



CAPITAL SHORTS:

- Both the election schedule and the budget development schedule are posted to the web site at www.CAFDA.net
- The Worchester Fire Department in Otsego County is hosting the NYS AFC "Short Handed Fire Fighting" on September 15th. A short drive down I-88.
- Western New York is marking a historic milestone this year as the Edward M. Cotter fireboat celebrates 125 years of service to the city of Buffalo. The Edward M. Cotter, recognized as the oldest working fireboat in the world, was honored with a ceremonial reenactment of its arrival to the city.
- With back to school starting up, students in

Rensselaer are heading back with a new two year program added this year. A program to help increase the number of first responders. The Rensselaer City School District and the City's Fire Department welcomed their first round of students for the new Career and Technical Education Fire Science Program.

- Another Alex Dell seminar to discuss VFBL and Cancer Diagnosis, Social Security Disability, Public Safety Officer and Veterans Affairs Benefits, Wednesday September 24th at the West Albany Fire Station, 113 Sand Creek Road, Albany at 7PM. No Charge!!

- The State Association's 2025 Annual Memorial Service is on Friday October 3rd, in Saratoga Springs. Note that the submission deadline is September 19th, 2025. Submissions can be made at:

<https://mms.afdsny.org/members/form.php?orgcode=FDNY&fid=7384225>

- September is Suicide Prevention Month. This is a a time to raise awareness and discuss this highly stigmatized topic. In addition to educating and shifting public perception, we need use this month and EVERYDAY to spread hope and vital information to people affected by suicide.

- AFDSNY is please to announce that Michael Stevens, from NYS DHSES OFPC, will be presenting on Thursday, October 2nd at the AFDSNY Annual Meeting & Leadership Expo in Saratoga Springs, to review the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS), answer your questions. and help ensure you don't miss the January 1st deadline. Onboarding to NERIS is **mandatory** for all fire departments, with a deadline of January 1, 2026. Register for the Annual Meeting/Conference at:

https://mms.afdsny.org/members/evr/reg_main.php?orgcode=FDNY&evid=45560727

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. **CAFDA FALL EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR, Saturday November 1st at Verday Fire Department; Continental Breakfast at 7am, Seminar begins promptly at 8am**

- Bob Mitchell, Fire Station Legal Liability and a properly designed Decon Laundry
- Alyssa Snyder, Running a Proper Election – Fire District & Fire Company
- Greg Serio, Ethics and roles of the players, Fire District & Fire Company
- Lunch with the experts, ask the panel of experts

Register at CAFDA.net

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

Emergency Services Supporter Assemblyman Billy Jones Leaves Assembly

Since Assemblyman Billy Jones has left office, all of his bills have their "enacting clause stricken" which means that the bills are no longer active in the Assembly unless or until another Assembly member sponsors the bill(s). In other words, we must find a new sponsor for all of Jones' bills.

1. Bill allowing for the creation of ambulance districts.
2. Bill relating to the good faith deposit following the award of bonds to a successful bidder.
3. A bill creating a volunteer firefighter training fund appropriation.
4. A bill relating to state aid for EMS.
5. A bill providing for an appropriation for a volunteer firefighter scholarship program and fund.
6. An appropriation bill providing for a volunteer fire department capital fund.
7. Authorizes the forest ranger force to establish a training program for volunteer search and rescue personnel to assist the forest rangers
8. Permits schools to allow fire departments to make a recruitment presentation in a high school
9. Relates to special districts for ambulance services and to volunteer firefighter and ambulance services staffing
10. Establishes a state disaster emergency grant and loan program
11. Makes certain fees and charges related to emergency medical services permanent
12. Establishes law enforcement officer grant funds and firefighter grant funds

13. Makes provisions permanent relating to disability due to disease or malfunction of the heart or coronary arteries
14. Creates a wage tax credit for employers who employ New York national guard members, reservists, volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel
15. Extends tuition free course benefits to volunteer firefighters or volunteer ambulance workers
16. Relates to the retirement of state, county and municipal 911 operators and dispatchers

As you can see former Assemblyman Jones was a big supporter and will be missed.

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?**

It seems that recently PESH has been inspecting fire departments in the area, remember that in NYS volunteers are considered to be employees of the AHJ.

One of the things that PESH will be looking for are the required posters to be posted in each fire station. For Public Employee Safety and Health (PESH), a New York-specific regulation, the required poster is the "Job Safety & Health Protection" (P208) poster. In addition to the state PESH poster, public employers in New York must also display federal OSHA posters if applicable to their specific sector, along with other federal and state labor law posters relevant to their business. You can find the official PESH poster on the New York State Department of Labor website or purchase them from a number of vendors such as:

https://www.laborlawcenter.com/new-york-labor-law-posters?a_aid=laborpostersorg&a_cid=5e39a18e&chan=laborposters&data1=topblock&data2=

In addition, employers **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>

Local PESH Visit Results

PESH was a no-show on Monday and rescheduled for Tuesday. They checked and requested the following:

- Labor law, workplace violence, and right to know posters
- Incident Report for injuries 2022 – present
- Total membership count
- Fire Department EIN # (Employment Identification Number)

Everything went smoothly; it took about half an hour in total. I recommend that you advise your commissioners and ensure this paperwork is accessible to help ensure a smooth visit.

Please let me know if you are paid a visit so we can help keep each other in the loop.

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.

🔴 **Support the Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act (S.237) to Add Cancer to Federal Death and Disability Benefits for Firefighters**

Congress is considering amendments to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and the Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act is under consideration. TAKE ACTION TODAY!

✓ Visit [CFSI's Legislative Action Center](#) for information on asking Congress to include the Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act (S.237) in the NDAA. [An email script is provided!](#)

✓ Watch CFSI's One Minute Advocate video below to learn how to find your members of Congress!

★ **FEMA Announces 2025 National Preparedness Month Toolkit**

The [toolkit](#) offers ready-to-share messages and graphics for social media, emails, and newsletters to help spread preparedness tips. The theme for National Preparedness Month is "Preparedness Starts at Home," encouraging everyone to: understand possible emergencies they might face, create a family plan, build an emergency supply kit, and get involved in community preparedness.

★ **FEMA Blog: How Communities Fight Fires With FEMA's Fire Management Assistance Grants**

[Click here to read FEMA's blog post](#) that discusses the Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) program and how it works!

Fire Apparatus Manufacturers Respond at Senate Hearing

Chris Mc Loone

Editor's Note: Since early 2025, there has been scrutiny on fire apparatus manufacturers resulting from industry-wide lead time and cost increases. Build times are well beyond the traditional 18 months to which we have become accustomed, and costs have increased far more quickly than in previous years. There are many reasons for this, and on September 10, 2025, representatives from Pierce Manufacturing, REV Specialty Vehicles Group, the Kansas City (KS) Fire Department, the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), and the Antimonopoly Counsel testified before Senators Hawley and Kim on the challenges our industry faces. What follows are the opening remarks from Dan Meyer, Vice President of Sales, Pierce Manufacturing and Mike Virnig, President, REV Specialty Vehicles Group, as well as resources you can use to learn more about the current apparatus purchasing atmosphere.

"Chairman Hawley, Ranking Member Kim, and members of the Subcommittee:

"Thank you for the opportunity to discuss Pierce's mission of delivering high-quality, innovative fire trucks that help firefighters protect and serve our communities. It's my honor to assist the Subcommittee's work on important issues facing fire apparatus manufacturers. My name is Dan Meyer, and I'm the Vice President of Sales at Pierce Manufacturing, an Oshkosh Corporation business. I've spent the vast majority of my career at Pierce because I believe in our mission and know firsthand the impact that Pierce has on my community.

"I was born and raised in Appleton, Wisconsin, where Pierce started over a century ago and continues to operate to this day. Our story is uniquely American. Pierce began as a father-and-son shop building truck bodies on Model T Ford chassis. Today, Pierce proudly builds American-made fire trucks manufactured by over 3,000 craftsmen, welders, and engineers across 10 principal facilities in Wisconsin, Florida, and Tennessee. We do so with firefighters top of mind. Whether supporting them as Pierce builds the trucks they need, walking them throughout our facilities along the build cycle, or standing beside them on the final inspection of their apparatus, I have the honor of engaging with these heroes daily. At Pierce, I also work alongside more than 100 active and former firefighters and other first responders. I think it's clear, our mission is personal.

"It's a privilege to be here alongside witnesses that include such distinguished fire service leaders. President Kelly and Chief Rubin are public servants dedicated to making our communities safer. That is why I take their concerns so seriously. At Pierce, we are unwavering in our support of the American fire service. We will always honor our more than century-long commitment to being transparent with our customers.

"I share the Subcommittee's serious concern about the industry-wide prolonged lead times seen since the pandemic, when demand for fire apparatus skyrocketed as supply chains and labor became strained. The current lead times, which are a function of that demand spike, are unacceptable, and Pierce remains laser-focused on reducing them to pre-pandemic norms.

"I'm happy to share that – while there is work left to do, Pierce has been making progress. We shipped more trucks last quarter than any other in Pierce's history. We acknowledged the lead time problem as soon as it emerged, and we have made – and will continue to make – historic investments to increase throughput.

