



CAPITAL SHORTS:

- Both the election schedule and the budget development schedule are posted to the web site at www.CAFDA.net
- The Worcester Fire Department in Otsego County is hosting the NYSAFC "Short Handed Fire Fighting" on September 15th. A short drive down I-88.
- 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>

- Since 1892 Hudson Fire has never had a full-time manned engine company. Call firefighters first would come from home to man the apparatus. In 1976 the department hired the first full-time firefighters but the firefighters cross manned several pieces of apparatus. This cross manning continued until to today 8/31/25 as of 8 a.m. Engine 2 at Central Fire Station will have a manned crew 24-7 for the first time in the fire departments history.
- Interested in Hosting Regional HOT training? State Chiefs is now booking dates in 2026! Four Regional HOT courses are available – [Fire Behavior On the Inside](#), [Fire Behavior From the Outside](#), [Flashover](#), and [Beyond the Basics](#). Fire departments and county organizations are invited to submit the [Host Request Form](#) to reserve training.
- 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.

STUFF FOR YOUR BENEFIT, NEED TO KNOW!

WWW.CAFDA.NET

NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING Thursday September 11th, in person or Zoom in. 7PM.

ZOOM LINK FOR THE SEPTEMBER MEETING:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89161905563?pwd=qlfYaqKJLhq1RE935FLnabZ0F0AGVN.1>

Meeting ID: 891 6190 5563

Passcode: 856002

One tap mobile

+1646-558-8656,,89161905563#,,,,*856002# US (New York)

CAFDA FALL EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR, Saturday November 1st at Verdooy 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

CAFDA is happy to announce the dates for Conference '26 in historic Lake George, April 9th, 10th and 11th, 2026 plan on joining us.

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

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

THE LATEST FROM THE STATE CAPITAL

Legislative Commentary

To see what the fire service accomplished during this legislative session go to the following LINK:

<https://cafda.net/what-did-the-fire-service-accomplish-during-the-2025-legislative-session/>

Now that the legislature is out of session, the ScoreCard will be reviewed for activity monthly.

Are You PESH Prepared?

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>

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.

FIRE DISTRICT FINANCES

****What's Driving the Cost of Fire Apparatus?**

MATERIALS

In most fire apparatus procurements, the purchase price is set at contract award and must account for expected input costs over the manufacturing window, which can be affected by the market conditions for labor and materials at the time of order.

Historically, labor and material costs have risen at stable rates that manufacturers could estimate with a reasonable degree of confidence. Recently, however, labor and material prices have been impacted by a confluence of factors, including the Pandemic, inflation, and tariffs, which make it difficult for apparatus manufacturers and component suppliers to reliably project future costs.

Material costing started to impact fire apparatus and component manufacturers in 2018 when tariffs on steel and aluminum were first introduced. The shortage of microchips needed to manufacture vehicles that followed in 2022 further drove up costs and slowed production lines dramatically.

In the case of aluminum—a major material used for apparatus manufacturing—the price has risen from \$1.18/pound in January 2024, to \$1.41/pound in January 2025, and up to \$1.72/pound in June 2025, reflecting an increase of 19.5% over the initial 12 months and more than 45% over the 18-month period. This rapid rise in aluminum pricing represented at the far right of Graph 1 is largely a result of recently announced aluminum tariffs, and the full impact of this increase has not yet worked its way into the market. The United States produces less than 1% of the primary aluminum produced worldwide, so it relies on imports, which means the tariffs will continue to influence aluminum costs.

Steel is the other commonly used material for manufacturing fire apparatus and components, and the United States imports approximately 25% of the steel used here. Tariffs on steel also add to manufacturing costs.

REGULATION

The most recent round of EPA regulations mandated changes to engines manufactured after January 1, 2027.

These changes had impacts to not only fire apparatus design, but also pricing. Truck manufacturers had to take into account the additional costs of not only the new engine, but also the engineering costs associated with modifying truck chassis and bodies to accommodate the new engine designs and systems. Individually, truck manufacturers had to forecast the increased costs years before the new engines became mandated. ***On a per truck basis, the impact of 2027 emissions engines is estimated to be significantly greater than \$100,000 per truck.***

DEMAND SURGE

According to data collected by the Fire Apparatus Manufacturers' Association (FAMA), orders for new mainline fire trucks in the United States increased approximately 43% (to 5,946) from 2021-2023 compared with average demand (4,169) during the decade prior.

This surge of new orders created an unprecedented order volume that translated to increased lead times, resulting in manufacturers buffering their costing estimates to account for future uncertainty around labor, material, and component pricing.

CUSTOMIZATION COMPLEXITIES

The fire truck manufacturing process is labor-intensive and requires highly skilled workers to produce vehicles. *Most mainline fire trucks take well over a thousand—if not several thousand—skilled labor hours to produce, and even the simplest trucks take many hundreds of labor hours to build.*

Fire apparatus are built to detailed specifications developed over months—sometimes years—to meet local operational needs. The demands of these final specifications require fire truck manufacturers to be flexible and provide multiple options for pumps, tanks, lights, seats, doors, and control systems to meet fire departments' needs, which adds engineering, fabrication, and manufacturing time that also affect price.

In an industry where customization is standard, manufacturers face the challenge of spreading out the high costs of design and production over a relatively small number of vehicles, making price increases unavoidable because of the high degree of customization per truck and the low volume of trucks sold.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Some argue that industry consolidation has driven up prices. However, the number of distinct apparatus builders remains at historic levels, ensuring many choices for end users across North America. *According to FAMA, approximately 55 member companies manufacture fire apparatus, including 45 standalone, independent companies.*

[*“Understanding Today’s Fire Apparatus Lead Times”*](#) (July 2025) detailed factors impacting current lead times, which are long by historical standards. This has led to uncertainty regarding final costing. Ultimately, this uncertainty affects purchase prices. When lead times stretch, it becomes even more difficult to project labor and material costs with any degree of certainty. One method available to manufacturers to help deal with the uncertainty is to add a strategic buffer to cover future increases. A buffer is typically based on recent inflation increases and forecasts by government and business economists. When the industry experiences longer lead times like it is now, the risk is higher because of the uncertainty, and prices move higher to mitigate the risk. Tariffs, again, can significantly impact the cost of fire apparatus, and manufacturers carry almost all this type of risk as well as potentially higher inflation similar to what the market has experienced in the past. Tariffs and inflationary risks also add to the uncertainty.

SOLUTIONS

Fire departments can use several strategies to help mitigate costs:

1. **Tie contracts to commodity indices:** One solution is to include a contract provision that ties the apparatus cost to a commodity index. For example, if the price of aluminum increased or decreased beyond a certain threshold, the price of the apparatus would be adjusted accordingly. This arrangement provides visibility against an accepted market metric and an adjustment method that protects both the buyer and the seller.
2. **Apply customization where it counts:** Asking what the “needs” are vs. the “wants” and working with manufacturers to identify high-cost or long-lead-time specifications can lead to less costly truck pricing. Although it is understandable that many fire departments spec trucks to meet specific needs, this approach can result in a truck design and configuration that increases design and manufacturing complexity, lead time, and ultimately cost. Working with manufacturers to identify which features have more impact on cost and/or lead times may help optimize the fire truck specifications.
3. **Consider stock or demo fire apparatus or commercial chassis instead of custom:** Specifying a commercial chassis instead of a custom chassis or purchasing a demo or stock truck may allow a department to secure a rig with a shorter lead time and at a more attractive price. Stock or demo trucks typically include common elements plus some “showcase” features, but because they have already been built, the manufacturers know their costs and don’t have to protect against future unknown factors.
4. **Consider preowned:** The preowned truck market is another option for departments that don’t have high call volumes or unique requirements. Although not appropriate for all departments, it represents an avenue to consider when conditions merit.

The key to better outcomes is collaboration. Departments and manufacturers must continue to work hand in hand to balance functionality, affordability and deliverability.

Local Government and School Accountability Contact Information:

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STEP INTO THE CHIEF’S OFFICE

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

Robert Ulrich

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

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

ANOTHER ANGLE

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

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROBLEMS

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

NONEMERGENCY PROBLEMS

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

GUARDRAILS WITH SUPPORT

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

FORCE MAGNIFICATION AND OWNERSHIP

These two principles can help everyone from the company level on up. Lifted from the military of “force multiplier,” “force magnification” refers to the application of force to make everyone more effective on

achieving goals on the battlefield. This is accomplished when leaders start to get their personnel engaged and working together to drive projects.

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

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

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

CHALLENGES YOU MAY HAVE AS THE LEADER

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

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

THE KEYS TO THE CAR

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

STEP INTO THE ATTORNEY’S OFFICE

Washington, Fire District Faces Lawsuit Over Hose Cap Injury

Jessie Stensland

A Langley man who was driving a pickup truck on South Whidbey last summer suffered a skull fracture and injuries to his eye when a metal hose cap flew off a fire engine, went through his windshield and struck him in the face, according to a court document.

The man, Robert Hodges, and his wife filed a lawsuit earlier this year against South Whidbey Fire/EMS, claiming negligence and asking for economic and non-economic damages. The attorney Karen Koehler of Seattle originally filed the lawsuit in Snohomish County, but it was transferred to Island County Superior Court this week.

Fire Chief Nick Walsh said he couldn't comment on ongoing litigation. The fire department is insured by Enduris.

The complaint for damages states that Hodges and his wife were southbound on Highway 525 in a Ford pickup when an object shattered the windshield and struck him in the eye. Hodges managed to pull to the side of the road "in a state of distress" and waved down a passerby to call 911.

Hodges retrieved the object that struck him, which was identified as a hose cap. He handed the object to paramedics who arrived at the scene.

The paramedics transported Hodges to WhidbeyHealth Medical Center. Doctors determined that the injuries were not life-threatening but were serious enough to warrant treatment at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle.

The lawsuit states that Hodges was informed that the hose cap came off a South Whidbey fire truck that was northbound on the highway at the time of the incident. The fire chief called Hodges' wife and admitted responsibility but did not disclose the name of the person who made the mistake, the claim alleges. As a result, the lawsuit names "John Doe" firefighter as a defendant along with the fire district.

According to the lawsuit, doctors determined that Hodges suffered a complex orbital fracture with fracture lines extending into his upper jaw and frontal sinuses. He suffered serious injuries to his left eye, including the dislocation of the lens, herniation of the orbital fat and inferior rectus muscle and a fracture of the infraorbital canal.

The eye injuries resulted in pain, suffering and long-term impairment of his ability to see, the lawsuit states.

The lawsuit also claims that Hodges suffers from ongoing stress, anxiety, mental anguish, difficulty sleeping and emotional trauma because of the incident.

The lawsuit alleges that the fire district breached its duty of care by failing to secure the hose cap.

Former Marbletown Fire Chief Sentenced for \$101K Theft From the Department

State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli, Wayne County District Attorney Christine Callanan and New York State Police Superintendent Steven G. James announced that William Storrs, the former chief and treasurer of the Marbletown Volunteer Fire Department, was sentenced to four months of weekends in the Wayne County Jail and five years of probation for stealing more than \$101,000 from the department. He was also ordered to pay a total of \$101,394.50 in restitution.

DiNapoli's office and the New York State Police launched a joint investigation into the Marbletown Fire Department in 2024, looking into allegations of theft. They found Storrs used his position as treasurer and then later as chief to steal \$101,000 over four years. From January 2020 to July 2024, he made numerous personal purchases with the fire department's debit cards and made direct payments from the department's bank accounts to his personal accounts. He also made payments to his wife's credit card and purchased items from various retailers.

The theft was discovered when a member of the fire department attempted to make a purchase with the department's debit card and it was declined due to lack of funds. Fire department officials then reported the unauthorized activity to the State Police who partnered with DiNapoli's office. In July 2024, Storrs was replaced as chief and suspended from the fire department.

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

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

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Champlain Fire District Moves into New Station

The future home of the Champlain Fire District in Northern New York is nearing completion after a nearly 20-year wait. For the first time in nearly 40 years, volunteer firefighters in Champlain are getting ready to move into a new home. "A year of construction, 20-plus years of planning. It is very surreal, actually. It is hard to believe it is actually here," said Chris Trombley, the commissioner of the Champlain Fire District. Voters approved the \$6.9 million project back in 2023. Construction started on it last May. Congratulations to the District and the Fire Company.

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

Cause of Fire That Destroyed FD Station, Vehicles Revealed

It was confirmed in the official report by the Kentucky State Fire Marshal's office that the cause of the fire at Vine Grove Station No. 3 was the result of a lightning strike.

We are currently working with our insurance companies and will hopefully have all things settled in the next few weeks. With that being said, we don't want to wait to start working on replacing the Santa Truck items (all lights, sound board and speakers, bubble machines). These items were not covered by our insurance. If you would like to make a financial contribution to helping with this effort, you can do so at Vine Grove City Hall. Make sure you designate this donation to The Santa Truck fund. Thank you all for your support during this difficult time.

West Allis considers merger with Wauwatosa Fire Department

Emily Pofahl

West Allis and Wauwatosa, Wisconsin are considering merging their fire departments **following a study that projects significant financial savings and potential improvements in response times**. West Allis city officials held a public information session Tuesday, where residents could learn more about the merger before the common council meeting Tuesday night.

City of West Allis officials Tuesday said it's getting more and more expensive to finance a fire department on its own.

We've had to cut costs everywhere else to maintain fire coverage. We're at the point now where there's not much left to cut," said city attorney Kail Decker.

A 40-page study commissioned by both cities suggests that merging the departments could save each city at least \$7 million over five years. The study proposes a single fire chief and a streamlined command structure, reducing personnel through attrition without planned layoffs. Station houses would remain open, but savings could be achieved by selling redundant equipment.

The study also suggests considering merging dispatch operations, and says response times are not likely to be slower after the merge.

We've been trying to do more with less, and now we're just getting to the point where this is the next option for us," said West Allis's interim fire chief Jason Schaak.

Because of state law, the merger means both cities could raise property taxes to fund the joint department in the future, but West Allis officials say the potential hikes would not come immediately.

"Joint fire agencies give you an opportunity to do a better job of raising funds," said a consultant with McMahon Associates, who spoke at the meeting. "Cost increases are going to continue. A joint fire department can better absorb those increases, and that's really what we're talking about."

The timeline laid out in the study said the merger could take place in one to three years. In the meeting Tuesday, the West Allis Common Council voted to start making an implementation plan. The proposal also has to pass Wauwatosa's council. Their first hearing on the proposal is next week.

If both councils don't agree, the merger would not move forward.

As Fire Departments Shed Volunteers or Close, CT Considers Options

Mary Ellen Godin, The Hour, Norwalk, Conn.

The South Meriden Volunteer Fire Department also known as Engine Co. 6 would have needed a Herculean effort to survive, city officials said.

The 117-year-old department had 40 active volunteers about 30 years ago in its heyday, but the numbers have continued to dwindle. When a former fire chief told the department a year ago it was disbanding Dec. 31, 2024, the department lost another six volunteers.

This spring, the city eliminated funding for the department from its budget, but Mayor Kevin Scarpati who advocated to give the department a chance, threatened a veto.

To remain viable, the five remaining active volunteers and their chief would have to train with the city's career department, and bolster their recruit numbers in each budget cycle. After spending the summer months discussing ways to meet the criteria, the volunteers and their chief agreed to disband at the end.

"They didn't want to fight with the unknown," Scarpati said.

The end of Meriden's volunteer fire department adds to the numbers of dwindling volunteer departments in the state and new ways of looking at fire protection.

Comptroller Sean Scanlon, the grandson of a decorated firefighter and keeper of the pensions, undertook a study reflecting the current state of volunteer departments in the state and where it can go from here.

Scanlon's study concluded the state lost 64% of its volunteer force from 2017 to 2025 leading to discussions and the formulation of a plan for statewide fire safety at a time when firefighters are battling some of its deadliest fires, floods and rescues.

Colchester Fire Chief Steve Hoffman, who works with the state's many rural departments, was surprised Meriden still had a volunteer department given its size and budget.

"A lot of these smaller towns in Connecticut and Litchfield County, need help with that (recruitment) issue," Hoffman said.

Meriden will continue to host a career firefighting company in the Camp Street firehouse to serve the city and assist surrounding communities.

"They are a small snapshot of the hundreds that have served our community in a volunteer capacity since 1908. For nearly 117 years, dedicated men and women across our community and beyond have volunteered their service for the sacrifice and safety of others," Scarpati said. "This is a time for us to reflect on all the great work, the lives that they have saved."

The state has 200 fire departments as of May 1. Groton has the most with 11, followed by Greenwich with eight, Danbury with seven, and Stamford and Killingly with six. A disproportionately high number of fire departments are in Fairfield County, southeastern New London County and northeastern Windham County, according to the report.

Volunteer departments make up 61% of fire departments in Connecticut.

Municipal career departments with staff that receive salaried/wage compensation make up the smallest grouping at 17% and combination departments with both volunteer and career staff account for 22% of the departments, according to the report. Combination departments either have a majority volunteer force that is augmented by a few full-time personnel or mainly have career firefighters with a volunteer division.

There are also state departments outside of this breakdown that are career staffed and operated under a state entity.

"The data collected shows that fewer people are pursuing firefighting as a career and demographic shifts have led to a significant decrease in volunteers across the state," the report states.

Firefighting also comes with a host of long-term health risks. A study conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health found that firefighters have a 14 to 20% higher risk for a host of cancers depending on the type.

"The risks, combined with the slow erosion of health and pension benefits due to budget constraints in many communities may be deterring those interested in pursuing firefighting," the report states. "As a result, Connecticut is facing a serious shortage of firefighters especially in rural communities. Pomfret, for example, has seen an over 50% drop in their volunteers."

On the other side of the state, the Torrington Volunteer Fire Department that serves Torrington closed on April 1 and North Haven closed two departments.

“This has forced departments in the area to draft new coverage plans and further stretch existing fire sources thin,” the report stated.

Volunteer departments are the predominant types seen in rural areas with 88 of Connecticut’s 169 municipalities only having volunteer departments.

Municipalities with only career departments are generally in the state’s largest cities and their immediate suburbs, with only 15 municipalities falling into this category.

The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection is drafting a strategic plan for the fire service in Connecticut but needs additional funding to be completed. It features comprehensive recommendations and a roadmap for the future of the fire service.

“We are trying to gather as much information as we can,” Hoffman said. “There has been no direction. We need to ask what we can do to increase volunteer staffing or augmenting staff.”

Another trend among departments is to mix volunteers with career firefighters. But there are also budget constraints in smaller towns where paying for career firefighters is a hardship.

“Regionalization, it’s kind of a dirty word,” Hoffman said.” But the sharing of resources to limit costs to municipalities and respond is also being done in places like Litchfield County.”

Hoffman said the health risks have not impacted recruitment but the lack of time and money are the two biggest factors for the drop off in numbers, and the study will help address potential solutions, including introducing firefighting into public high schools as a possible career choice.

While it compiles more information, demographics and emergency call data, the DPSS has made several recommendations.

Among them is creating and maintaining a database of fire chiefs’ contact information and creating a map to show the coverage area of each department. Officials said that not having the exact coverage area can hamper recruitment and retention efforts.

Another recommendation is to regularly conduct a firefighter census to determine how many firefighters there are in Connecticut, which will give leaders and policymakers the most current information.

“This will help us provide direction,” Hoffman said.

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

Stay and Exit Surveys

A critical piece of fire or EMS department retention is to know why your members stay and why they leave, and then making adjustments where possible to address barriers or obstacles to retention. An important component to this is to survey your members. This page has information and sample documents for conducting Stay and Exit Surveys.

Conducting Stay & Exit Surveys: A Brief Overview

Learn more about why these surveys are important and how to utilize them to their fullest benefit.

Stay Survey – [PDF](#) and [Fillable PDF](#)

Conduct a Stay Survey among your membership at set intervals to identify ways in which the department can better support and retain members.

Exit Survey – [PDF](#) and [Fillable PDF](#)

Conduct an Exit Survey when a member leaves to identify valuable information to improve future retention.

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

Corning: October 25-26

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

REGISTER NOW AT THIS LINK:

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

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH & SAFETY; PROTECTING OUR OWN

58

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!

- A man started shooting at firefighters responding to a call for service in rural North Carolina, sending one to a trauma center, authorities said. The firefighter was flown via helicopter to a trauma center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for treatment of a leg wound.
 - The nine firefighters who were taken to a hospital Saturday night as they fought a fire at a two-story McKinney, Texas home have been treated and released. Nine firefighters were taken to hospitals with injuries ranging from smoke inhalation to overexertion, the department said.
 - A two-alarm house fire in Fort Worth's Historic Southside neighborhood injured two firefighters, trapping one in the garage when the structure collapsed, but was rescued and flown to Parkland Health in Dallas. The trapped firefighter sustained multiple injuries, including burns, and is currently in stable condition in the burn unit.
 - Four Pittsburgh firefighters were hospitalized after a ladder they were on contacted power lines. Four firefighters were transported to Mercy Hospital and are in stable condition.
-

FIRE APPARATUS ACCIDENTS FOR THE WEEK

- Brighton Area Fire Authority was providing advanced warning of a two-vehicle rollover crash on westbound I-96 near U.S. 23 in Brighton Township when a Kia struck a fire truck in the median shoulder. The fire truck had its emergency lights activated at the time of the crash, BAFA officials said in a statement on Facebook. A firefighter was inside the truck when it was struck. First responders were pulled off the original crash to care for the Kia driver and firefighter, who were transported to Ann Arbor hospitals with non-life-threatening injuries.
 - A deputy fire chief was seriously injured Friday night in a head-on crash while responding to a call. Dunn, North Carolina Emergency Services Deputy Chief Rodney Eason was responding to a fire when a pickup truck crossed the center line and hit his vehicle.
 - While attempting to transport a car crash victim to a hospital on Wednesday morning, a Los Angeles Fire Department ambulance was struck by another vehicle, authorities said. When a battalion chief arrived at the scene to investigate the crash, they were involved in another collision at the same intersection. No Fire Department personnel were injured in either collision.
-

FIRE APPARATUS

Apparatus Purchasing: Pump Panel Labels and Gauges

Bill Adams

When NFPA 1900 says a requirement “shall be” provided, my interpretation is it is cast in concrete and not subject to negotiation. If an NFPA requirement is not readily understandable, it is fair game for inquiry and analysis by readers. There are valid caveats to some “shall be” requirements. An example is when requirements are elucidated by stating they “shall be approximately” or “shall be no less than” whatever is defined. Defining or measuring “approximately” and “no less than” is solely in the eyes of the beholder.

NFPA 1900 defines minimum standards for new fire apparatus. It does not prohibit a purchaser from exceeding a requirement. As long as the minimum requirement is maintained, you should be able to add whatever you want.

When NFPA 1900 requires controls and labels/gauges inside commercial and custom fire apparatus cabs, it is unknown if they have to meet any Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) or the myriad state Department of Transportation requirements in regard to size and readability. It is a valid question to ask vendors.

Except for the “shall be” detailed requirements for specific labels/gauges, it appears the NFPA has recognized that the importance and criterion for other labels/ gauges are the purchaser’s choice. That is an optimistic and welcomed presumption. Phraseology is a fancy term describing the actual words on a label. NFPA 1900 is explicit in defining words that shall be used on some controls. Again, it is the purchaser’s choice for all others. A pessimistic viewpoint is that manufacturers and their dealers might claim that their own versions or interpretations of NFPA-compliant labels and gauges are regulatory requirements to which purchasers should comply. Doing so is alarming and borderline misleading. Another scenario is when writers and commentators in the fire service and industry take a simple subject and blow it out of the water (bloviate). Beware of information overload.

Caution: Every mandatory requirement is not necessarily in print in NFPA 1900. Chapter 2–Referenced Publications states: “The documents or portions thereof listed in this chapter are referenced within this standard and shall be considered part of the requirements of this document.” Chapter 2 references almost 140 documents from 22 entities.

Noteworthy ones concerning labels include TC008 Graphic Symbols for Automotive Fire Apparatus and TC010 Standard Product Safety Sign Catalog for Automotive Fire Apparatus from the Fire Apparatus Manufacturers’ Association (FAMA). Underwriters Laboratories UL 969, Standard for Marking and Labeling Systems is also listed.

SIZES AND SNELLEN

Pump panels should be ergonomically designed to enable quick and efficient operation for operators with various levels of expertise and experience. Simply put, it should be easy to find stuff—especially in times of stress. NFPA 1900 requires a minimum size (height only) for lettering and numerals in specific areas. It is reasonable to inquire how those sizes were established. Online research and manufacturers’ brochures, literature, and specifications were unhelpful. Asking questions some people do not want to or cannot answer produced similar results.

The Snellen eye chart tests or variations of it are used by the Department of Motor Vehicles and eye doctors (ophthalmologists, optometrists, opticians, etc.) to measure the ability to discern details at certain distances. Supposedly, the average person with normal 20/20 vision should be able to read an 8.75-mm (about a 5/16-inch) letter at 20 feet. Snellen charts usually have black letters on a white background. Perhaps the NFPA and apparatus manufacturers have such a litmus test.

“SHALL BE” REQUIREMENTS

Following these direct quotations from NFPA 1900 is commentary that might address purchasers’ queries such as: Why did they do that? Why didn’t they do that? Can I do that? Do I have to do that?

Section 13.9 Pump Operator’s Panel under 13.9.1* says: “Each pump control, gauge, and other instrument necessary to operate the pump shall be located on a panel known as the operator’s panel and shall be marked with a label as to its function.” It just says they must be labeled for function. It is presumed the label must denote what is being functioned!

Except for explicitly identified controls and gauges, it does not mandate how to label the others. It does not say they have to be numbered. It does not say they must be color-coded. Nor does it mandate what verbiage must be used. And when referring to controls and gauges for hose connections, it does not require labels to denote the connections' physical locations or what is connected to them. That is the fire department's prerogative.

Do what is operationally functional for your fire department and not someone else's or because a vendor claims it is a required standard. Choose wisely. Whether actual hose connections and the hosebeds themselves have to be labeled is also the purchaser's choice—albeit one that should be carefully considered. Avoid overcrowding the pump panel.

Section 13.10.2.1.2* says “ ‘Throttle Ready’ and ‘OK to Pump’ indicators shall be on the pump panel.” Presumably, indicators are lights. Despite the importance of knowing if the pump is engaged, NFPA 1900 does not mandate a color or size for the light and presumptive label.

MASTER GAUGES

Under Section 13.12.2 Master Pump Intake and Discharge Pressure Gauges, Section 13.12.2.1.4 says: “Pressure gauges shall be marked with labels that read ‘Pump Intake’ for the intake pressure gauge and ‘Pump Discharge’ for the discharge pressure gauge.” Wording is specific; however, not everyone adheres to that requirement. Possibly confusing to readers and specification writers is when Section 13.12.2 describes the specific wording, the terms master pump intake, discharge pressure, pump intake, intake pressure, and pump discharge can be found. Recent deliveries showed master gauges labeled Master Intake, Intake Pressure, Vacuum, Master Discharge, Discharge Pressure, and Pressure. Some departments complying with NFPA's verbiage for master gauges also add their own (photos 1, 2, and 3). Older rigs also used various terminology (photos 8 and 10).

Section 13.12.2.2.5 says: “Numerals for master gauges shall be a minimum of 0.25 in. (6.4 mm) high.” When digital master gauges are used, Section 13.12.2.3.1 says: “Numerals shall be at least 0.5 inches (12.7 mm) high.” It doesn't say why digital numerals have to be twice the size of printed numerals.

NFPA 1900 does not specify the size (viewing area) of gauges. Section 13.12.2.1 says, “There shall be at least a 1-inch (25-mm) diameter difference in viewing area between the master gauges and the individual pressure gauges, with the master gauges being the larger.”

Manufacturers offer various gauge sizes (diameters) ranging from 2½ inches to 6 inches. Probably the easiest to read are the 6-inch master and 4- or 4½-inch individual line gauges. The smallest I've seen are 2½-inch line gauges and 4- or 4½-inch master gauges, which are popular with the compact (purposely squashed in size) pump panels. It is unknown if manufacturers will provide larger numerals and custom pressure increment numbers on the larger gauges. It seems logical, as they do offer gauges with their custom logos on the faces.

DISCHARGE GAUGES

Easy-to-read discharge pressure gauges (aka line gauges) for individual discharge outlets are extremely important for the safety of firefighters who could be maneuvering hoselines on slippery ground surfaces, above grade, below grade, or clinging to ladders.

Section 13.12.3.1 says, “A pressure gauge shall be provided for each discharge outlet 1½ inches (38 mm) or larger in size and shall be marked with a label to indicate the outlet to which it is connected.” Section 13.12.3.3 says a gauge bezel must be within 6 inches of the centerline of its valve control. Some manufacturers provide a single label between them (photos 4 and 10). Others label everything. Some offer a common bezel encompassing the gauge, control, and labels in a single housing (photo 13). Use caution: If purchasers do not specify exactly how controls and gauge/labels are laid out, manufacturers are free to provide whatever they choose.

Section 13.12.3.7.1 says, “Numerals for gauges shall be a minimum of 5/32 inch (4 mm) high.” How close to a gauge does an average person have to be to read a 5/32-inch number? When digital pressure gauges are used, Section 13.12.3.8.1 says, “The digits shall be at least ¼ inch (6.4 mm) high.” I don't know how the NFPA came up with the measurements or why digital numerals have to be 60% larger than those on regular gauges.

Section 13.12.3.7.2 says there shall be graduation lines showing at least every 10 psi (50 kPa) with major and intermediate lines emphasized and figures at least every 100 psi (500 kPa). Some small 2½-inch gauges show the numbers 0, 100, 200, 300, and 400. The ones showing up to 600 psi can get crowded, which could prove

challenging for pump operators to quickly compensate for differences in floor elevations or an urgent radio call to “cut it back 25 pounds.”

Large discharge gauges with numbers indicating every 50 psi or even 25 psi might allow quicker and more accurate adjustments by the pump operator. Considering pump operators are seldom glued to the pump panel, it might be advantageous to have larger gauges with the easily readable numerals.

PUMP PANEL OVERLOAD

There is no advocating that pump panels be stripped of required labels and gauges. Fire departments are not encouraged to return to the “good old days” of only having three gauges on a panel (photo 6). However, readers are urged to consider simplifying panels. Labels/ gauges can be a good start. Use common sense.

The NFPA mandates data plates as well as numerous FAMA safety signs on the panel. Manufacturers add pump data plates plus instructions for foam systems, light towers, etc. Look at the number of controls from outsourced manufacturers that find enough room on their product to advertise their names (photo 13).

Purchasers may add their own logos plus labels of the entity that sold and/ or services the rig and often fire-department-supplied friction loss charts. On side-mount rigs, consider moving some of the warnings signs and advertising to the exterior rear of the cab or the front of the side compartments facing the pump panel.

COLOR-CODING

A fictitious radio transmission: “Command to Engine 1 driver—urgent. Shut down the green line!” The answer: “Engine 1 driver to Command, okay chief, uh which one: the dark green, light green, or mint green one?” While far-fetched and highly unlikely, the scenario illustrates how carried away color-coding can get.

Annex A-A13.9.1 says: “Many fire departments have found it useful to color-code the labels that identify the various discharge and intake controls. While this process can simplify pump operations, it can also create confusion if a pattern is not followed on all apparatus in the department. For standardization, the color-coding scheme in Table A.13.9.1 is recommended for all new apparatus labels.” Table A.13.9.1 recommends 11 colors for discharges and one for inlets.

Adding to the confusion, one manufacturer of labels for the fire service offers 23 colors: black, rust, yellow, lime, beige, red, red and white, gray, tan, brown, silver, light purple, orange, olive, blue, white, white, light blue, pink, burgundy, green, light green, and mint green. Another manufacturer of fire service labels offers 45 colors—too many to list. The Boston (MA) Fire Department has its own version of color-coding labels, using only two black labels with white letters for controls bringing water in, white labels with black letters for water going out, plus white labels with red lettering for foam-capable discharges.

I would not recommend telling manufacturers that since 1903, Crayola has introduced more than 200 crayon colors. The vendors might offer all of them as color-coding options on your next purchase.

Color-coding is presumably useful to quickly identify controls by making them conspicuous to the eye and readily noticeable. It is possible conspicuousness may be negated by having numerous tags of the same color intermixed with multiple tags of other colors—some even in similar shades in a small workplace. Then add fire hose color-coded per hose diameter, or discharge, or per apparatus, or even per department.

If purchasers believe color-coding is an important or a necessary feature for pump operations, there are multiple levels of doing so (photo 4). Photo 10 shows the same concept was used in 1987 before it was recommended. Remember, you are designing a functional fire truck, not a kaleidoscope or a psychedelic landscape. It may be overkill to provide a number for each discharge along with a unique color scheme, where the discharge is located, and possibly with wording telling what hose is connected to it and how long it is.

Again, regardless of what a vendor or manufacturer may claim, color-coding is not mandatory. Just because it may be their standard, it does not have to be yours. Look at what other departments, big and small, are doing.

BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

“Apparatus Purchasing: Boston’s Pumpers” (June 2019) describes an order to replace 23 of the almost three dozen pumpers for the Boston Fire Department. From it, “Older pump panel features that had worked well were incorporated into the 2016 design specification to create a user-friendly layout to enhance fireground operations. The committee examined all the physical tasks done by the motor pump operator (MPO) and designed the panel so movements are made in a logical and natural sequence where the MPO doesn’t have to reach or contort himself to search for a particular control or gauge.

“Master pump gauges are 6 inches in diameter, enabling them to be read at 15 feet from the panel—a normal distance where a pump operator may be while performing multiple initial tasks. The larger size allows instant recognition of master gauges and eliminates confusing them with smaller individual line gauges. Locating them one above the other is efficient use of pump panel real estate. Water ‘in’ on the lower gauge and water ‘out’ on the upper gauge is similar to the usual location of suctions and discharges. All gauges are limited to a 300-pounds-per-square-inch (psi) reading because they are easier to read than 400-psi or 600-psi gauges. Primary pump controls are logically located on the right side of the panel away from the crosslays.”

GENESEO (NY) FIRE DEPARTMENT

Four hundred miles west of Boston is the small western New York village of Geneseo. