks once federal funding resumes.

WILL I STILL GET MAIL?

Yes. The U.S. Postal Service is unaffected by a government shutdown. It's an independent entity funded through the sale of its products and services, not by tax dollars.

WHAT CLOSES DURING A SHUTDOWN?

All administrations get some leeway to choose which services to freeze and which to maintain in a shutdown. The first Trump administration worked to blunt the impact of what became the country's longest partial shutdown in 2018 and 2019. But on Tuesday, Trump threatened the possibility of increasing the pain that comes with a shutdown.

"We can do things during the shutdown that are irreversible, that are bad for them and irreversible by them," Trump said of Democrats. "Like cutting vast numbers of people out, cutting things that they like, cutting programs that they like."

Each federal agency develops its own shutdown plan. The plans outline which workers would stay on the job during a shutdown and which would be furloughed.

In a provocative move, the White House's Office of Management and Budget has threatened the mass firing of federal workers in a shutdown. An OMB memo said those programs that didn't get funding through Trump's mega-bill this summer would bear the brunt of a shutdown.

Agencies should consider issuing reduction-in-force notices for those programs whose funding expires, that don't have alternative funding sources and are "not consistent with the President's priorities," the memo said. That would be a much more aggressive step than in previous shutdowns, when furloughed federal workers returned to their jobs once the shutdown was over. A reduction in force would not only lay off employees but eliminate their positions, which would trigger another massive upheaval in a federal workforce that's already faced major rounds of cuts due to efforts from the Department of Government Efficiency and elsewhere in Trump's Republican administration.

WHAT AGENCIES ARE PLANNING

— Health and Human Services will furlough about 41% of its staff out of nearly 80,000 employees, according to a contingency plan posted on its website.

As part of that plan, the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would continue to monitor disease outbreaks, while activities that will stop include research into health risks and ways to prevent illness. Meanwhile, research and patient care at the National Institutes of Health would be upended. Patients currently enrolled in studies at the research-only hospital nicknamed the "house of hope" will continue to receive care. Additional sick patients hoping for access to experimental therapies can't enroll except in special circumstances, and no new studies will begin.

At the Food and Drug Administration, its "ability to protect and promote public health and safety would be significantly impacted, with many activities delayed or paused." For example, the agency would not accept new drug applications or medical device submissions that require payment of a user fee.

— National Park Service: As the shutdown neared, the National Park Service had not yet said whether it will close its more than 400 sites across the U.S. to visitors. Park officials said Tuesday afternoon that contingency plans were still being updated and would be posted to the service's website.

Many national parks including Yellowstone and Yosemite stayed open during a 35-day shutdown during Trump's first term. Limited staffing led to vandalism, gates being pried open and other problems including an off-roader mowing down one of the namesake trees at Joshua Tree National Park in California.

— Smithsonian Institution: In the event of a government shutdown, our museums, research centers, and the National Zoo will remain open through at least Monday, Oct. 6.

IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY

Phillip Swagel, director of the Congressional Budget Office, said a short shutdown doesn't have a huge impact on the economy, especially since federal workers, by law, are paid retroactively. But "if a shutdown continues, then that can give rise to uncertainties about what is the role of government in our society, and what's the financial impact on all the programs that the government funds."

"The impact is not immediate, but over time, there is a negative impact of a shutdown on the economy," he added.

Markets haven't reacted strongly to past shutdowns, according to Goldman Sachs Research. At the close of the three prolonged shutdowns since the early 1990s, equity markets finished flat or up even after dipping initially.

A governmentwide shutdown would directly reduce growth by around 0.15 percentage points for each week it lasted, or about 0.2 percentage points per week once private-sector effects were included, and growth would rise by the same cumulative amount in the quarter following reopening, writes Alec Phillips, chief U.S. political economist at Goldman Sachs.

FIRE DISTRICT FINANCES

Local Government and School Accountability Contact Information:

Phone: (518) 474-4037; Email: localgov@osc.ny.gov
Address: Office of the State Comptroller, Division of Local Government and School Accountability
110 State Street, 12th Floor; Albany, NY 12236

STEP INTO THE CHIEF'S OFFICE

The Importance of Mentorship in the Fire Service: Building the Best Damn Team

Mentorship has always been a cornerstone of professional development in many fields, but in the fire service, it takes on an even more vital role. The fire service operates in high-stakes environments where trust, competency, and teamwork means the difference between life and death. For firefighters, mentorship ensures that essential skills, knowledge, and values are passed down to the next generation. It not only enhances operational effectiveness but also fosters personal growth and strengthens the culture of the organization.

In this article, we will explore why mentorship is critical in the fire service, discuss the need for consistent evaluation standards, and highlight how lessons from the law enforcement community—specifically the San Jose model—can serve as a blueprint for success.

THE ROLE OF MENTORSHIP IN THE FIRE SERVICE

Mentorship in the fire service is far more than just teaching new recruits how to perform specific tasks. It involves a seasoned firefighter (the mentor) providing guidance, sharing experiences, and fostering a mindset of continuous improvement in a less-experienced colleague (the mentee). This relationship can take many forms, from informal advice to structured training programs, but its goal is the same: to build a competent, confident, and cohesive team capable of handling any emergency.

Some key benefits of mentorship include:

1**. Knowledge Transfer**

Firefighting is a field where both textbook knowledge and real-world experience are crucial. Many would argue the latter outweighs the former. Mentorship ensures that experienced firefighters pass on their hard-earned lessons to newer members, reducing the likelihood of costly mistakes.

2. **Professional Development**

Mentors help mentees navigate the complexities of their careers, offering advice on technical skills, leadership, and long-term career planning. Here's an example: Do I test for engineer or not? "Give me some advice."

3. **Cultural Preservation**

Every fire department has its own culture, built on shared values, traditions, and expectations. Mentorship helps maintain these aspects, ensuring the department's identity remains intact even as new generations join. I say it all the time: If H.R. or a group of nuns saw our group chats or hear how we talk at the table, we'd be lined up at the soup kitchen. We have a culture that most people—including our spouses—seldom understand. Whether we admit it or not, we often take that culture with us every time we leave the firehouse.

4. **Emotional Support**

Firefighting can be mentally and emotionally taxing. A mentor can provide the support and perspective that mentees need to cope with stress, trauma, and the challenges of the job. At a minimum, mentors must know when to call in the big guns for some help above and beyond what they can deliver. We're not knocking back the booze and washing the demons away anymore. We realized that didn't work so well for us. Instead, we are being proactive with these kinds of things and it's working.

5. Improved Safety

Well-mentored firefighters are less likely to make critical errors in high-pressure situations. This directly impacts the safety of these individuals, their colleagues, and the community they serve. The brothers and sisters on the floor deserve to work with quality employees. Be it a specialized team or company or a basic functioning member of "C-shift."

THE NEED FOR CONSISTENT EVALUATION STANDARDS IN MENTORSHIP

Although mentorship is invaluable, its success often hinges on the structure and consistency of the program. One area where many fire departments struggle is in the development and enforcement of clear, objective evaluation standards. Without these, mentorship can become inconsistent or ineffective, leaving mentees underprepared and mentors frustrated.

An example: Hop on the TikTok, Reels, or YouTube and watch fireground videos. Naturally, you'll have critiques. We all do. That's fine, but this begs the question: What standard did you apply? It's not what you know, it's what you can prove. Give me something to hang my hat on other than a subjective opinion. You may be right, but don't tell me you're right—prove to me you're right.

Here are some reasons why consistent evaluation standards are so important:

1. **Ensuring Accountability**

Use the example I just referenced. Clear standards create accountability for both mentors and mentees. Mentors know what they are expected to teach, and mentees understand what they need to achieve to progress.

2. **Eliminating Subjectivity**

In the absence of standardized evaluations, mentors may rely on subjective criteria to assess their mentees. This can lead to inconsistencies, favoritism, or unfair treatment, all of which can erode trust in the mentorship program. How many times have you inherited the new kid from the other shift and all you have heard about is how much he or she sucks. Then, low and behold, the individual performs pretty well. You and the rest of the shift are wondering what the hell the other shift is talking about. Which one of the two shifts is right? Subjectivity at its finest.

3. **Facilitating Fair Progression**

Consistent standards ensure that all mentees are held to the same expectations, creating a fair and transparent path for advancement within the department. There are a lot of laws and rules about this that require that we have fair standards that apply equally to each person being evaluated.

4. **Promoting Operational Readiness**

Firefighting requires a uniform level of competence across the team. Standardized evaluations ensure that every firefighter, regardless of their mentor, has met the same rigorous criteria before being entrusted with critical responsibilities. Read that again. How nice would it be if you knew all new hires getting off probation, regardless of experience or what shift they're coming from has been trained to the same exact standard by mentors who have some actual formalized training?

5. **Building Confidence**

When mentees meet clear, well-defined benchmarks, they gain confidence in their abilities, knowing they've earned their place through hard work and demonstrated competence. Do you want to work with the firefighter who has no self-confidence, when things are going sideways?

LESSONS FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT: THE SAN JOSE MODEL

The fire service tends to get higher marks from the public when compared to our law enforcement siblings. But the fire service has been missing the mark in one particular area that police have been getting right for decades.

Fire departments seeking to improve their mentorship programs can look to the law enforcement community for inspiration. Since the 1970s, law enforcement agencies have used the San Jose Field Training Officer (FTO) Program as a gold standard for onboarding and mentoring new recruits. This model, first implemented in San Jose, California, has been widely adopted across the United States due to its proven effectiveness. Some of those processes employ significant psychological tactics, and some even go back to the same processes used in determining what makes good aviators in the World War II era.

The San Jose model is built on several key principles that can be adapted to the fire service:

1. **Structured Training Phases**

The program divides training into distinct phases, each with specific objectives and skills to be mastered. This ensures that trainees receive a comprehensive education and are evaluated on all aspects of the job.

2. **Standardized Evaluation Tools**

The San Jose model uses a daily observation report (DOR) to document a trainee's performance in key areas. This standardization ensures that evaluations are objective and consistent across different trainers.

3. **Continuous Feedback**
Trainees receive regular feedback on their performance, allowing them to address deficiencies and build on strengths in real time. The name of the game is helping them succeed. There aren't "gotcha" tricks anymore!
4. **Defined Roles for Trainers**
FTOs are carefully selected and trained for their mentorship role. This ensures that trainees receive guidance from competent and committed mentors.
5. **Graduated Responsibility**
As trainees progress through the program, they are gradually given more responsibility. This builds their confidence and ensures they are fully prepared before taking on the full duties of the role.
6. **Program Accountability**
The San Jose model includes mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of both the program and the individual FTOs, ensuring continuous improvement.
By adopting these principles, fire departments can create mentorship programs that are structured, fair, and highly effective.

DEVELOPING A MENTORSHIP PROGRAM FOR THE FIRE SERVICE
Using the San Jose model as a foundation, fire departments can design mentorship programs tailored to their specific needs. Here's a step-by-step approach to developing such a program:
1. **Define Goals and Objectives**
Start by identifying what the mentorship program should achieve. This might include improving operational readiness, enhancing leadership skills, or fostering a positive department culture.
2. **Establish Clear Standards**
Develop detailed evaluation criteria for mentees at each stage of the program. Ensure these standards align with the department's operational requirements and values.
3. **Select and Train Mentors**
Choose mentors based on their technical expertise, leadership abilities, and commitment to the program. Provide them with training on how to mentor effectively and use evaluation tools. No more need be the days of the mentors being "volun-told." Let's give their role some definition and teeth!
4. **Create a Structured Curriculum**
Divide the mentorship program into phases, each focusing on specific skills or knowledge areas. Include hands-on training, classroom instruction, and scenario-based exercises. Generally, the fire service has some semblance of this, already, in the form of a new-hire book.
5. **Implement Evaluation Tools**
Use standardized tools, such as daily or weekly performance reports, to document mentee progress. These tools should be easy to use and focused on measurable outcomes.
6. **Provide Regular Feedback**
Schedule regular check-ins between mentors and mentees to review progress, address challenges, and set goals for the next phase.
7. **Monitor and Adjust the Program**
Continuously evaluate the program's effectiveness through surveys, performance data, and feedback from participants. Use this information to make improvements over time. There is no "set it and forget it" with programs like this. They require a finger on the pulse to make sure they're staying both relevant and effective.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES IN MENTORSHIP
While mentorship offers significant benefits, it also comes with challenges that must be addressed:
1. **Time Constraints**
Firefighters often juggle demanding schedules, leaving little time for mentorship. Departments must prioritize mentorship and allocate time for it within the workday.
2. **Resistance to Change**
Shocker, I know. Some seasoned firefighters may be reluctant to embrace formal mentorship programs. At the same time, there is a counterargument that seasoned firefighters don't want to work with slackers. Leadership must emphasize the value of mentorship and provide incentives for participation. You know where we see the

most buy-in of the senior folks when implementing this program? When it successfully weeds out those who can't meet the standards who would have remained on the job had this program not been in place.

3. **Mentor Fatigue**

Mentoring can be demanding, particularly in addition to regular duties. Providing mentors with support, recognition, and resources can help prevent burnout.

4. **Maintaining Consistency**

Ensuring that all mentors adhere to the same standards requires regular oversight and training.

THE NEED FOR MENTORSHIP

Mentorship is not just an optional aspect of the fire service—it is a necessity. It's necessary for the probie, and imperative for new team members. Some departments here in Michigan are even using this as part of their officer-development requirements, since it's been demonstrated to work time and again. In an environment where teamwork, trust, and competence are critical, mentorship ensures that every firefighter is prepared to meet the challenges of the job, so long as these programs are implemented correctly. By implementing structured mentorship programs with clear evaluation standards, fire departments can foster a culture of excellence, competence, and professionalism.

The law enforcement community's success with the San Jose model demonstrates the value of structure and consistency in mentorship. By adapting these principles, the fire service can create programs that not only prepare firefighters for the technical aspects of their roles but also instill the leadership and resilience needed to thrive in their careers. Every single mentor you, the reader, has had in this job, started somewhere on day one.

Mentorship is an investment in the future of the fire service—an investment that pays dividends in stronger teams, safer operations, and better service to the community. It's time for every department to make mentorship a priority and ensure that every firefighter, regardless of rank or experience, has the opportunity to grow and succeed.

STEP INTO THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Who is Liable for Damages That Occur on Mutual Aid Responses in New York?

Curt Varone

The New York Supreme Court for Dutchess County has ruled that a fire department that requests aid from a neighboring community is responsible to compensate that assisting department for damage that occurs to their apparatus, even though the apparatus has been released from the incident, and even though the damage was solely the result of negligence by its driver.

The facts of the case are relatively straight forward;

- *On June 10, 2021, the defendant, City of Poughkeepsie, requested mutual aid from the New Hamburg Fire Department for a fire located at 5 Parker Avenue in the City of Poughkeepsie.*
- *The New Hamburg Fire Department responded to the scene with 4 firefighters and a single fire truck.*
- *The New Hamburg fire truck was driven by Brian Smith.*
- *After New Hamburg's assistance was no longer needed at the site, Mr. Smith, while backing up the fire truck to leave the scene, ran the truck into a telephone pole as he lost sight of his spotter (another New Hamburg firefighter).*
- *The truck was damaged.*
- *New Hamburg's insurer, National Union Fire Insurance Company of Pittsburgh, alleges that it paid for the damage to the fire truck and thereafter submitted a notice of claim to the City of Poughkeepsie for payment for the damage in the amount of $85,307.25.*
- *The City of Poughkeepsie, through its insurer, denied the claim. This action followed.*

At issue is state law, General Municipal Law §209, that requires the requesting department to pay for damages sustained by the responding department, as follows:

- *Any loss or damage to, or expense incurred in the operation of, fire apparatus or other equipment answering a call for assistance from outside territory as provided for in subdivision one of this section or otherwise, and the cost of any materials used in connection with such call, shall be a charge against and paid by the city … which issued the call for assistance.*

Poughkeepsie argued that it should not be liable for New Hamburg's damage for several reasons, including that fire departments in New York have immunity protection and that immunity protection should rightly usurp a separate law like §209; that the New Hamburg truck had been released from the incident and the time of the damage, and thus was no longer "answering" the call; and that §209 does not require a requesting fire department to pay for damages caused solely by the negligence of the responding department.
Judge Thomas R. Davis rejected the arguments made by Poughkeepsie, concluding instead that:

- *[T]he intent of the Legislature in enacting GML §209 was to encourage neighboring communities to answer calls for help in fighting fires.*
- *Limiting … the statute in the manner proposed by the defendant would undermine this intent as it could make responding agencies hesitant to provide aid if they had doubts about whether the cost of damage to their equipment would be covered by the municipality requesting help.*

Quoting from a press release issued by fellow firefighter-attorney Donald J. Kavanagh, Esq., who represented the plaintiff in the case:

- *As both an attorney for plaintiff and a volunteer firefighter myself, I am pleased and relieved that the Supreme Court ruled in plaintiff's favor. This ruling is significant because it confirms that fire departments need not hesitate or make a choice between helping a neighbor and putting their very costly equipment at risk*.

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

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Orangeburg County, South Carolina EMS First In State To Use New Gel To Stop Bleeding

Orangeburg County Emergency Medical Services has a new resource for emergencies when every second counts. Orangeburg County EMS officials used a new device called TRAUMAGEL to stop the bleeding of a volunteer firefighter in late August.
TRAUMAGEL is a syringe of a plant-based mixture made of algae that is meant to control the bleeding of moderate to severe injuries and wounds. The thick mixture is meant to seal wounds on impact to the skin in order to help the patient with the process of blood clotting. Each syringe costs $130.
Volunteer firefighter Casey Bolin was the first person in South Carolina to use the gel after cutting his hand with a miter saw. The first responder's decision to use the gel gave Bolin a chance to save his arm.
"It stopped the blood from bleeding, from hemorrhaging," Bolin says. "I had a lot of pain too, so I was able to take the tourniquet off and life net and all of those that come there quickly. They got me to the hospital and to the surgeons, and I believe that saved the functions of my hand." First responders, including Orangeburg County EMS Training Captain Jeff Elian, made the decision to use the gel. Elian says the team completed three days of in-service training before the incident. Elian says the training moments displayed how the gel can be the seconds difference in an emergency.
"We had people woundpack traditionally with just regular gauze versus the Traumagel," Elian says. "The wound packing took upwards of three minutes, as to where the Traumagel took 30 seconds."
Co-founder of New York-based medical device company Creselion, Joe Landolina, discovered the resource at 17 years old. Landolina says the goal is to have the resource in every first responder and emergency room across the country.
Landolina awarded Hero Coins to the three EMT personnel who treated Bolin the day of his injury.
The device became U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved in August 2024. Landolina says the gel entered the market in October 2024.

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

Plan to Consolidate EMS Services in Greene County Hits Roadblock

Town supervisors, county legislators, the heads of rescue squads, and county EMS officials have been meeting for a year to address dire problems with ambulance services operating in Greene County, which are draining town budgets and are significantly understaffed, leading to long response times and rescue personnel routinely working 24-hour shifts.

Over the last few months, a preliminary plan has been hashed out for the counties' nine municipal and independent rescue squads to be consolidated under the county, which would absorb the costs of operating the squads, standardize their wages and equipment, and hire additional personnel.

But at a meeting held last week, county legislators, who must approve the consolidation, were evenly split on whether the plan should move forward in an unofficial straw poll. Greene County Administrator Shaun Groden said this established there was a lack of consensus, and the plan could not go forward, at least for the time being.

Their issue? The cost.

Greene County Legislature Chair Patrick Linger, who represents New Baltimore, said many legislators at the meeting believed the plan was too expensive.

"To say I was disappointed is a little bit of an understatement," Linger, who is also an EMS worker, said.

Groden said the plan would cost county taxpayers between $12 million and $15 million annually. The increased county taxes would be offset by reductions in town taxes as the EMS costs are absorbed — but only partially. The towns collectively spend $5 million to $6 million on EMS services, meaning the consolidation plan would cost taxpayers an additional $7 million to $9 million, Groden said.

Reductions in town taxes would vary, since different communities pay different amounts for EMS services. But Groden said the county tax rate would rise 20% if the consolidation plan were enacted.

This increase would surpass the state's 2% property tax cap, requiring the Legislature to approve the increase with a 60% majority. A bill removing EMS services from the property tax limit was passed by the state Senate and Assembly in June, but it has not been signed into law by Gov. Kathy Hochul.

The majority of the additional spending would be put towards hiring new EMS workers, Groden said. There are currently about 90 full-time EMS workers in the county, not including part-time workers, he said, and the consolidation plan envisions hiring an additional 30 full-time workers.

This would allow the county to have 12 ambulances operating during the day and evenings. Currently, about eight ambulances operate during these times, Groden said.

Groden said he still supports the consolidation plan, but, in light of the straw poll, he proposed an alternative: direct payments to the towns to offset the increasing cost of EMS services.

There wouldn't be any additional taxes associated with this plan, Groden said. The money would come from the county's fund balance, Linger said, where money is kept for unforeseen costs. The way the money would be distributed has not been determined.

Under this plan, Groden would push for equal pay across the different rescue squads over the next 12 to 24 months, he said, as well as standardizing purchasing and training across the squads, which is also an element of the consolidation plan. He hoped the county would be able to fully consolidate after this.

Groden said the alternate plan was not a silver bullet.

"We haven't addressed the base problem yet," he said — a lack of employees.

Linger added his own criticisms to the direct payments, saying it would be impossible to get better reimbursement rates from Medicaid if the county's EMS services were fragmented. Under one system, the county could advocate for better reimbursement rates on the state level, he said. The reimbursement rates have fallen behind inflation in recent years.

This is Greene County's second attempt at consolidating the rescue squads. About 10 years ago, a plan was rejected after town leaders turned it down.

In both instances, Linger said he thought that "we have people sitting at the table who were not necessarily in favor of (consolidation), and were more plotting how to come out against it rather than trying to find a viable solution."

Legislator Greg Davis, who represents Greenville, said he voted in support of consolidation during the straw poll, adding that the current system is not working.
"This is just killing our small, little towns," he said.
Greenville has a population of 3,745 people, but EMS services — which are paid for through a taxing district, as opposed to with town taxes — cost taxpayers a total of $600,000 annually, Davis said.
He said the direct payments would help "a little," but called them "a Band-Aid."
Legislator James W. O'Connell, who represents Athens, said he was not at last week's meeting to vote due to a family emergency, adding he was still evaluating the consolidation plan and had not made up his mind.
He said this plan, which envisions hiring an administrator to begin the consolidation at the beginning of 2026, and bringing EMS employees under the county's roof in 2027, was "maybe a little fast."
"If you ease into it, you have more of a chance to change things on the fly," he added.
Late Wednesday, a letter signed by 11 of the 14 town supervisors in Greene County was sent to Groden and Linger demanding that the consolidation plan be put to an official vote in front of the full Legislature.
Groden said Thursday morning the straw poll was split 7-7. However, in its official votes, the Legislature uses a weighted voting system to account for differing populations in each district. Under the weighted system, the consolidation plan would pass, Groden said.
The letter stated the request "is not about predetermining the outcome."
"It is about accountability, transparency, and providing clarity on where our Legislature stands," the letter continues. "A recorded vote would offer direction to the municipalities, emergency service providers, and residents who have engaged in good faith throughout this process."
"I want to see a vote," Hunter Town Supervisor Sean Mahoney said.
Mahoney and other town leaders on the mountaintop — the portion of Greene County in the Catskill Mountains — kicked off the push to reexamine county rescue squads as their towns suffered financial hardships, leading to the hiring of Fitch & Associates to produce a report on the services. The report, released in 2024, was critical of the current system and led to the formation of the committee that has been meeting for the last year. (Fitch & Associates is part of the Fitch Group, which is owned by the Hearst Corporation, the parent company of the Times Union.)
Mahoney said there was "some hesitation on the part of certain county legislators" that was creating "an obstacle at this point in time."
Catskill Town Supervisor Patrick McCulloch did not sign on to the letter. He said Wednesday he did not because he lacked the backing of his town board, adding he "won't do anything without their approval — I'm not above them, we're all equal."
"The question we have is: what exactly are we asking the county to vote on? We don't know exactly what the plan is. There's nothing finalized," he said.
Linger said on Wednesday — before he received the letter demanding a floor vote from the Legislature — that he wanted an official vote on the issue, adding the measure would first need to be introduced in a committee before potentially going to the full legislature.
A lack of employees is far from just a Greene County problem. From 2019 to 2022, the number of active EMS practitioners in New York fell 17.5%, according to a 2024 report by the state Department of Health.

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

Training: Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

Clifton Park - October 18-19
Corning - October 25-26
MissionCIT's recruitment and retention workshop is back with two sessions this October for fire and EMS leaders looking to strengthen their teams.
This immersive two-day experience will equip you with proven strategies to recruit effectively, retain members, and build a stronger department culture. Whether you're a seasoned officer or just stepping into a leadership role, this training will help you create lasting impact.
REGISTER NOW AT THIS LINK:
https://firefightersassociationofthestateofnewyork.cmail20.com/t/y-l-qijitky-ikjuyhjliy-m/

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

Get started:

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

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

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

GET STARTED NOW AT THIS LINK:
https://tracking.police1.com/t/9495565/187515077/7816037/1/1006865/?b44ed14b=YmY5NWQ4NzktNWRmOC00MWJkLTkzMDctNzg0Y2VhZTNjMzYy&x=1ee5e8f9

HOW TO START A SUCCESSFUL JUNIOR FIREFIGHTING PROGRAM

Blaize Levitan

One of the most rewarding things I've ever done is junior firefighting, both as a participant and later as an advisor. I can't imagine my youth without the service and experience of junior firefighting, which profoundly affected who I am today.

Every department with the will and resources should start a program. And if you're ready to do so, but don't know where to start, you've come to the right place.

WHY START A JUNIOR FIREFIGHTER PROGRAM?

Junior firefighting programs allow teens, usually between the ages of 14 and 18, to join their local fire department. When done properly, a junior firefighting program is an incredible opportunity for your community. Here's why:

- Teens that participate will have the chance at one of the most unique and rewarding life experiences. They develop leadership skills that will serve them for the rest of their lives, inherit important values of the fire service, build lifelong relationships, explore career opportunities, and have a chance to serve their community.
- The department will benefit by having a group of young people who are willing to assist with a variety of tasks and responsibilities, access to this great recruitment tool and, as their training progresses, additional on-scene support.
- The community benefits by having young adults engaged with public safety agencies and exposed to opportunities for social development, as well as benefiting from the community services participants can help sustain.

Watching young people transform into adults by passing on the knowledge and traditions of the fire service is well worth the time. Making a lasting impact on a young adult is a powerful and priceless experience.

ARE YOU READY TO COMMIT?

This is the most important question: Are you and your department ready to commit? To do this right, it won't be easy, but it will be worth it. It will take countless hours. When working with young people, there can be unique, time-intensive challenges. Keep this in mind as you proceed. That said, this is the fire service and you're not alone. You will need the support of department leadership and a dedicated team committed to this program.

HOW TO START THE PROGRAM

The most successful way to approach the structure of a junior firefighting program is to essentially treat it as its own fire company, with its own drill times, meetings, events, training schedule and even its own junior leadership. You'll want to integrate the program into the fire department, but the program requires independence to operate. Let's review how to make this work.

Establish a team of advisors: First, the program needs adult leadership to serve as "advisors" to the program. This team will establish the structure of the program, training guidelines and schedules, and handle the administrative work. They will also serve as the liaison between the department and the program. A variety of firefighters can be called upon to assist with specific training and events, but you want a dedicated crew to lead the program on a day-to-day basis.

Create program policy or guidelines: The first assignment for the Advisor Team is to establish the governing policy creating the program. To start, rather than address every detail of the program, focus on who and how decisions will be made. Often, volunteer departments will need to consider bylaw amendments.

There are many factors to address in this process:

- **Membership:** How will junior firefighters fit into the structure of your department? Volunteer departments often have different classes of membership with certain benefits and requirements. Do you want to establish a junior firefighting class of membership?
- **Application process:** What steps do you envision to apply?
- **Program eligibility:** Who do you want in your program? There are several factors to consider here: Age: Standard participation range is 14-18; however, some programs allow participants to remain until 21, while others don't let participants join until 16.
    - Residency: There is value in allowing non-resident participants to join your program, especially if there is no alternative in their community.
    - Participants: The program should be co-ed. Junior firefighting programs can be a great way to reverse the fire service's abysmal record on gender diversity.
    - Health: Consider requiring a doctor's note, as many school sport programs do.
    - Academics: Consider collecting high school report cards and requiring academic intervention if participants drop below a certain grade point average. Participation in junior firefighting should help develop young people into healthy and successful young adults, not inhibit academic achievement. Advisors or even fellow program participants can tutor those in need.
    - Criminal history: Do you plan to conduct background checks for program advisors?
- **Advisor onboarding:** Will you onboard advisors so they understand appropriate behavior when dealing with minors? Dating or any type of relationship with participants outside of the program must be strictly prohibited.
- **Discipline:** Who will be responsible for issuing discipline? This is important to navigate, as there is the Advisor Team as well as Department Leadership.
- **Sign-offs:** Who is approving the minor's participation? Participation by minors requires forms for parent/guardian sign-off, which should also include approvals for photo use on the department website or social media accounts.
  Note: It is also important to leave some decisions for the program participants to make.
- **Start recruiting:** Recruitment can be a challenge – but it will get easier with time. Websites and social media are easy ways to advertise and a great place to start.

Engage with the local public school system, which will have multiple options to connect you with interested participants. For example, you may be able to speak at an orientation event for students entering high school or you could include a flyer in the new year materials handed out to students. My former department used to

park an apparatus in front of the high school on orientation days, and some of the junior firefighters would wear their gear and discuss the program with interested students.

Further, ensure your presence or inclusion in regular department recruitment operations, such as tables at farmers markets or community and department public events. Eventually, word of mouth will become one of the primary methods of recruitment for your program. Invite those interested to come and watch a drill or two to see what it is all about.

- **On-board your members:** On-boarding is important. If you're investing time and money into the participants, you want to be sure they clearly understand the commitments. Be upfront about the commitment and expectations. This is not just any club or organization; the members will be representing one of the most respected organizations in their community.

Start by developing a standard agenda or checklist that can be reused, then set up a meeting with the interested participant. By doing this, you can not only explain the program but also learn more about what they hope to achieve. Through this process, you may also learn that they have special skills that can benefit the department, such as social media engagement or website graphic design.

A good friend of mine in a neighboring department was highly adept in video editing as a high school student and made multiple amazing videos for his department while serving as a junior firefighter – and he's a lieutenant now!

RUNNING THE PROGRAM

The specifics of every department's junior firefithtert program will be just as unique as every fire department in this country. Here are some general aspects to consider:

- **Develop a schedule:** When does the organization meet? My suggestion is to pick one night per week, with three drills and one monthly meeting. If this is too frequent, consider every other week.
- **Participant leadership:** The organization should have its own leadership structure. This is key for participants to develop leadership skills. They should hold an annual or biannual election to elect officers (e.g., president, vice president(s), treasurer and secretary, at least).
- **Monthly meetings:** The club should hold an administrative meeting once per month that follows Robert's Rules of Order, and requires reports from each officer to the membership, and minutes, too.
- **Program finances:** The program should have its own budget, managed by the treasurer, with guidance from an assigned advisor who has actual signing authority. The department will need to make a financial commitment to start the program, and then through fundraising, the program can help sustain itself. Firefighting gear, insurance and similar expenses should be covered by the department. T-shirts, banquets and the like can be funded through a thoughtful budget and then fundraising events.

DRILL TIME

One of the most rewarding aspects of running a junior firefighting program is designing training. Training for junior firefighters should focus on the basics, fully preparing members to excel in Firefighter I training, if they so choose.

Here are some ideas to help get started:

- **Hydrant operations:** This is what we trained on more often than any other topic. We set up hydrant relay races and held timed hydrant challenges.
- **Ground ladders:** Practice throwing ladders over and over, a key skill that junior firefighters can provide on a fireground.
- **Equipment location:** This is a good one for quizzes and mock responses.
- **Equipment use:** Try Jenga or stacking cups with extrication equipment.
- **Major fire history:** It's important that new members know fire service history.

Encourage participants to attend and or participate in regular department training, too, especially if they are going to be responding to calls with firefighters. This helps build a positive rapport with firefighters.

Other training events include holding joint drills with other junior firefighting programs in the region. One exciting training event is to have competitions with other junior firefighting programs, relay races or muster challenges. For over a decade, the Connecticut Fire Academy has hosted an annual muster for junior firefighters from across the state. Also, Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts has hosted a historic firefighting muster challenge for junior firefighters, with a bucket brigade and hand-drawn pump.

RESPONDING TO EMERGENCY CALLS

Responding to calls is by far the most exciting aspect of the experience. If properly implemented, it is also a huge benefit to the department. Juniors don't get complacent in firefighting basics because they are constantly training on them. It's likely a junior firefighter can dress a hydrant and get water to a scene more efficiently than a 10-year veteran who may have not dressed a hydrant in years.

How junior firefighters respond to calls will depend on the design of your program. Clear standards must be met to allow for response eligibility. Develop a set of competencies that must be attained before response is allowed. Utilizing the concept of Firefighter I and Firefighter II, set different levels for participants to attain.

For example, a Level 1 junior firefighter must prove their competence in a basic set of competencies. Create a checklist that each participant can use to track their progress. Have an advisor sign off, confirming when each skill has been successfully demonstrated. Once the checklist is fully signed off, consider performing a final overall spot test. If they pass and have demonstrated character and discipline in line with expectations, they should be approved to start responding. Send a notice to ensure that they're introduced to the rest of the department.

Level 2 can include a set of more advanced skills to encourage additional development. This level could come with extra benefits, such as an extended time of response or maybe some tools or a pager. Interested participants should be encouraged to become certified EMTs or emergency medical responders.

It's important to consider participant ages and local, state and federal work rules. While you may allow participants to join at 14, it may be beneficial, based on labor rules, to wait for the emergency response age to be 16. Most states have guidelines and rules that apply to minors working or volunteering in the fire service. Further, ensure that junior firefighters understand the confidentiality of what they may be exposed to on scene, as well as protocols regarding cell phone use and social media.

Remember, these are teens responding to potentially serious emergencies. There may not be a need to expose them unnecessarily to disturbing or traumatic situations. For example, there was an emergency in which a routine garage fire turned out to be a suicide, with a deceased individual that had barricaded themselves in the garage and then set fire to it. We didn't need the junior firefighters on scene for body removal. If they are exposed to trauma, include them in critical incident stress debriefing. It's best practice to reduce the exposure to trauma for anyone, especially young adults. Instill a positive approach to mental health in junior firefighting programs, and start their fire service career on a strong footing.

BOY SCOUTS EXPLORING

One cannot consider starting a junior firefighting program without discussing **Exploring**, the national program affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) that seeks to "teach important life and career skills to young people from all backgrounds through immersive career experiences and mentorship." Exploring is implemented through local BSA councils and an interested organization can form its own post or club. Establishing your program as an Exploring Post is like buying ready-to-assemble furniture. It will provide you with operational guidelines, basic policy and a model structure. Notably, exploring programs provide some basic insurance, training for adult advisors, and background checks.

This all comes with a cost, though. There is a per head fee for both explorers and adults, as well as insurance fees and some minor costs depending on your local BSA chapter. Your program will also be affiliated with the BSA, which comes with its rules and policies, as well as to some extent, its branding. I recommend considering a Post at the start and then rethinking its value as the program stabilizes.

IT'S WORTH IT

There is no single right way to start a junior firefighter program. It's not easy, but it is worth it. When I contemplate my years as a young adult, I can't imagine them without the profound impact junior firefighting had on my life, as a participant and advisor. I carry this experience wherever I go. Even in my career outside of the volunteer fire service, I find myself leaning on the leadership skills and values I developed as a junior firefighter. That is surely something worth creating for others.

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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!

- Idaho Department of Lands Firefighter Isabella Oscarson was struck by a falling tree while assisting the U.S. Forest Service's Tinker Bugs with *a prescribed fire* in the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests.
- Moncks Corner VFD, South Carolina Deputy Chief Jimmy Townsend died of an apparent heart-related incident within five hours of responding to an incident, he was a 35 year member.
- Fire Chief Mike Phillips reportedly sustained burns to his face and arm when jet fuel ignited prematurely during a live-fire drill. He is being treated at the University of Utah Hospital and is expected to remain hospitalized for several weeks.
- Bristol, Tennessee Firefighter/Paramedic Brandon Clawson suffered a medical emergency at a city fire station on Oct. 1 and later died.

FIRE APPARATUS ACCIDENTS FOR THE WEEK

- A passenger in a southwestern Minnesota firetruck died after the vehicle rolled into a ditch Friday night near Cottonwood, Minn. The Wood Lake Volunteer Fire Department truck, traveling north on 490th Street with three people on board, rolled off the road and onto its side. Rescue crews found Patrick Steven Remiger, 43, trapped beneath the truck when they arrived, he was pronounced dead at the scene, Remiger was a 20-year member of the volunteer Fire Department while also running a dairy farm. Two others in the truck — driver Andrew Vanhecke, 37, and his 6-year-old son Beaux, both of Wood Lake — were taken to Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center in Marshall with life-threatening injuries, authorities said. They were later flown to Avera McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls. According to the State Patrol*, driver Vanhecke had been drinking and none of the three was wearing a seat belt, they had been in Cottonwood participating in the annual Lakeview HS homecoming.*
    - Follow up: Charges against the driver are pending, Yellow Medicine County Attorney Mark Gruenes told the Minnesota Star Tribune on Tuesday, adding, "that could change at any time, of course." No one in the truck had on restraint devices, according to the patrol.
- A Lee County, Texas paramedic suffered serious injuries in an ambulance crash that occurred after a medical emergency. The rig ran off the road and hit a tree, Lee County EMS officials wrote in a statement on the agency's Facebook page. The passenger was released after treatment at a local hospital while the driver remains hospitalized.

FIRE APPARATUS

Snippet of the Congressional Apparatus Manufacturer Hearings::Interesting

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

Compartmentation Innovations

Alan M. Petrillo

Jonathan Castner, senior marketing manager of Ziamatic Corp., says that one of the most popular Ziamatic fittings for use in compartments is the Sure-Grip SG-VM1 for securing handled tools. Ziamatic also expanded

the series with the SG-VM-XL version for larger tools and the SG-VM-XLS for tools in the 2- to 4-inch grip range like struts, irons, and bolt cutters, he notes. Another popular Ziamatic compartment fitting is the Multiple Extrication Tool Holder, which allows securing up to four extrication tools on a Lazy Susan rotating platform. Castner notes that adjustable mounting brackets on the fitting accommodate most brands of cutters, spreaders, and combination tools, including hydraulic and battery-powered models. One or two of the slots in the fitting can be changed out to hold a ram, he adds.

Ziamatic also makes the Quic-Swing Flip-Down SCBA Bracket, Castner says, which slides out and over the lip of the compartment, then flips end-over-end to a convenient height for safe self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) donning from a standing position. Ziamatic also makes the Double Hard Sleeve Gantry, which Castner says is a safe and efficient way to retrieve two 10-foot or two 12-foot hard sleeves from the top of a pumper or tanker. He says the gantry can be configured with two hard sleeves stacked either vertically or side by side.

Thomas Trzepacz, vice president of sales and customer relations for Performance Advantage Company (PAC), says some of PAC's most popular products used in compartments include its Super Flex brackets, the PAC strut mount, its MultiMount HD kit, and PAC compartment matting.

PAC's Super Flex bracket is a round friction bracket with a strap that comes in 3-, 4-, and 6-inch versions, Trzepacz says. "They are very good with cylindrical objects and work with different variations of fire extinguishers, like 3-, 5-, and 10-pound versions, as well as water cans," he notes. "The 6-inch kit will do an SCBA bottle as well, and we also see them being used with struts and shoring."

The PAC strut mount is a hanger-style bracket that is very adjustable and can handle up to 100 pounds, Trzepacz points out. "Our MultiMount HD kit is sold in pairs with the PAC channel lock that allows PAC brackets to be attached to it," he says. "It creates a shelf on which you can mount tools on a back wall, and at 90 degrees as well. It's another way to increase the usability of compartment space." PAC's compartment matting comes in 12- × 12-inch squares that attach with clips, he adds.

Jason Witmier, director of education and technology for Safe Fleet, says his company's division, ROM, makes straight slide-out trays, out-and-down compartment trays, and dual-directional trays for transverse compartments. "ROM makes all of its own slides and trays out of aluminum, and the unique aspect of the trays is that instead of a pin or catch to latch the tray, we use a full-width bar across the front of the tray that locks it in place when extended," he notes. "To unlock, simply pull up on the bar and push the tray closed."

Witmier points out that ROM's straight slide-out tray can be locked at 70%, 100%, or 120% extension, while its out-and-down tray slides out 70% and then drops down at a 45-degree angle. "With ROM's dual-directional trays for transverse compartments, the tray will only slide in the direction that the user unlocks it with the transverse bar," he says.

Phil McLean, president of Sensible Products Inc., says his company recently completed a complicated equipment packaging job on the compartments of a walk-around heavy rescue truck for the Wheeling (WV) Fire Department. "In the L2 compartment, we installed two vertical pull-out tool boards that hold Paratech struts on both sides," he notes. "We nestled PolyTech clips very close together on our channel panel to allow them to hold the light duty gray struts on one board and the heavy-duty gold struts on the second board, all in one compartment."

McLean points out that Sensible Products configured the heavy rescue's R1 compartment to hold HURST Jaws of Life® eDRAULIC E3 battery-powered rescue tools on slide-out trays and the R2 compartment with out-and-down trays holding cribbing. "It's all about packaging tools for usability," he observes, "and also being able to meet the needs of the fire department."

Clay Horst, general manager of OnScene Solutions, says that his company has introduced a configurable sliding cargo tray made from anodized extruded aluminum. The Configurable Tray can be customized with tray separators, adjustable tie-downs, and fold-down gates, he points out.

One of the biggest problems facing tray makers over the years has been designing a suitable brake for out-and-down cargo slides, Horst maintains. "When those trays are released, they can slam out and down, and

that can be dangerous if it is loaded with its 250-pound maximum load," he says. "We've developed a hydraulic device that hooks to the outward tilting portion of the slide on its framework, which slows the tray's descent to a safe speed as it deploys."

Another new OnScene Solutions product is the X-30 Cargo Lift System, Horst says. The X-30 system has a 500-pound capacity and 30 to 36 inches of downward travel that lowers heavy equipment from high compartments using an electric slide device, Horst notes. The X-30 can also be installed in a lower compartment, allowing the heavy equipment to be deployed completely to the ground and rolled off the lift.

Zach Summers, design coordinator for FMI Inc., says one of the more popular products that FMI makes is its air bag controller tote. "It's made to keep air bag equipment ready at a moment's notice instead of in a Pelican case," Summers says. The bag has carry straps and a foam insert to keep the equipment secure and can fit hoses, controllers, and accessories in a 6½-× 24- × 14¼-inch bag that weighs 9½ pounds, he notes.

"Another hot item right now is our flip-up saw box that stores a saw at a 45-degree angle for ease in deploying, with storage underneath the saw," Summers says. He adds that FMI has had great success with its FMI SuZan™ rescue tool storage mount in both 20- and 24-inch platforms. "The SuZan stores up to four hydraulic extrication tools in quick-release mounts on a tray that spins, which also can be mounted on an optional slide-out tray," he says.

Matt Curtis, sales representative for SlideMaster, says all the company's trays are custom-built to the size requested by the fire department. "Our 600-pound capacity slide-out trays that slide out at either 70% or 100% extension are our most popular models," Curtis notes. "These single-direction slides allow the user to get the gear in a hurry without having to reach or crawl into the compartment."

Curtis adds that SlideMaster makes 120- and 130-inch-long compartment slides for ladder trucks, either in steel or aluminum versions. "For the heaviest carrying capacity, fire departments choose the steel option," he says. SlideMaster also makes tip-down slides that come out and then down at an angle to make use of higher storage compartments by bringing equipment safely into reach and dual-direction slides for transverse compartments, allowing for equipment access from either side of the rig, he says.

He says that SlideMaster offers both a standard turn-lock on slides or an IMS push-pull lock. "Designed with gloved hands in mind, our IMS lock unlocks the slide by pulling on the handle to extend it and pushing on the handle to close it. The IMS is a spring-loaded lock that audibly clicks into the open position and gives the user much more control of the load," Curtis says.

THE CHANGING FIRE SERVICE

*****W.Va. County Takes First Step Towards Career Fire Department As Volunteer Staffing Declines***

Bill Carey

Morgan County is poised to hire its first paid firefighter after the County Commission authorized the Fire Board last week to advertise for a full-time Fire Board captain.

The move follows more than a decade of shrinking volunteer ranks and understaffed departments, which have left fewer responders available for emergencies across the county, The Morgan Messenger reported.

Morgan County's fire protection is provided by four all-volunteer departments: Berkeley Springs, South Morgan, Great Cacapon and Paw Paw, each a separate legal and financial entity. Coordination is done by the Morgan County Fire Board, which includes one representative from each department, three citizen members and a representative from the County Commission.

County officials approved the Fire Board Captain position and transferred $64,978 from the state-funded Fire Protection Fund to cover the salary. They also signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the County Commission, the Morgan County Fire Board and the Berkeley Springs Volunteer Fire Company to modernize fire response.

Under the MOU, all paid personnel will operate as the Morgan County Fire Department under a Fire Board Captain. They will be shared across volunteer companies and serve at a department's request only.

The county will share one paid firefighter across the volunteer departments for 40 hours a week. That firefighter must be trained and approved by the hosting department's fire chief, follow that department's policies and will be paid by the Fire Board with coverage under the county's workers' comp.
Morgan County has long wrestled with how paid staff should work alongside volunteers, while still trying to boost volunteer ranks through incentives and outreach. Under the MOU, the Morgan County Fire Department captain oversees on-duty paid personnel, but incident command stays with the volunteer fire chief or designated volunteer fire department officers, per state law.

How To Build A Combination Fire Department: Food for Thought

Chief Marc Bashoor

A lot has been espoused about the volunteer fire service, and more specifically, the decline in volunteerism we've seen in the past several years.
What began in many places as a self-sustaining insurance-subscription fire protection service has evolved into so much more today. The American fire service now protects nearly 350 million residents spread across 50 states and five territories (there are an additional nine territories with no population recorded).
What has also changed is the culture of volunteerism in general, which brings us to the topic at hand: building a combination fire department. While there are many trying to solve the problems of recruitment and retention, here I hope to offer some solutions to continue providing service when "going combination" is the decision.

PAYING FOR IT

Volunteer doesn't mean free. As needs increased, the subscription fire service turned to fundraisers and has evolved to today's environment of multi-million-dollar grants to build NFPA-compliant stations and purchase NFPA-compliant apparatus. But spaghetti nights, bingos and car washes will only take you so far. So, what will be your funding mechanism to pay salary and benefits for firefighters? It doesn't seem too tough when you're only paying for one, but the load grows exponentially as you add each firefighter and cover the many associated needs.
Whether it's county, district, parish or any other municipal form of government, the fire chief will likely find him or herself working with one or more municipal leadership groups to determine an appropriate funding mechanism to pay for people – and stuff. I recently spoke to a volunteer chief in Pennsylvania who has to negotiate with more than 20 municipal entities to determine how they'll fund their operations. They pay a few full-time firefighters, but despite the politics associated with more than 20 municipal governments, the fire department continues to carry the volunteer elected chief model. It is well past time for that department to make the switch to a combination organization.
Whatever your income – fundraisers, fees, taxes, assessments, subscriptions – the method likely will require some approval through the municipal (and maybe state) process. This is a long-haul discussion and not a process to take lightly, nor to try to do on your own. There's plenty of help out there.

THE ANATOMY OF A COMBINATION DEPARTMENT

There is no cookie-cutter combination department. For a singular department with one or two stations, the evolution from all-volunteer to combination is usually a slow process, likely first hiring a day-time driver for at least one station.
What drives the need to hire? The catalyst is often increasing failures to respond or some catastrophic incident. Maybe it was a citizen complaint or political pressure, or maybe it was a progressive volunteer chief who saw the need for help. Sometimes the department will later hire an additional firefighter for specific hours or use some creative means through grant opportunities to provide stipends or paid-per-call opportunities.
I have observed that many long-time volunteers feel threatened by the mere notion of paying firefighters, and in some cases will even resign as a result. To alleviate that threat, many volunteer departments soften the blow by calling paid staff something else. I recently spoke to a New York State volunteer chief who told me that paid staff in the VFDs are not always identified by traditional service ranks – paid officers called "foreman" and paid firefighters called "engineers" or "maintenance" and similar terms. I understand the concept, baby steps maybe; however, I don't think renaming firefighters, paid or volunteer, is a productive improvement for the community.

The number one challenge of any leader charged with the responsibility to "combine" a department is making sure the best possible service is being provided to the community. Within that challenge are many micro-challenges, including the need to "stop the bleed" of members leaving because they feel threatened. There are myriad incentives and some basic education that can help. As important as it is for people to acknowledge and accept help, volunteers want to continue to feel welcomed and needed. Fostering that atmosphere can sometimes be a challenge when paid firefighters are brought in, leaving the perception that some power has been taken away from the volunteers. ***The outlook must be about service to the community, not the power level of any group.***

I've never seen a successful combination system succeed with an all-or-nothing approach. While it must be about service, there is a shared empowerment to accomplish goals. The department still needs volunteers, and the volunteers need help getting the apparatus out the door – both "sides" need each other.

FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE

I've worked in three different states in systems that were, at least at one time, all-volunteer:

Mineral County, West Virginia: This is the one that remains all-volunteer today, providing service out of 10 stations.

Prince George's County, Maryland: PGFD entered the combination environment under a County Charter in 1970 and remains an evolving combination department today.

What was originally 40-plus independent volunteer 501(c)(3)s before charter, remained independent *administratively* after charter. After charter, the 501(c)(3) fire department operations were wrapped under the county fire chief. Sounds simple, right? Of course not! PGFD, one of the largest combination fire/EMS systems in the United States, is the quintessential combination department experiment, now 54 years in the making.

Highlands County, Florida: The area's 10 volunteer chiefs got together and petitioned the county commissioners for help as volunteerism declined. This ultimately resulted in a professional study that provided options as well as a report that provided a blueprint to implement the study.

I had the unique opportunity to start this process after the elected officials had decided to move forward with hiring paid firefighters. With the elected official mandate at hand, we needed to get the community to approve a level of funding to pay for the plan, which included these core recommendations:

- Establish a county fire chief
- Hire paid firefighters
- Work to bring apparatus into NFPA compliance
- Work to bring facilities up to 24-hour occupation status and into NFPA compliance
- Combine fire and EMS (which was all county-employee-paid)

While the county had a previously established a working group as the study was being conducted, this group was terminated as a fire department working group was stood up. This group, which would be the avenue to implement the approved changes, included this lineup:

- Each volunteer chief
- An EMS representative
- The new county public safety director/fire chief

Delivering regular updates to the County Administration and elected officials was crucial to ensuring transparency and accountability to the plan (and the people). Unfortunately, the product of any municipal relationship, especially one where the "boss" is hired from the outside, will face certain hurdles. For example, it was my experience that certain connected volunteers and paid EMS folks were keeping their own connections to the elected officials alive and well. Balancing this dynamic is never easy for a leader, especially when you're trying to establish a new organization while helping 13 others to stay afloat.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EXPERIENCE

The best advice I can give someone in these shoes is to understand several basic principles:

- *Operate from a plan, not an idea.*
- *Understand that you will never make everyone happy*. You're likely shifting some power and making progress, while "fighting the fights" and ensuring that service delivery is improving.
- *Do what's right for the community*, for your people and for the organization – JDTRT.

- *Resist the urge to be the bull in the china shop*. You may need to be a bull, just keep it in the arena.
- *Focus on individual steps you can succeed at daily*.
- *Establish a regular rotation of internal and external constituent monthly meetings – and stick to them*.

As you look to build this new combination department, make sure you provide any and all support possible to those volunteer stations that continue to sustain themselves. While they may be benefiting from the new county income, that doesn't mean that paid staffing has to be thrown in the station just because. ***Use a strategic approach to staffing that focuses more on safety than just getting fire trucks out the door.***

Pick locations that have higher call volumes and may have lower volunteer participation. Make sure there is sufficient PPE and radios to equip any newly hired firefighters, while still maintaining capacity for volunteers. Make sure the facility can sustain 24-hour living. Let's face it, it's a home as much as it's a firehouse! Be prepared in advance to support not only your volunteers but the staffing you hire as well.

As you hire, if the IAFF is involved, you'll have additional dynamics to manage – all opportunities to succeed, if you let them succeed. Much like parenting a family, a chief with volunteer and union members working side by side will have family feuds to deal with – that's part of the human nature within us all.

FINAL THOUGHTS

You have a mission and a plan. *Moving from an all-volunteer system to a combination department is not a process for faint-of-heart, uneducated or inexperienced leaders*.

My last bits of advice, if you really want to succeed:

- Less talking and more listening
- Respect your people and your community
- Move forward with the plan – take positive and informed action

Remember, the train cars will not combine and move forward on their own, whether your stoker (firefighter) is paid or volunteer, someone has to shovel the coal!

BUILDING CODE ISSUES AND REPORTED FIRE FATALITIES

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

An awfully expensive price to pay to save money. Stop the carnage, install residential sprinklers.

Residential sprinklers are a component of the plumbing system, with approximately 1 head per room. The purpose of residential sprinklers is to allow time for the occupants to escape. Residential sprinklers are designed for quick response and only one at the most two heads may be triggered. With residential sprinklers present, the civilian death rate is 89% LOWER. Residential sprinklers will assist responding firefighters to do their jobs and save firefighters lives also, especially since everyone is short staffed!!

CHIEFS NEED TO SPEAK UP: Our fire problem would not be as bad if there were residential sprinklers!!

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

HOME FIRE FATALITIES REPORTED BY THE MEDIA FROM THE US FIRE ADMINISTRATION FOR 2025	
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	53
Last fire death 8/9/25 Eaton, Madison Co., Female 69	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	88
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	733
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA/60
	#2 NY/53
	#3 IL /43
Civilian home fire fatalities in 2025: 1480 2046 civilian home fire fatalities in 2024	

Week 36 of 2025, fire has claimed on an average 41 lives PER WEEK.

Both the states of Maryland and California as well as Wash. DC require sprinklers in 1&2 family dwellings.

According to realtors and builders only old homes burn, so sprinklers are not needed in new homes: so when does a new home become an old home?

Building New Homes Could Reduce Fire Deaths

Trea Lavery, masslive.com

Allowing the construction of modern apartments could improve fire safety and reduce fire deaths nationwide, according to a new report out Tuesday.

Researchers from Pew Charitable Trusts found that apartment buildings built in the 21st century have fire deaths at one-sixth the rate of older apartments and single-family homes, and one-fourth that of newer single-family homes.

This is despite concerns among some that apartment buildings pose additional dangers in a fire, from the presence of more kitchens and other potential fire starters to the need for residents to go down many floors to escape in an emergency.

"When we're talking about fire safety in the U.S., we're really talking about a problem with older buildings," said Alex Horowitz, co-author of the report and project director of Pew's housing policy initiative. "Newer housing is much safer when it comes to fire safety."

The report found that in 2023, fire deaths were 17 times more common in apartment buildings constructed prior to 1970, where there were 8.5 deaths per million residents, than in those built since 2010, at just 0.5 per million residents. This held true regardless of the size of the apartment building.

Newer single-family homes were also safer than older ones, with those built before 2000 seeing 8.6 deaths per million residents compared to 4.9 deaths per million residents for those built in 2000 or later.

While the report did not determine what specific features made modern buildings safer, Horowitz said it was likely due to safety measures that used to be uncommon or nonexistent but are now ubiquitous. Multifamily housing in particular is often legally required to include sprinklers, self-closing doors, connected smoke detectors, fire-rated walls and noncombustible stairways.

Because of this, the report argues that other regulatory barriers to housing construction, such as restrictive zoning and parking requirements, should be relaxed in the interest of safety.

"We know that's good for housing affordability. We know that's good for housing availability," Horowitz said. "It would also improve fire safety and this is the first time we can say that with confidence."

He added that more, newer options would allow people to move out of older, more fire-prone buildings.

Earlier this year, Pew published another report looking at the requirement for apartment buildings to have two staircases, a rule that is common in the United States, purportedly to give residents multiple avenues of escape in case of a fire. However, that report found that single-stair buildings were no less safe, and in fact are common in other countries.

Housing advocates have said legalizing single-stair housing would allow much more construction, both because adding an additional staircase makes a project much more expensive and because single-stair buildings can be smaller and fit more easily into the existing urban environment.

Some have called for other fire codes, such as sprinkler requirements, to be relaxed, too, in the name of housing production. Horowitz emphasized that Pew has only studied the efficacy of having multiple staircases, and said they were focused on breaking down other barriers.

"There's been this tension between whether we should have fire safety or have housing availability and affordability … The way we get out of the housing shortage and improve affordability and reduce homelessness is the same way we improve fire safety," he said. "Legalizing modern apartments and getting more of them built is worth doing on its own, just as a way to improve fire safety."

In July, 10 people were killed in a fire at a Fall River assisted living facility. In the weeks following, it was revealed that the owner of Gabriel House had been notified just days before that the facility had missed its five-year sprinkler inspection.

A MassLive investigation found that there is no centralized way of tracking sprinkler inspections in the state, and local fire departments frequently rely on an honor system for building owners to stay up to date.

In Massachusetts, the homebuilding industry has historically lobbied against residential fire sprinkler proposals, arguing they raise the cost of housing and that efforts should instead focus on ensuring working fire alarms in all buildings.

According to the Department of Fire Services, more than 70% of all fire-related injuries and deaths in Massachusetts take place at home, yet residential occupancies are the least likely to be protected by fire sprinklers.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: SO EVENTUALLY THESE BUILDINGS WILL BE IN THE HOUSING STOCK, HOUSING THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS AND WE ARE GOING TO HAVE WOODEN CONSTRUCTION, WITH ONE EXIT STAIRWAY AND THEY ARE GOING TO GET OLD AND THE ADVOCATES OR POLITICIANS THAT ARE PUSHING THIS CONCEPT WILL BE NO WHERE TO BE FOUND AND IT WILL MAKE MORE WORK FOR THE NATION'S FIRE SERVICE. WE SHOULD NOT ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE SOLD ON THIS FAULTY CONCEPT AND IT'S HAPPENING STARTING IN THE "BLUE" CITIES AND STATES!]

GREEN TECHNOLOGY & THE FIRE SERVICE

'This is a first:' Four Sacramento firefighters injured from toxic fumes of EV battery fire

Michelle Bandur

Sacramento firefighters are facing new challenges as they encounter more electric battery fires, including an e-scooter that spontaneously combusted Tuesday morning at the Executive Inn and Suites Hotel on Bannon Street.

"When they made entry, they found out there was an e-scooter inside that had spontaneously combusted from the batteries," said Battalion Chief Keith Wade of the Sacramento Fire Department.

Although the fire was small and quickly put out, firefighters called out hazmat teams for cleanup and decontamination.

"We're seeing these types of fires more and more," Wade said. "How do we respond to keep our people safe? Because the batteries are very toxic."

"We've never had anyone off related to any type of lithium-ion battery fire. This is the first," said Justin Sylvia, with the Sacramento Fire Department.

Four firefighters are being treated for exposure to a Tesla battery fire last April.

"A very low-lying white cloud, as it was described by those members, came across them. They immediately had a metallic taste in their mouth," said Sylvia. "One of the chemicals in those batteries, once it hits water, it turns to an acid."

Sylvia further explained the dangers of electric vehicle fires.

"Once you split that series (of batteries), that's when it becomes dangerous, because it can short-circuit and get into that thermal runaway and become very unpredictable on its own," he said.

The unpredictability adds to the danger, he said, as the four firefighters did not have on their breathing apparatus since the fire was out and they were in clean-up mode.

Sylvia emphasized the need for crews to always wear their protective gear.

"These EVs are something that is new to us," he said. "We really need to look at what the best practice on fighting these fires and not becoming a victim ourselves."

The four affected firefighters are undergoing experimental IV-infused therapy to remove heavy metals from their bloodstream and lungs, but it is unclear if there will be permanent damage.

In Tuesday morning's scooter fire, no one was injured. Firefighters advise against keeping scooters inside homes, suggesting a balcony or garage as a safer location.

Battery Storage Fire Tackled in Glendale, AZ

Susan Nicol

A fire at a battery storage facility in Glendale required dozens of firefighters Wednesday night. Heavy fire was showing from the containers that were storing batteries. Officials at the Salt River Project told AZFamily it was

aware of the fire at its 25-megawatt battery system at its Bolster substation. No power outages were reported as the battery was offline. The cause remains under investigation.

STUFF FOR YOUR OFFICERS AND MEMBERS!

Webinar: Maximizing Grants to Help Your Fire Department Purchase PPE

Join fire service grants expert Brian Vickers for a must-attend webinar revealing proven strategies, insider tips, and a key checklist to help your department secure funding for updated firefighting PPE.

Tuesday, October 7th at 2:00PM

REGISTER AT THIS LINK:

https://www.firehouse.com/webcasts/webinar/55315954/maximizing-grants-to-help-your-fire-department-purchase-ppe?o_eid=6778E0229656H9A&oly_enc_id=6778E0229656H9A&rdx.ident[pull]=omeda|6778E0229656H9A&utm_campaign=CPS250917035&utm_medium=email&utm_source=FH+Newsday

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LEXIPOL

Rare Emergencies Demand, Total Crew Readiness

WATCH ON-DEMAND WEBINAR AT THIS LINK:

https://tracking.police1.com/t/9561414/187515077/7947786/0/1006865/?b44ed14b=YmY5NWQ4NzktNWRmOC00MWJkLTkzMDctNzg0Y2VhZTNjMzYy&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!

ESIP EMERGENCY SERVICES INSURANCE PROGRAM BY McNeil&Co.

Emergency Service UTV/ATV Basics ESIP WEBINAR SERIES

More and more emergency service agencies are using these versatile vehicles to support operations. During this webinar we look at the vehicles that are out there and discuss the hazards that come with their use and how to stay safe.

Wednesday 10/15/25 at 7PM

REGISTER HERE:

https://mcneilandcompany.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=03596f243a9d922954ebaf15e&id=7fab7a4215&e=781e9a2c81

FASNY Firefighters Association of the State of New York

2nd Annual Lake George Training Symposium

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

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

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

Save Me a Seat for Lake George 2026

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

2025 Seminar Series, Short-Handed Firefighting

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

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

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

Cortland (October 28) • **Erie** (October 8) • **Jefferson** (October 15) • **Nassau** (November 5) • **Rensselaer (October 20)** •

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

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

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Attend an NVFC Training Near You!

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

ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Coming Attractions:

- **October 8-10, 2026,** Annual Meeting and Vendor Expo at the Saratoga Hilton and City Center, Saratoga Springs

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NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Gansevoort Fire Department Breakfast

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

Clifton Park Fire Department Breakfast

See you Sunday October 5th when we start up again. **Thank you for your support!**

GENERAL INTEREST

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

Fire Museum In New York Working To Preserve Rich History Of Firefighting

VIDEO: The Syracuse and Onondaga County Fire Museum, located in the former home of Engine 4, near Destiny USA, is preserving the rich history of firefighting with a collection that has been growing for 35 years. The museum, ***which is open by appointment***, showcases three antique fire trucks, including a 100-year-old Ahrens-Fox, and aims to educate the public about the history of firefighting in the region. However, the museum is seeking funding to perform necessary upgrades in the building.

"We need to put an elevator in to make it ADA accessible. We need a new roof to preserve this building for 100 more years. Everything takes money," said Jim Ennis, a former city firefighter with over 37 years of service. City firefighter Maurice Gilbert, who grew up near Station 7, has been passionate about firefighting since childhood and now serves as a board member of the museum.

"I knew they were going to help somebody, and I wanted to do that for my career as well," he said. David Reeves, who chairs the museum's board, has a 40-year career with the Syracuse Fire Department, progressing from explorer scout to deputy chief. His helmets from various stages of his career are on display at the museum. The firehouse and a refurbished antique fire truck were donated by Gary Thurston of Haynor-Hoyt.

"They all run. They all drive. They all pump. They work just as good as when they were new," Reeves said.

The museum also highlights the history of firefighting beyond city limits, with 57 volunteer departments in Onondaga County, some of which are older than the city department itself.

As the museum continues to preserve the legacy of firefighting in Syracuse and Onondaga County, it seeks community support to ensure its future accessibility and sustainability. "It's the best job in the world," Gilbert said, reflecting on the firefighting profession's legacy and future.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO TOUR THE FACILITY, WORTH STOPPING BY IF YOU ARE IN THE AREA. PROBLEM IS I HAVE NO WAY OF CONTACTING THEM.]

LAUGH OUT LOUD!!

Old? Me? Oh no!
I'm in the prime of my life, somewhere between the young and the restless and the old and senseless.

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

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

CAFDA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063

EMAIL TREASURER: TREASURER@CAFDA.NET

518-407-5020

EMAIL SECRETARY: SECRETARY@CAFDA.NET

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

It's our desire that every member fire district have the opportunity to attend Capital Area meetings. We know we cover a large area, in 8 counties and beyond, and wish to give all of our members a chance to participate in the general

membership meetings. You have a voice, and we would like to hear it. Join us at our next meeting either in person or via Zoom. The link will be sent via constant contact prior to each general membership meeting. Thank you for being a member and we hope you will join us.

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

Business Partner Applications Available At: WWW.CAFDA.NET

We invite our business partners to submit educational information to be included in this Bulletin for district commissioners and chief officers

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

FIRE SERVICE LEGAL SERVICES

D'AMATO LAW GROUP

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Gregory Serio, Partner
Alyssa B. Snyder, Partner
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518.426.3800
Email: gserio@dlgny.com or asnyder@dlgny.com
damatolawgroup.com

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Michael May, Broker
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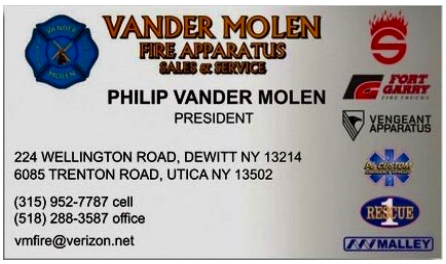

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Heather R. Lewis, CPA hlewis@mmb-co.com

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://cafda.net/membership-info/

CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

SAVE THE DATES!

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

COMMISSIONER TRAINING

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

OTHER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

FINANCIAL TRAINING FOR FIRE DISTRICT OFFICIALS	~~Fulton-Montgomery Community College Thurs-Fri. March 13-14, 2025 2805 State Hgwy. 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**

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.