"Since lead times began to extend in 2022, Pierce has invested approximately \$50 million to increase throughput, and we have another \$100 million on the way. In less than three years, Pierce grew our workforce by more than 25%, adding nearly 800 good-paying American jobs.

"We expanded our manufacturing space by 28%, adding nearly 500,000 square feet. In short, we are significantly increasing investment to meet the needs of our customers – and our ship-rate reflects our commitment. That said, Pierce recognizes the need to provide options for our customers. For departments that don't want to wait for custom fire apparatus, we produce stock trucks, which are built to standard specifications and are available immediately.

"I also want to emphasize that Pierce has always been committed to being fair, honest, and transparent about costs. The costs to make fire trucks, like other heavy equipment, climbed substantially in recent years due to supply chain and labor disruptions across industries. While material costs in the fire truck manufacturing process remain high – at Pierce – price increases have slowed significantly.

"Finally, I understand the Subcommittee is interested in reports of consolidation in the fire truck manufacturing industry. I want to be clear: neither Oshkosh nor Pierce has acquired any other U.S.-based fire truck manufacturer. I am deeply proud that our growth has been organic: driven by innovation, a commitment to our customers, and high-quality support for Pierce trucks long after they leave our factory floor.

"Our plan for growth is to continue investing in our business and our people, not through acquisitions. I know our customers have choices when purchasing their trucks, and Pierce fiercely competes with dozens of manufacturers wherever we sell. These choices are also reflected in our aftermarket business, where customers have a choice in who services their vehicles.

"I would like to reiterate Pierce's appreciation for the Subcommittee's efforts to ensure that firefighters are getting the vital tools they need as quickly as possible. When firefighters are the first in and the last out, they need to rely on their equipment, and they can rely on Pierce.

"Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions."

FIRE DISTRICT FINANCES

Audits from the Comptroller's Office

EASTPORT FIRE DISTRICT – PROCUREMENT

PROFILE

The District is located in Suffolk County and provides fire protection services to Eastport, Speonk, Remsenburg and parts of Manorville. The Board is composed of five elected Commissioners, each serving a five-year term. The Board delegated the responsibility of purchasing to a member of the Board.

Audit Objective

Did the Eastport Fire District (District) Board of Commissioners (Board) seek competition for the procurement of goods and services?

AUDIT PERIOD

January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024

UNDERSTANDING THE AUDIT AREA

Generally, fire district (district) purchases should be made in the best interest of the taxpayers. One method for ensuring that goods and services are acquired in a cost-effective manner is to create as much competition as possible. Whether using formal competitive bids in accordance with New York State General Municipal Law (GML), requests for proposals (RFPs) or written and verbal quotes, a well-planned solicitation effort is important to reach as many qualified vendors as possible. Every district must adopt its own policies and procedures for procurement of goods and services not required by law to be competitively bid.

A Board member is responsible for the District's procurement process. During the audit period, the District paid 108 vendors for goods and services totaling \$847,191. This included 11 professional service and insurance vendors paid \$214,672 and 20 vendors paid \$96,955 for purchases that did not require formal competition but required quotes.

AUDIT SUMMARY

The Board-adopted procurement policy (Policy) addresses the procurement of goods and services not required to be bid. However, the Policy does not provide guidance or encourage competitive methods for the procurement of professional services and insurance. The Board did not use a competitive method such as

issuing RFPs or obtaining competitive quotes to procure professional services and insurance coverage from 10 vendors totaling \$203,097. When officials do not seek competition for professional services, they lack assurance that services are procured in the most economical way, in the best interests of the taxpayers. In addition, the District paid 20 vendors for goods and services totaling \$96,955, without obtaining quotes as required by the Policy. As a result, the District may not have received the best price for the goods and services it purchased.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Board should update the Policy to provide additional guidance to officials for soliciting competition for professional services and insurance coverage, such as using an RFP process or obtaining quotes.
2. District officials should use the form that is attached to the Policy to document quotes obtained, or the reason for exemption from competition.

FINDING 2 – DISTRICT OFFICIALS DID NOT FOLLOW THE DISTRICT’S POLICY REGARDING COMPETITIVE QUOTES.

Officials did not obtain competitive quotes in accordance with the District’s Policy. According to the District’s Policy, purchases of goods and services between \$2,000-\$4,999 require two verbal quotes, and purchases between \$5,000-\$19,999 require three written quotes. We reviewed 24 purchases from 20 vendors that provided goods and services totaling \$96,955. Nineteen purchases required two verbal quotes, and five purchases required three written quotes. District officials did not use the form that is attached to the Policy and, as a result, did not document seeking competition, or the reason for not seeking competition for any of the 24 purchases, such as equipment, repairs, maintenance and sanitation. At the January 2024 organizational meeting, the Board appointed certain vendors for use throughout the year for specific goods or services. For example, vendors were appointed to provide heating oil, diesel fuel and propane gas without obtaining quotes or documenting any price comparison. The three fuel vendors were paid a total of \$14,598. District officials did not review the vendors’ total aggregate amounts to determine whether they should receive additional quotes based on the total dollar amount. The heating oil purchases required three written quotes, and the diesel fuel and propane gas purchases Office of the New York State Comptroller 5 required two verbal quotes based on the aggregate amounts paid to these vendors. Officials did not seek competition because they were comfortable with the vendors they were using and believed they were receiving a good price.

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

Distributed Leadership: Shifting Decision-Making To The Frontlines

Brian Schaeffer

We rely on a paramilitary structure. It’s built into our DNA and starts on day one in the academy, and follows us through promotions, lateral moves and into leadership roles. Our predecessors built the system so that decisions flow directly from the command staff to battalion chiefs, then to captains, lieutenants and ultimately to firefighters.

This structure works well during complex incidents where we have a measured span of control and a unified system where everyone is working from the same playbook. Everyone knows their role and there is no ambiguity. We respond, bring resources to the party, make decisions quickly and then leave it better than we found it. However, away from the fireground, this same system can hinder our progress and limit our adaptability for the challenges that lie ahead.

WHERE OUR COMMAND STRUCTURE FAILS

Our traditional structure is familiar and straightforward. Yet, from an organizational development lens, it often keeps us stuck in past practices (“that’s how we’ve always done it”). We assume past success means future success. Making decisions based only on rank without context and a growth mindset can feed egos and limit how openly we consider new ideas or accept honest feedback. [The European Management Journal](#) identified this as true even in large organizations, finding that their rigid hierarchies isolated leaders from frontline realities, making adaptation challenging.

It’s not that the chain of command doesn’t have value — it does. It’s just not the only way to make good decisions. When every decision is expected to flow through the same path, we create bottlenecks. Minor problems take too long to solve, and big problems can get stuck with the top-level leaders. The people doing the work — the firefighters on the rig, the captain managing the company, the manager running a program — often see the issues before the executive does. If we don’t let them act or weigh in, we miss valuable input.

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP: A NEW PATH FORWARD

A better approach is distributed leadership. The concept simply means giving those closest to a problem a voice in how to solve it. **According to researcher Richard Bolden**, distributed leadership enables smaller groups to make decisions based on their direct knowledge, resulting in faster and more effective responses. This isn’t just about delegation. It’s about trusting people to make their own decisions within their area of responsibility and using “**leader’s intent**” to establish parameters. Leader’s intent is a clear statement of what needs to be achieved and why it matters. It gives teams the freedom to decide how best to get the job done, especially when plans change or leaders aren’t immediately available.

Leader’s intent is best communicated through three elements: the Task, the Purpose, and the End State:

1. The **Task** defines what action needs to be taken.
2. The **Purpose** explains why that action matters in the broader context.
3. The **End State** describes what success looks like when the task is complete.

In a distributed leadership model, this clarity enables teams to adapt and make decisions on their own while still aligning with the overall mission. For example, a training captain should be able to set the direction for drill schedules without waiting for sign-off from the top. A company officer should be able to adapt policy when the facts on the ground demand it. Those on-the-fly changes doesn’t mean instant chaos. It means clarity — knowing who owns which decisions and trusting them to carry them out.

To get there, we need to define decision rights clearly and in a straightforward manner. Decision rights outline who has the authority to make what kind of call. We begin by identifying decisions that drive performance, such as task orders, staffing plans, deployment changes, community risk reduction priorities, and capital purchases. Then we ask who is closest to those issues and who has the bandwidth and skill to make the right call. It won’t always be the person with the highest rank. Often, it isn’t.

When decision rights are clearly defined, everyone benefits. The decision-maker has clarity. The rest of the team knows where to go for answers. And senior leaders are freed up to focus on big-picture strategy instead of micromanaging routine operations.

THE ROLE OF COMMITTEES

Committees also have a place here. In fire agencies, committees can feel like either a rubber stamp or a black hole where ideas go to die. But when done right, they serve a critical function. Committees pull together diverse experiences. A training committee that includes paramedics, firefighters and engineers will design better drills than a single training officer working alone. A labor management health and safety committee will spot issues sooner and fix them faster because it brings multiple perspectives to the table.

Committees should also have clear scope and decision-making rights. If a committee is advisory, say so. If it has final say within a defined area, spell that out. That level of clarity helps prevent confusion and protects the committee from being undermined or ignored.

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP UNDER PRESSURE

We can look to the military for examples of how distributed leadership works under pressure. In “**Team of Teams**,” Gen. Stanley McChrystal describes how the U.S. military adapted during the Iraq War by shifting decision-making authority to frontline teams. What they found was that people closest to the action could make better and faster decisions — if they had access to the correct information and knew the overall mission.

This model is also used in progressive and high-performing fire departments. The frontline officer knows the capabilities of their crew, the conditions in their district and the needs of their shift. With the proper leader's intent, context and trust, they can adjust their actions and make informed decisions. Good officers plus the trust of their leadership equals high performance without needing to escalate every issue or add drama.

For distributed leadership to be effective, trust is essential. If people think they'll be punished for making the wrong call, they'll stop making any call. **Harvard Business Review defines psychological safety** as the belief that one will not be embarrassed or punished for speaking up with ideas, questions or concerns. Fire departments that build this kind of trust perform better, learn more quickly and retain top talent longer.

To build that trust, we must educate people about how we work as human beings and train them to lead. This includes providing them with the knowledge and experience to make informed decisions. Scenario-based training, shift-level mentoring and honest feedback sessions go a long way in enhancing performance, as does the simple act of letting someone make a decision and backing them up — even if the outcome isn't perfect.

THE CHAIN OF COMMAND + DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP = SUCCESS

The change away from a strict hierarchy takes time. It requires us to name decision rights, set clear expectations and communicate often. It also requires senior leaders to get comfortable with less control. That's hard for some. However, the reward is an organization that can think, move and learn more quickly.

Don't even think about throwing out the traditions that work. The chain of command still matters. So does accountability. But when we pair those with distributed decision-making, we get stronger leaders at every level. We solve problems before they escalate and create a culture where people feel ownership over the mission.

STEP INTO THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Driver Charged in Crash Where Downed Wires Electrocuted a Delaware County, NY Fire Chief

A grand jury has indicted an Upstate New York man involved in a crash that downed wires that electrocuted a volunteer firefighter this summer. Prosecutors allege the driver was drunk, speeding and using his cell phone. On Friday, Delaware County District Attorney Shawn J. Smith announced an eight-count indictment against Joseph Bellows Jr., 54, of Downsville, stemming from the July 17 crash on Route 30 in Hancock, according to a news release from State Police. If Bellows is convicted of the top charge, second-degree manslaughter, he faces 5 to 15 years in state prison, Smith said in a Friday news conference.

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

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

PA Fire Companies See 'Compact' as Way to Address Manpower, Resource Shortages

Jade Campos – LNP, Lancaster, Pa.

Three Lancaster County fire companies last month announced a plan to join forces in response to the manpower crisis that's affecting volunteer departments across the state.

The Lafayette and Witmer fire companies, both located in East Lampeter Township, along with the Upper Leacock fire company said they plan to form a "fire-rescue compact." Officials said the fire companies will share personnel and resources while also training together, but the departments will remain separate entities. Sam Huber, chief of Upper Leacock Fire Company, said the compact will help preserve the companies' volunteer model. He said a growing list of training requirements is a big reason that volunteer departments are struggling to recruit.

“We just want to formalize that we’re going to work together as a brotherhood and strengthen the operation for all three of us,” Huber said.

But Jeff Keens, assistant chief for Lafayette Fire Company, on Tuesday said the compact still needs to be reviewed by officials from the two East Lampeter fire companies, as well as township officials. Until then, he said, the proposal is suspended.

The compact, if approved, would function similarly to a mutual aid agreement, in which neighboring fire departments join calls outside their district when another fire company needs help.

Huber said the compact is a way to put off hiring professional fire staff for as long as possible, a costly step that many municipalities across the state are facing as volunteerism dwindles in local fire departments.

Some local companies have gone further and consolidated. Reamstown and Smokestown fire companies in East Cocalico Township last year formally merged into one department, and West Hempfield Township and Mountville Borough are in the process of consolidating their departments.

Huber said Upper Leacock’s struggles with recruiting prompted an attempt to merge with another neighboring fire department. After the effort fell through, he asked to join with Witmer and Lafayette to form a compact. Huber said his members are excited for the partnership, though leaders agreed to take “one step at a time” to allow members to build trust.

Attempts to reach officials from Witmer Fire Company were unsuccessful, though Chief Michael Creamer has emphasized the independence of each department.

“No agency stands above or below another; instead, we’re moving forward together with a common purpose and a team-first mindset,” Creamer said in a news release.

East Lampeter Township Manager Tara Hitchens said township leaders were not involved in the talks and were not informed about the agreement’s existence until late August.

Hitchens said the township is not opposed to the partnership but has concerns about existing funding agreements with the two departments within its boundaries, Witmer and Lafayette.

The township plans to donate nearly \$300,000 across the Hand in Hand, Ronks, Lafayette and Witmer fire companies in 2025, according to its budget. The township also reimburses the fire companies for workers compensation insurance (\$47,000 is budgeted for 2025). That funding is not currently planned to be shared with the Upper Leacock Township department.

Hitchens noted that firetrucks and equipment that the township helps pay for would frequently be asked to answer calls in Upper Leacock, posing a resource crunch if crews are needed in East Lampeter at the same time.

Still, she said, the compact could be a meaningful solution to volunteer recruitment woes, but more discussion is needed.

“We need to find creative ways we can work together,” Hitchens said.

Keens, of Lafayette Fire Company, said fire officials plan to discuss the compact with township leaders before it takes effect. He would not provide more information on what details need to be worked out.

Huber said the fire companies have always supported each other through mutual aid agreements, and the compact would not force any major changes. Each company would look out for its community first before it travels to another area, he said.

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

17 Department Consolidation

PINNACLE, N.C. — At the Shoals Volunteer Fire Department in Pinnacle, fire chiefs of various departments met to discuss, among other things, a proposal recently passed by Surry County Commissioners.

After going through their other agenda items, they got to their big question of the night for their chiefs meeting: ‘How will they be affected by Surry County Commissioners’ proposal of consolidating 17 fire protection districts into one?’

County leaders, including the county manager, say the consolidation of fire districts would result in an equal distribution of funds to volunteer fire departments. However, for many of these fire departments, there’s just a lot of unknowns about the proposed district.

Chief Johnny Hiatt of the Franklin Volunteer Fire Department said he's skeptical and believes the existing system already works to meet their needs.

"We all got to do the same job," he said. "They [some stations] have to answer calls 100 times, and other stations are running 800 calls. That's why there's a big difference in the money across the county. You got different populations."

A chief with the Skull Camp Volunteer Fire Department told WXII, he's on the fence about the district. The proposal has potential, but it would take time for the departments to get used to it.

Another firefighter from the Ararat volunteer fire department said it's too early to tell how this will impact them.

However, many of the chiefs at the meeting agreed there are a lot of questions that need to be answered, which is why it was disappointing that county commissioners weren't here.

"We don't have the representatives here," said Hiatt. "The fire marshal wasn't here, the county commissioner wasn't here. That said, they was going to be here. I guess we're kind of holding it for November 3rd."

A public meeting about the proposed county-wide fire district is planned for Nov. 3. Many of the chiefs said they hope to get their questions answered there.

The Reality of Forcible Entry Props

Key Takeaways

- When firefighters conduct forcible entry training on a prop, they risk becoming so familiar with the prop that their ability to deal with real-world doors is inhibited.
- Firefighters' understanding of the features of a Halligan and the positioning of those features in a door's gaps is crucial for forcible entry.
- Firefighter forcible entry training must be reasonable, relevant and realistic.

When members don't practice forcible entry, they easily can lose a step. Further, the fireground isn't a place to relearn skills; it's where members should implement previously covered skills and only deal with variables that are thrown at those skills in the moment. The question is, where and on what type of props do members practice those skills?

Fifteen years ago, forcible entry props were difficult to come by in firehouses. There weren't many departments that had the props, mainly because of the cost of the props. Because of this, many firefighters who have welding and fabrication experience were left to design something in house to teach the mechanics and fundamentals of forcible entry, to just get by. Today, it isn't difficult to find forcible entry props in firehouses, because many prop manufacturers achieved pricing that's more affordable.

The problem today is bigger than the props themselves. *The biggest challenge that we face as it relates to forcible entry training is having become too accustomed to these props, almost to the point where that familiarity inhibits our ability to deal with real-world doors. With these elaborate props, we no longer are trying to understand the mechanics of the tools that we use and the positioning of the tools in the door frames.* Our mission shifted to test the tool's breaking strength or the structural stability of the door props, usually leaving one or the other damaged or broken.

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.

Clifton Park: October 18-19

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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.

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FIREFIGHTER HEALTH & SAFETY; PROTECTING OUR OWN

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LINE OF DUTY FIREFIGHTER DEATHS FOR 2025

In 2024 we experienced 64 LODDs reported nationally.!

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

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

- Two members of the Morehead, Kentucky Fire Department suffered cardiac emergencies while responding to a call to help a patient who was experiencing a medical emergency in downtown Morehead on Thursday night. Lt. Tony Cooper was performing CPR on the patient when he went into sudden cardiac arrest. Cooper was taken to University of Kentucky St. Claire Regional Medical Center, where he was listed in critical condition as of Friday morning, according to the city. Cooper was said to be in the intensive care unit "in a medically induced coma."
- Assistant Fire Chief John Northcutt, who is also the Rowan County, Kentucky coroner, was at the hospital when he began having chest pains and was rushed to the cardiac catheterization lab. The city said Northcutt had two stents placed to repair a blockage in an artery. He was stable as of Friday morning and was said to be recovering in the IC.U alongside Cooper.
- One Champaign, Illinois firefighter and the Arrow Ambulance crewmember have been released after being stabbed at a mental health call while another firefighter remains hospitalized.
- DeKalb Co. Georgia, Master Firefighter Preston Fant was operating at the scene of a large warehouse fire when he became overcome by fire conditions and had to be rescued by fellow firefighters but could not be revived.
- J. Hank Hester, 70 of Priest River, Idaho, a wildland firefighter working at the scene of a wildfire burning since July at the Grand Canyon died Monday after suffering a cardiac emergency, and could not be revived.
- A volunteer firefighter with the Celestine Volunteer Fire Department has died on duty on September 7. According to the fire department, Luke Gehlhausen, 41, responded to a structure fire at 7:15 p.m. in his personal vehicle when he was involved in a single vehicle accident.
- Campton-Thornton, New Hampshire Fire Rescue officials said while fighting a fire on Condo Road, a firefighter working on the second floor of the structure fell through the floor up to their waist, briefly becoming trapped. Their partner declared a mayday, notifying on-scene personnel and incident command of the emergency. Nearby personnel were able to quickly to free the firefighter and help them out of the structure, where care was rendered and is expected to make a full recovery.
- Warren Township Volunteer Fire Department Firefighter Douglas William Thompson died on Sept. 5 after suffering a cardiac event at home within 24 hours of a department training session held on Sept. 4.
- A Woodward County, OK, ambulance was involved in a crash with a semi-truck resulting in the death of a paramedic on board.

FIRE APPARATUS ACCIDENTS FOR THE WEEK

- Seven people were injured after a tractor-trailer crashed into a Carroll County ambulance in Baltimore County Saturday evening, according to the Baltimore County Police Department. Police said the ambulance was responding in emergency mode, with lights and sirens on, when it was struck by the

tractor-trailer *going through the intersection*. Medics treated seven victims on scene, who were then taken by ambulance to local hospitals, while two patients were flown to hospitals by state police.

- A Quinlan (TX) Volunteer Fire Department engine rolled over Tuesday en route to a call, injuring two firefighters, the driver of Engine 62 lost control on a curve, then rolled the unit over several times. The driver was transported via AirEvac and the passenger was transported by ground ambulance, both are in stable condition. As you can imagine, the engine was destroyed.
- A person is dead and multiple others are injured following a crash between a semi-truck and an ambulance in Dewey County, OK. according to the Oklahoma Highway Patrol.
- A train struck a Moline (IL) Fire Department ladder truck that was positioned near the tracks while battling a fire in an outside container at an industrial building Thursday, Sept. 11, 2025, the department said in a press release. The fire truck sustained damage, but no firefighters were injured. The rig was placed back in service after evaluation.

*****When did 'safety' become a four-letter word in the American fire service?***

Eric Valliere

In recent years, “safety” — once a universally positive term — has become a point of contention in the American fire service. Some firefighters now speak of it as if it’s a limitation rather than a lifeline, a word that signals hesitation, bureaucracy and a shift away from the aggressive firefighting they were trained to deliver. But how, when and why did the word “safety” start to feel like a bad word? And how do we shift our collective mindset to one of aggression and safety working together?

By the numbers

FireRescue1’s What Firefighters Want (WFW) survey recently explored this very topic. One of the questions asked of respondents was: Has your department changed its fireground tactics in response to the fire service’s heightened focus on firefighter safety over the past 10 years?

- **66%** said Yes
- **26%** said No

Another question: “Do you believe your department’s enhanced safety focus compromises members’ ability to do the job?”

- **18%** said Yes
- **82%** said No

But the *why* behind those numbers is where the story lies.

COMMON THEMES AROUND COMPROMISED EFFICACY

Many of the comments from the survey (and from ongoing field feedback) share common themes as to why they believe their department’s enhanced safety focus compromises members’ ability to do the job. Here’s what some of the participants had to say:

FROM RISK MANAGEMENT TO RISK AVOIDANCE

Some firefighters feel victims are being put at higher risk because of the focus on *our* safety over *their* survival:

- “We encourage members to prioritize themselves over the mission.”
- “Rescue should be our focus but we’re stuck on safety protocols.”
- “Them before us — not the firefighter’s safety first.”

TACTICAL DELAYS AND MISSED RESCUES

Long safety briefings, mandatory staging and backup line requirements delay water on the fire and search operations:

- “The department’s overemphasis on firefighter safety — particularly strict adherence to policies, checklists, and ‘two-in/two-out’ style rules — delays or prevents aggressive interior operations, which in turn reduces civilian rescue opportunities and overall effectiveness.”
- “Officers default to transitional attack due to lack of understanding.”
- “Strict adherence to 2-in-2-out causes small fires to grow unnecessarily.”

TRAINING LIMITATIONS

Live-fire temperature caps, banned acquired-structure burns and overly risk-averse training erode readiness for real-world conditions:

- “We avoid live burns, realistic training, reps in gear ... and end up more unsafe.”
- “Fog machines don’t prepare individuals for superheated environments.”
- “More focus on RIT and Mayday drills than on search, fire attack, and rescue.”

CULTURAL SHIFTS

Aggressive tactics are equated with recklessness; leaders favor “rule-followers” over tactical problem-solvers:

- “Aggressive firefighters have been vilified.”
- “It has created robots instead of thinking firefighters.”
- “Aggressive firefighters get in trouble more than those who play it safe.”

RESOURCE MISALIGNMENT

Budgets diverted to compliance gear and safety tech instead of functional tools and apparatus:

- “The department is too safety focused... safety is the only thing they focus on.”
- “HQ is over focused on accreditation... they have not kept up with new studies.”

OPERATIONAL INEFFICIENCIES

Repeated pauses, overstaffed command structures and excessive rehab cycles disrupt fireground momentum:

- “The culture has created hesitant officers and firefighters.”
- “Sometimes we are letting the fire burn too long to ensure everything is perfect before extinguishment.”

A SAFETY CULTURE DONE RIGHT

The environment has changed for us exponentially. The products of combustion have changed the burn curve and decreased our time to make good decisions and act! That means our tactical decision-making must change too. But here’s the truth: *Safety should never hinder our ability to save lives — if we do it right.* That’s not to say bad things won’t happen. Firefighting is, by nature, dangerous. But *done right*, safety is a force multiplier, not a brake pedal.

Doing it right starts with the following:

All operating personnel shall work within a standard risk management plan during all emergency operations on every emergency incident. This application will be continuously re assessed at all levels of the incident until all units leave the scene.

- **Green (Go):** We *will* risk our lives, in an educated and calculated manner, to save savable lives.
- **Yellow (proceed with caution):** We *may* risk our lives, in an educated and calculated manner, to save savable property.
- **Red (No/go):** We *will not* risk our lives for lives or property that are already lost.
- **Understanding risk vs. benefit** at every level, from recruits through the fire chief.
- **Breaking down the training/operations disconnect**, ensuring what’s practiced on the drill ground matches what’s expected on the fireground.
- **Leadership buy-in** (at all levels), seeing safety as a *supporting set of eyes*, not a leash.
- **Identifying survivable space** — training members to assess victim viability, read smoke and anticipate hostile fire events. This is the key to understanding and driving your Risk Management Plan. Do we have victims and could they be they alive?
- **Adjusting conditions, not avoiding them** — using skill and decision-making to change the fireground environment in our favor.

Ultimately, it all comes down to making good decisions based on a good size-up of critical factors, implementing an incident action plan with a strategy based on the Risk Management Plan, and continually re-evaluating.

WHAT’S THE REAL GOAL?

If you had three options when saving a life, which would you choose?

1. Save a life and die doing it.
2. Save a life and be critically injured doing it.
3. Save a life and not get injured or killed in the process.

Of course, we’d all choose Option 3. While that’s not always reality, it *can* be the target we train toward. With the right knowledge, tools and mindset, we can push aggressively when it matters — without defaulting to risk avoidance as a substitute for smart risk management.

FINAL THOUGHTS

We in the Fire Department Safety Officers Association (FDSOA) and in the Phoenix Metro Auto-aid System love aggressive firefighting. We believe safety, applied correctly, makes us *better* at it. The enemy isn't the word "safety" — it's when safety is used as an excuse to avoid action rather than as a tool to empower it. In the end, the mission remains unchanged: **We risk a lot to save a lot, and we train hard to do it well.** Safety is part of that, but it must serve the mission, not replace it.

FIRE APPARATUS

Maintenance: Your Key to Longevity[Long read but you are responsible]

William C. Peters

A suburban volunteer fire department in the Midwest maintained a fleet of three engines, one tanker/ tender, and one aerial platform. Many years ago, it suffered the loss of three units when an unexpected tornado made a direct hit on the fire station. The town set up a temporary shelter for the apparatus, purchased one new demonstrator from a manufacturer, and borrowed two spare apparatus from nearby city fire departments.

Based on the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommendation that no apparatus should remain in emergency service past 25 years, the township set up an apparatus replacement plan that would fund the purchase of a new rig every five years. This allowed for ample time to plan the capital budget over a period of time. The department members cooperated by religiously maintaining their fleet both weekly in the station and annually by having the manufacturer perform testing and maintenance.

The plan worked seamlessly until the COVID-19 pandemic. The volunteers were barely able to maintain a reliable response to emergency calls due to members' illness and death, and the town suffered a serious financial crisis. The population declined because of job loss and because residents, unable to pay their mortgages, moved to more affordable housing. That, in turn, caused many businesses along Main Street to shutter, never to open again.

As this all unfolded, fire department members met with elected officials to discuss their annual budget. In it was a request for nearly \$1 million to replace their aerial truck that was approaching the 25-year mark. Officials told them that, unfortunately, the town was unable to bond that amount of money, and the department heads were told to "maintain what you have."

This extended maintenance went on for three more years, with the cost increasing each year. In each budget meeting, the same request was made and the same answer was given. Some exaggerated that the truck was being held together with "duct tape and baling wire," and others pointed out the liability of using an overdue aerial in emergency service.

When the fire department was finally given the green light to spec a replacement, the cost went from \$1 million to more than \$2 million! And the estimated delivery time for the new truck was 3 to 3½ years! It was going to take a lot more duct tape and baling wire to keep it in service for that time period!

While this story is fictitious (with certain historical elements of truth), it is intended to stimulate thought on the importance of apparatus maintenance for both safety and longevity. We have all seen decades-old apparatus drafting and pumping at musters around the country. The key to their longevity is always proper maintenance.

Whether the operator is called the chauffeur, driver, or engineer in your department, he is the first-echelon maintenance person who is responsible for keeping the apparatus in safe condition and ready for response.

IS REFURBISHMENT AN OPTION?

Many times, the exterior of the apparatus in question looks pristine to the untrained eye. It is inevitable that some elected official or local citizen will suggest refurbishment of the current piece of apparatus.

Both NFPA 1900, *Standard for Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Vehicles, Automotive Fire Apparatus, Wildland Fire Apparatus, and Automotive Ambulances*, and NFPA 1910, *Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Refurbishment, Testing, and Retirement of In-Service Emergency Vehicles and Marine Firefighting Vessels*, state in their Annexes: *"It is recommended that apparatus more than 15 years old that have been properly maintained and that are still in serviceable condition be placed in reserve status; be upgraded in accordance with NFPA 1910; and incorporate as many features as possible of the current fire apparatus standard."* They

go on to say, “Apparatus that were not manufactured to the applicable NFPA fire apparatus standards or that are over 25 years old should be replaced.”

Annex material in the NFPA standards is *not part of the requirements* of the document but is for informational purposes only. It is being quoted here to provide a baseline for consideration. In addition to the published requirements, the Annex material provides a wealth of information that can help you in your decision to replace or refurbish your apparatus. *The standard does state that the fire department should consider safety as the primary concern in the retirement of emergency vehicles and that retired emergency vehicles shall not be used for emergency operations.*

If you are considering refurbishment, here are some important questions to answer:

- What is the condition of the current apparatus? Has it had major component failures or accidents that would make spending a significant amount of money on refurbishment prohibitive?
- What is the underlying condition of the frame and other components? How much originally unseen work will need to be done.
- What advancements in design, safety, and technology have improved the efficiency and safety of personnel? How does the apparatus under consideration compare to the current apparatus standards? For instance, does the aerial device meet current standards for tip load, interlocking safety features, or controls that prevent the aerial from operating in an unsafe area?
- What has the apparatus workload been like? A busy engine that responds continuously or over long distances is less likely to be a candidate for refurbishment than a suburban ladder truck that makes infrequent responses.
- Will this be a cost-effective project? Some considerations include comparing the cost per year to operate the refurbished unit vs. a new unit, downtime, maintenance costs, depreciation, reliability, and safety of the users and public.
- *Will the refurbished apparatus provide the level of safety and operational capability of a new apparatus? For example, in 1991, the standard required fully enclosed riding positions for all members. Some refurbishment projects included gates and half-doors that did not meet the standard.*
- What about the gross vehicle weight rating? Older apparatus quite often were close to or exceeded the axle/suspension weight ratings. If you are refurbishing, will you be adding weight or carrying additional equipment? Is it cost effective to change axles and suspension to support the additional weight? In the early 1990s, many departments enclosed the rear canopy seats on their older rigs and found that it overloaded the fairly lightweight front axle.
- Will replacement parts be available for the extended life of the apparatus? Many fire apparatus repair facilities can perform refurbishment on most vehicles, but is the original manufacturer of the apparatus still in business? Engine, driveline, and pump parts might still be available, but proprietary parts such as aerial ladder components might be scarce or not available at all.
- Current Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) emission standards help protect firefighters from dangerous diesel emissions in the fire station. How closely will the refurbished unit comply with these standards?
- Will the refurbished apparatus continue to efficiently and effectively serve the current and anticipated development of the community?

After taking all these questions into consideration, if you decide to proceed with the refurbishment, your first order of business should be to obtain the current edition of NFPA 1910.

Refurbishment can range from a simple cosmetic-type (Level II) to a complete (Level I) refurbishing. Safety should be the primary concern when deciding on refurbishment or replacement.

LEVEL I AND LEVEL II REFURBISHMENT

NFPA 1910 identifies two levels of refurbishment:

Level I. *This is intended to meet the requirements of the applicable chapters of NFPA 1900 by the use of a new chassis frame, driving and crew compartment, and either new components or components from an existing apparatus for the remainder of the apparatus.* It would include meeting the estimated in-service weight of the apparatus and equipment; vehicle stability by testing or lateral acceleration indicator; new chassis frame; and,

if the engine is replaced, certification that the engine meets EPA standards that were in effect at the time of contract signing.

The driving and crew compartment is to be replaced with a new one meeting the applicable chapter of NFPA 1900. This would include the spacing of primary and secondary seating. The original body, pump, and water tank must be inspected and may be reused if they meet the current standard. If the original aerial device is used, it shall meet the requirements of the NFPA standard in effect at the time of the contract signing for the original manufacturer of the apparatus.

Level II. *This is intended to meet the appropriate NFPA automotive fire apparatus standard in effect when the apparatus was originally constructed.* When doing a Level II refurbishment, many components can be upgraded to meet current standards, such as warning light systems, step and scene lighting, and audible warning devices.

APPARATUS REFURBISHING SPECIFICATION FORM

Annex E of NFPA 1910 contains a very detailed set of forms that cover all areas of the apparatus that might be considered for refurbishment. By using this form, it is unlikely that you would overlook important items that you need to address.

When you get into the specific areas of the apparatus, there are checkboxes that provide guidance as to the work that needs to be performed. They are as follows: (1) No Change, (2) Inspect, (3) Replace, (4) Upgrade, and (5) Add New. In most cases, two factors govern the degree of attention each component will receive: the degree of use it has experienced and the budget.

As you might imagine, there is a lot more to apparatus refurbishment than a new paint job and some fancy graphics. If your apparatus is a candidate for refurbishment because of limited use and good maintenance, and you have sufficient funds in the budget, use NFPA 1910 to guide you through the process. Remember, in the end, the result you want is an up-to-date, reliable piece of fire apparatus—not just a pretty-looking old fire truck!

MAINTENANCE

NFPA 1910 defines preventive maintenance as “the act or work of keeping something in proper condition by performing necessary preventive actions in a routine manner to prevent failure or breakdown.” The responsibility of developing and implementing a schedule for the operational checking, inspection, diagnostic checking, and maintenance of the emergency vehicle lies with the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ), which might be the fire chief, board of commissioners, or even the town’s elected officials.

The first level of maintenance is typically performed by the operator. An area of difference between the volunteer and career service involves the person(s) responsible for routine maintenance and fluid checks. In career departments, this will usually change daily when there is a shift change. The off-going chauffeur should report any work that was performed or items needing attention during his shift.

The volunteer fire service usually has a person or team of people responsible for performing maintenance checks, usually weekly. Between checks, the apparatus might respond to numerous calls with several different operators. It is important that there is a way to report apparatus deficiencies that require correction and for each operator be able to place the apparatus off-duty if an unsafe condition exists.

NFPA 1900 says that visual and operational checks shall be done within 24 hours of a run or weekly if no runs are done during the week. To assist in this task, a good example is found in the Daily/Weekly Walk-Around Check for Mobile Fire Emergency Vehicles form in Annex C of NFPA 1910. The form is a simple two pages and covers the important points to examine.

Cab and Driving Compartment

Starting the inspection in the cab, the first thing to check is seats and seat belts. The driver’s seat should be adjusted so the driver is comfortable while seated and belted. The rearview mirrors should be adjusted so they are in a suitable position for the driver.

Inspect the crew seats and check the seat belts. Examine all self-contained breathing apparatus in the cab for proper mounting, full cylinders, and untangled straps. Once again, I stress FULL cylinders. There is no excuse for having a firefighter enter a burning structure with less than a full tank of air.

Check the doors to be sure that they close securely and the door handles and steps are all in good order. Inspect the cab glass and mirrors for cracks or other deficiencies.

Start the engine and check your gauges and controls. This is a good time to operate the wipers and be sure that the horn sounds. Check for excessive steering wheel play.

Air brake systems have several pressure checks that the operator should be familiar with:

- The compressor should be able to build air pressure in the system from 85 to 100 pounds per square inch (psi) in 45 seconds with the engine at full revolutions per minute.
- You should not have an air pressure drop of more than 2 psi in 1 minute for a straight chassis and 3 psi for a combination chassis with the engine stopped and the service brakes released.
- *The leak down rate with the engine stopped and the service brakes applied should not exceed 3 psi in 1 minute in a straight chassis and 4 psi in a combination chassis.*
- The air brake compressor should be able to maintain 80 to 90 psi with the service brakes applied and the engine at idle. Check the parking brake for its ability to hold the apparatus in a stopped position.

With the engine running, check the battery voltage and the charging system. The alternator should be charging in the 13- to 14-volt range. Check all the required Department of Transportation lights, headlights, clearance lights, and marker lights

Activate the warning lights. Some lights are controlled by the position of the parking brake, so check them with the brake applied and with it released.

ENGINE COMPARTMENT

Perform fluid checks of the engine, transmission, and power steering. Some apparatus have an electronic means to detect low levels, but also tilt the cab and remove the dipstick to check for the presence of coolant in the oil or the possible need for an oil change based on the color and consistency of the oil. If you detect contaminated fluid, place the apparatus out of service and refer it for a professional investigation.

The fuel level is another critical area of concern. Often, the rig might make several runs and the driver puts off filling the fuel. NFPA 1900 requires that the apparatus be able to pump at capacity for 2½ hours. Think about receiving an alarm for a large structural fire. Will a half-tank of fuel be enough? Also, when fueling the rig, don't forget to fill the diesel exhaust fluid tank (blue cap).

Check the coolant level at the overflow bottle. The manufacturer will usually have two levels marked "cold" and "hot." If the coolant is low, it can be added in the bottle. If it is not visible, the radiator might need to be topped off. Never open a radiator cap when the coolant is hot. Radiators are equipped with a pressure cap that increases the boiling point of the cooling fluid by 3°F per pound. Releasing the pressure could result in a violent boilover. Also, be sure to use the correct coolant and don't just add water to the radiator.

While checking under the cab, inspect the areas of the frame and suspension that are visible for any signs of wear or damage. Quite often, you can easily see a crack in a leaf spring pack supporting the front axle.

This is also a good opportunity to look for leaks, worn hoses, frayed electrical wires, and bad fan belts.

OUTSIDE VEHICLE WALK-AROUND

One of the first things to observe in a vehicle walk-around is if there are any leaks visible under or around the apparatus. NFPA 1910 classifies leaks in three categories:

- **Class 1 Leakage:** Seepage of liquid indicated by wetness or discoloration, not great enough to form drops.
- **Class 2 Leakage:** Leakage of liquid great enough to form drops but not enough to cause the drops to fall from the item being inspected.
- **Class 3 Leakage:** Leakage of liquid great enough to cause the drops to fall from the item being inspected.

An example of a Class 1 leak is some discoloration on an area around an aerial turntable. This might indicate that a seal or hose is starting to develop a leak. If you investigate further and find the cause of the discoloration is a hose fitting that has a droplet sitting on the connection, that is a Class 2 leak. Finally, if you engage the aerial hydraulic controls and fluid is dripping from a hose connection, that is a Class 3 leak.

It is important that the operator who is inspecting the apparatus be able to determine what class of leak is appearing. *A Class 3 leak of oil, fuel, or coolant from the engine is cause to place the unit out of service.* A

lubrication leak from the transmission, differential, or axle flanges and a Class 3 leak in the aerial hydraulics system are all also cause to place the unit out of service.

When you inspect under the rig, check steering shafts and linkages for unusual wear or play. You can often feel this from the driver's seat when you check steering wheel play.

Check the wheels, lug nuts, and tires for proper pressure and damage. When lug nuts become loose, they cause a dangerous condition of elongated stud holes in the wheels. A good suggestion is to put plastic arrow indicators on the studs. If one or more are out of position, it would indicate loose lug nuts. Wheel cracks are another condition to look for.

An important part of the walk-around inspection is checking the condition of the tires and the tire pressure. Some apparatus are equipped with a tire pressure monitoring system or LED monitoring caps that indicate low pressure. A visual inspection is essential, as many times the inner tire of a dual set will be low on air or flat. The single outer tire was not designed to carry the full weight of the apparatus, which could result in a serious accident if there is a blowout. The cold front and rear tire pressure will be indicated on the label that is required in the cab. Worn tread, bulges, bumps, and cuts in the sidewall all need to be evaluated by a tire professional. Areas of the body to inspect include steps, running boards, and handrails for mounting and security. Make sure compartment doors are securely closed. The hosebed should be covered or secured as required in the standard. Observe the mounting of wheel chocks and aerial ground plates.

FIRE PUMP

Engage the fire pump and check the pump panel gauges. Check the water tank level gauge. The throttle or pressure governor should only activate when the apparatus has the parking brake applied and the pump is engaged properly. Operate the throttle and observe the output pressure.

Check the pump and water tank for leaks. Operate the intake and discharge valves, checking for smooth operation. A stuck valve can result in a serious water hammer at the worst possible time!

Operate the primer. It should be able to produce 22 in. Hg. (mercury) and hold it without losing 10 in. Hg. in five minutes. This sounds technical, but it just means pull a vacuum with the primer and check that it holds half of what you produced in five minutes. If it goes to zero, you have a vacuum leak in the system, which could prevent you from taking suction when you need it.

If you have a two-stage pump, exercise the transfer valve operating between the pressure and volume positions.

Finally, if you have a booster line, operate it and check that the rewind system is operational.

AERIAL DEVICE

If the apparatus is equipped with an aerial device, engage the aerial hydraulic pump to activate the system. Operate the outriggers, then the aerial device in all positions. Check for smooth operation and any sign of a problem. Visibly inspect the aerial structure for any obvious defects. Finally, check the aerial hydraulic fluid level.

RECORDS OF INSPECTIONS

It is extremely important to maintain records on the results of all apparatus inspections, maintenance requests, preventive maintenance, repairs, and testing for the life of the vehicle. In some cases, you can only detect problems by comparing current test results with previous inspections.

Due to the complexity of fire apparatus, the apparatus operator might identify many conditions that require attention. Some repairs can wait until the rig is in for routine preventive maintenance or reported for shop attention when shop personnel are available. For example, a compartment light that is out or a discharge drain that is dripping could wait until the shop has an opening to make the repair. Other conditions, especially those impacting safety, may call for the apparatus to be placed out of service immediately.

NFPA 1910 indicates that it is the responsibility of the AHJ to take the emergency vehicle or defective portion of the vehicle out of service for any deficiencies noted and have it evaluated by a qualified technician. This can involve placing the unit off-duty, keeping it in service with specific limitations, or keeping it in service without limitations.

Exercise caution when keeping a unit on-duty with less than full capabilities. Many years ago, a fire department in Texas had an aerial apparatus equipped with a pump and tank for use on nuisance fires. Over time, the tank

developed a leak and was never replaced. The thought was that the truck always responded with an engine from the same station, which would attack the fire. Unfortunately, one evening that truck arrived first-due at a working house fire with children trapped and the engine that normally responded with them was at another call. As the public called for the crew to stretch a line, there was nothing they could do. The result was tragic. Regardless of the type of department, a large part of apparatus safety relies on a solid maintenance program, beginning with the operator and ending with proper testing and repairs. Be sure to do your part!

****New EPA Engine Standards: What Fire Departments Need to Know About the 2027 Transition**

Chris Mc Loone

The upcoming EPA emissions standards slated for 2027 are set to reshape the landscape of fire apparatus engines. This article discusses what these new guidelines mean for engines, cab and chassis design, and apparatus bodies, drawing on expert insights to help fire service professionals navigate this transition.

WHY ARE THE EPA STANDARDS CHANGING?

For several decades, engine emissions standards have been steadily tightened to reduce pollutants, particularly nitrogen oxides (NOx). *Since 1988, regulations cut NOx emissions by approximately 80%. In 2027, the EPA and California Air Resources Board (CARB) are aligning on a further 80% reduction target within just four years. Such a dramatic drop—from 200 mg to 35 mg of NOx emissions per horsepower-hour—represents a steep technical challenge.*

Chris Crowel, Emergency Vehicles Lead at Cummins, explains the magnitude of this change. The first drop in emissions was costly but achievable. Now, pushing that second 80% reduction requires completely new engine designs. Additionally, these standards extend warranty periods for emissions components from five to ten years and impose stricter compliance requirements. Engines must meet emissions across the entire operating range rather than relying on emissions averaging.

ONE ENGINE MANUFACTURER'S APPROACH

Cummins is responding with a \$2 billion investment in research, development, and manufacturing enhancements to deliver a new generation of fire apparatus engines. Existing engines like the B6.7, L9, X12, and X15 will be replaced with all-new platforms, including the AB7.2 (a 7.2-liter displacement engine) and the X10 (a 10-liter engine replacing the L9 and X12).

Several key technological innovations are driving these new engines:

Dual SCR Catalysts in One Module: To meet the low emissions thresholds, the after-treatment system will feature two Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) catalysts housed together, sometimes called a “snowman” or “infinity” design, increasing reaction surface area while managing packaging constraints.

Advanced After-Treatment Heaters: New heater elements before the Diesel Particulate Filter (DPF) and SCR catalysts will help engines meet emissions standards earlier after startup, but these require significant electrical power. Therefore, Cummins will add a belt-driven 48-volt alternator dedicated to generating this heat.

Clean-Sheet Engine Design: Leveraging computer-aided design (CAD), engineers have optimized material placement, improving cooling, oil flow, and block stiffness. For example, moving the gear train from the front to the rear reduces potential oil leaks and enhances durability.

Weight Management: Despite adding emissions hardware, the new X15 engine system will be roughly weight-neutral compared with current setups. The X10 engine will be about 300 pounds heavier than the L9 but similar to the current X12, which is itself lighter than most mid-bore engines in the market.

Improved Engine Performance: The X15 will maintain familiar horsepower and torque ratings, including the 605-hp/1,850 ft-lb rating popular in fire service applications. The X10 will cover all previous L9 ratings with a new high-torque family offering up to 1,650 ft-lb, close to the X12's current capability.

Environmental Improvements: Moving to canister-style oil and fuel filters, replacing steel housing and elements separately, supports environmental sustainability through reduced waste.

Cummins plans to launch the new X15 as early as April 2026, ahead of the 2027 mandate, giving manufacturers time to prepare. However, the last date to build with the current L9 engine frame will be December 31, 2026.

IMPACT ON CAB AND CHASSIS DESIGN

Jason Witmier, Director of Education and Technology for Safe Fleet, emphasizes that while every OEM will face unique challenges, the anticipated design impacts share some common themes:

Weight Considerations: The good news is that weight changes will be minimal. This is crucial since front steer axle weight limits are often more restrictive than the rear axle, and balance is a constant design concern.

Engine Footprint and Cooling: The new engines and aftertreatment systems, including larger radiators or additional cooling requirements, may slightly enlarge the engine “doghouse” (engine tunnel). Since cab width is heavily regulated by Department of Transportation standards (typically 96 to 102 inches), manufacturers have limited room to expand sideways, so any growth in engine or radiator size affects the available space inside the cab.

Seating and Ergonomics: Potentially lost cab space could slightly impact seating configuration, particularly rear-facing seats located beside the engine tunnel. The NFPA’s minimum requirements for seating width and operability remain protected, so OEMs will have to innovate around those constraints.

Crash Testing Considerations: OEMs are working diligently to avoid significant changes in the doghouse’s structural design, which would trigger costly and time-consuming crash testing.

Witmier observes that OEMs are already integrating prototype engines and computer-aided models to ensure the new powertrains fit into existing frames and doghouses as seamlessly as possible.

Effects on Pump Panels and Body Compartments

Behind the cab, pump panel design and body configurations may face subtle but important changes due to aftertreatment placement and heat management considerations.

Pump Panel Location: Aftertreatment devices typically reside near the pump house, requiring plumbing and panel layouts to accommodate their size and heat output. This may result in relocation of auxiliary suction lines or changes in the size or door configuration of pump panels. While no fundamental changes to pumping capabilities are expected, departments might see slight reconfigurations of access or compartment arrangements.

Body Compartments: For aerials, rescues, or other apparatus without a pump house, the sizable aftertreatment devices may occupy space traditionally reserved for compartments. Consequently, front body compartments might be reduced or reshaped. Given the fire service’s familiarity with fitting equipment efficiently and creatively, these adjustments can be incorporated with minimal disruption.

Space Trade-offs and Wheelbase Length: In some cases, extending the apparatus wheelbase slightly can provide additional space to fit the engine and after-treatment package without sacrificing compartment volume. However, keeping wheelbases short often means stacking systems more tightly, so some compartment space might be sacrificed to accommodate emissions hardware.

PREPARING FOR THE 2027 TRANSITION

The consensus from Cummins and Safe Fleet representatives is clear: fire departments and apparatus manufacturers need to stay informed and proactive. The timeline is set:

- Engines meeting the new EPA standards will be available in early 2026.
- *The deadline for installing older-model engines on new apparatus is effectively March 2027, with only limited exceptions granted by the EPA.*
- *OEMs have been designing around these requirements for more than two years, leveraging CAD models, fuel and thermal testing, and prototype installations.*

Apparatus purchasers should engage early with their manufacturers and ask detailed questions about engine selection, emissions equipment placement, and how these affect cab, chassis, and body design. Since differences between OEMs’ approaches will exist, direct communication ensures that departments avoid surprises.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR FIRE DEPARTMENTS?

The transition to cleaner engines comes with unavoidable costs and engineering complexities. The additional emissions hardware means careful packaging, potential minor sacrifices in compartment space or cab layout, and possible weight distribution adjustments. While no radical design changes are expected, departments should approach apparatus spec’ing with new engine technology in mind. This includes:

- Verifying engine options and emissions compliance timelines with manufacturers.

- Evaluating potential impacts on seating, compartment volume, and pump panel accessibility.
- Considering operational implications, such as heat management around aftertreatment components.
- Planning for potentially extended lead times due to new production requirements.

Advanced computer modeling and prototype testing at the OEM level reduces the risk of last-minute surprises, but the decision to specify and accept new engine models must be deliberate.

Fire departments should monitor developments, engage with suppliers, and prepare their purchasing processes accordingly.

BUILDING CODE ISSUES AND REPORTED FIRE FATALITIES

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

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

Residential sprinklers are a component of the plumbing system, with approximately 1 head per room. The purpose of residential sprinklers is to allow time for the occupants to escape.

Residential sprinklers are designed for quick response and only one at the most two heads may be triggered. With residential sprinklers present, the civilian death rate is 89% LOWER.

Residential sprinklers will assist responding firefighters to do their jobs and save firefighters lives also, especially since everyone is short staffed!!

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

HOME FIRE FATALITIES REPORTED BY THE MEDIA FROM THE US FIRE ADMINISTRATION FOR 2025	
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	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	724
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA/58
	#2 NY/53
	#3 IL /43
Civilian home fire fatalities in 2025: 1460	
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?	

Despite Recent Fires, MA City Council Rebuffs Fire Chief, Kills New Sprinkler Law

Adam Bass-Masslive.com

The Worcester City Council went against the recommendations of its city manager and fire chief by opting out of a state law requiring automatic sprinklers in new or significantly renovated residential buildings with four or more units.

On Tuesday, the public safety committee made a recommendation to lay aside a communication from City Manager Eric D. Batista recommending the adoption of the law.

The council voted 6-4 in favor of the subcommittee's recommendation, choosing not to opt into the law.

Voting against adopting the law were Mayor Joseph Petty, Councilors-at-Large Kathleen Toomey, Morris Bergman and Donna Colorio, District 2 Councilor Candy Mero-Carlson and District 3 Councilor George Russell.

The councilors voted to lay aside the recommendation because they believed the sprinkler law was redundant due to changes to Worcester's building codes.

"The codes meet and exceed the standards," said Toomey, who chairs the Public Safety Committee. "Things have changed here in Worcester, and we now have rules and regulations between the Fire Department and inspectional services that far supersede what this legislation would have.

Voting against the recommendation to kill the adoption of the law were City Council Vice Chair and Councilor-at-Large King, District 1 Councilor Jenny Pacillo, District 4 Councilor Luis Ojeda and District 5 Councilor Etel Haxhiaj.

"The vote leaves many residents without an additional safeguard, particularly those in older four-unit-plus buildings, without the additional layer of protection that sprinklers provide in preventing injury, loss of life, and property damage," King wrote.

Haxhiaj was the one who put forth the order to opt into the state law in December 2024. Haxhiaj's district saw two fires take place at the Washington Heights apartment complex near Mill Street in about six months.

The first fire took place in June 2024, which resulted in the displacement of more than 30 people and a total loss of 36 units.

The second fire happened last month, resulting in the displacement of 28 people and a total loss of 24 apartment units, according to reporting from the Telegram and Gazette.

"The law hasn't changed, the need hasn't changed," Haxhiaj said. "All I am asking is for Worcester to take this step to better protect our residents and our firefighters."

Fire Chief Martin Dyer attended the meeting on Tuesday and told the council that he supports the measure.

"As a fire chief I always support installation of sprinklers wherever possible," he said.

Batista also supported opting into the law in a letter sent to the council in February.

"Automatic fire sprinkler systems have been instrumental in reducing fire fatalities and injuries in Worcester," Batista wrote to the council. "By containing fires in their early stages, these systems also reduce property damage, which helps prevent tenant displacement—an important factor in maintaining stable housing stock."

Most residential fires can be quickly contained or extinguished by a single sprinkler head, which puts out about 12 to 15 gallons of water per minute, according to the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services. An uncontrolled fire in the same environment can double in size every 30 seconds, requiring firefighters to use hundreds or thousands of gallons of water to extinguish it, according to the department.

Nevertheless, the council chose not to move forward on updating the law.

King, who is also running for mayor this year, expressed disappointment with the vote on Facebook on Wednesday morning.

"The vote leaves many residents without an additional safe guard. Particularly, those in older 4 unit plus buildings-without the additional layer of protection that sprinklers provide in preventing injury, loss of life, and property damage," King wrote. "As a community, we must continue to advocate for policies that put safety first and ensure that all Worcester families can feel secure in their homes."

[EDITOR'S NOTE: UNFORTUANTELY, THERE WAS NO MENTION OF HOW SPRINKLERS WILL TAKE A LARGE BURDEN OFF THE FIRST RESPONDERS AND HELPS THEM IN THEIR RESPONSE ESPECIALLY TO MULTI DWELLING FIRES. WHERE ARE THE POLITICIANS WHO VOTED AGAINST SPRINKLERS WHEN THE FIRE OCCURS?]

GREEN TECHNOLOGY & THE FIRE SERVICE

Nothing was reported this week.

STUFF FOR YOUR OFFICERS AND MEMBERS!



ESIP WEBINAR SERIES 2 Webinars Next Week Emergency Services Reputation Management

Responding to emergencies often places our first responders in high stress situations. ***How we handle those situations can make or break our public image and trust.*** Without a positive image and trust, it is almost impossible to complete our mission and serve our communities. With the growing use of social media, now more than ever, many of brothers and sisters are finding themselves on the negative side of the public narrative.

In this session we will discuss sensitivity and de-escalation techniques that can help you navigate a bad situation.

MONDAY September 15th at 7PM AND:

Effective Operational Communication

In the course of our duties, we know that communication is key. How we say things, what we say, and when we say it can make you very effective or get you in trouble. ***This presentation will examine how clear, appropriate, and well-timed communication can make us successful.***

WEDNESDAY September 17th at 7PM



2025 Seminar Series, Short-Handed Firefighting

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

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

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

Cortland (October 28) • **Erie** (October 8) • **Jefferson** (October 15) • **Nassau** (November 5) • **Niagara** (March 12) • **Onondaga** (February 18) • **Orange** (April 29) • **Rensselaer (October 20)** • **Rockland** (April 23) • **St. Lawrence** (March 24) • **Suffolk** (April 2)

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

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

Attend an NVFC Training Near You!

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

ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Coming Attractions:

- **October 2-4, 2025, Thursday - Saturday**, Annual Meeting and Vendor Expo at the Saratoga Hilton and City Center, Saratoga Springs
- **October 8-10, 2026**, Annual Meeting and Vendor Expo at the Saratoga Hilton and City Center, Saratoga Springs



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

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

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Vischer Ferry Fire Department Lobsterama

Get Lobster and support your local fire department. **Saturday October 4th** 750 Grooms Road, Rexford. Order at VFLOBSTERAMA.COM, Starting at \$20. Same day from Maine!

Gansevoort Fire Department Breakfast

The fire company thanks you for your support!! Breakfast will resume on **Sunday September, 21st**.

Clifton Park Fire Department Breakfast

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

Asking for a Friend

Help needed, is there a District/Company that accepts EMS applicants only. What are your requirements for those members that respond to EMS calls only, but are still considered firefighters for VFBL or LOSAP purposes? Contact me at my email address, asking for a friend. If you have a written policy and are willing to share please send to tom@rinaldi1.com, thanks.

GENERAL INTEREST

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

First responders face investigations over social posts about Charlie Kirk's killing

First responders and public employees in several cities have become the subject of investigations or have been placed on leave over social media posts reacting to the fatal shooting of conservative activist Charlie Kirk. Kirk, a close ally of President Donald Trump, was shot and killed on Sept. 10 at a Utah Valley University event. Authorities say a single shot was fired from a rooftop before the gunman escaped. The suspect in Kirk's death was taken into custody on Sept. 12.

Nashville Fire Department

In Nashville, Tenn., [WSMV](#) reported the fire department put an employee on paid administrative leave after a post circulating online appeared to reference Kirk's death. The department said it opened an internal fact-finding review and would not comment further while it's underway.

Prince George's County Police Department

Prince George's County (Md.) Police Department confirmed an internal investigation into an officer's social media post that read, "When you're spewing hate, hate will eventually rear its head and find you...." [WJLA](#) reported the department said **the post may violate general orders governing employee conduct on social media**. There was no immediate indication that the officer's duty status had changed.

New Orleans Fire Department

In New Orleans, [WDSU](#) reported that the fire department said it is investigating after an employee appeared to mock Kirk's killing in a social media comment.

The comment allegedly said in part: "That bullet has a right to be there because it's a gift from God."

Louisiana Attorney General Liz Merle called the remark "unacceptable and disturbing," adding that invoking God in the message "was even more disturbing." Louisiana Rep. Clay Higgins vowed to use congressional authority and pressure on tech platforms to seek lifetime bans for users who mocked Charlie Kirk's killing. In an X post, he praised Kirk and said he'd target posts that "belittled" the assassination.

Toledo Fire & Rescue

Toledo (Ohio) Fire & Rescue is investigating a member over an alleged social media post about Kirk's death, [WTOL](#) reported.

The department did not release details about the post, but comments on its recent social media pages claim a lieutenant wrote it and alleged Kirk was killed because of his political beliefs and affiliations.

A department spokesperson said all fire stations in Toledo were placed on lockdown on Sept. 12 as a precaution following online backlash to the comment. While no direct threats were made to personnel, leadership decided to restrict access to stations to keep members safe.

Maui Police Department

A Maui police officer has been placed on administrative duties and is under internal investigation after allegedly celebrating the assassination of Kirk on social media, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported.

The officer is accused of posting, "Charlie Kirk's demise takes us one step closer to healing this country" in the aftermath of Kirk's fatal shooting.

"We take this matter extremely seriously," Maui Police Chief John Pelletier said. "We hold our employees to the highest standards of the policing profession, and when actions fall short of those standards, they are addressed immediately."

LAUGH OUT LOUD!!

Well I finally reached the wonder years.

Wonder where my car is parked.

Wonder where I left my phone.

Wonder where my glasses are.

Wonder what day it is.

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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

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

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

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

CAFDA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063

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

518-407-5020

EMAIL SECRETARY: SECRETARY@CAFDA.NET

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

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

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

Business Partner Applications Available At: WWW.CAFDA.NET

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

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

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*The Weekly Capital Bulletin is reaching well over **700+** subscribed fire district members and now other members of the fire service on a regular basis. This is a service of CAFDA through the effort of Tom Rinaldi who can be reached at tom@rinaldi1.com for comments and content contributions are always welcome.*

BECOME A MEMBER OF CAFDA!

The Capital Area Association has voted to amend its By-laws to allow both individual and regional or county Fire District Associations to join. The updated By-laws are posted to the CAFDA.NET website.

Individual membership fee will be \$50 annually, fire district association fees will be \$300 annually.

Download THE APPLICATION available on the home page at CAFDA.NET

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION (CAFDA)

Would you like to join Capital Area Fire Districts Association along with 100 members in 14 counties? Individuals, fire district associations, fire protection districts and Village departments are all eligible for membership.

Annual dues (January 1st to December 31st) shall be as follows and shall be based on the annual budget of the Fire District/Organization;

\$0 to \$200,000: \$50

\$200,001 to \$400,000: \$100

\$400,001 to \$600,000: \$200

\$600,001 plus: \$300

Individuals \$50.00 or Other County or Regional Associations \$300 annually.

Business Partners: \$100.00 annual member fee

If You, Your Fire District or Department is not a Member of CAFDA You Can be?

Individuals can be members of CAFDA. The annual membership fee is \$50, which will provide you access to this Bulletin, attendance at meetings and social gatherings. Provides networking with other fire district officials and a source of the constant barrage of information related to today's fire service.

FOR A MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR A BUSINESS PARTNER APPLICATION GO TO THE FOLLOWING LINK:

<https://cafdanet/membership-info/>

CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

SAVE THE DATES!

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

COMMISSIONER TRAINING

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

OTHER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

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

SOCIAL EVENTS

OFFICER INSTALLATION DINNER	Century House, Latham	Saturday, March 8, 2025
ANNUAL DAY AT THE RACES!	Saratoga Race Course, Saratoga Springs	Friday, August 8, 2025

MEETINGS – CLIFTON PARK FIRE DISTRICT & ZOOM

General Membership Meeting	Saturday, January 4, 2025
General Membership Meeting	Thursday, February 13, 2025
General Membership Meeting	Wednesday March 5, 2025
Board of Directors Meeting	Thursday, April 3, 2025
General Membership Meeting	Thursday, May 8, 2025
General Membership Meeting	Thursday, June 12, 2025
Board of Directors Meeting	Thursday, August 14, 2025
General Membership Meeting	Thursday, September 11, 2025
General Membership Meeting	Thursday, October 9, 2025
General Membership Meeting	Thursday, November 13, 2025



FOR MORE REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Website	www.CAFDA.net
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OSHA INFORMATION SUPPLEMENT

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

NEWEST INFORMATION ALWAYS AT THE TOP WITH RED ARROW

By Dave Denniston NVFC OSHA 1910.156 Taskforce Chair

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

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

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

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

Dave Denniston, 1st VP AFDSNY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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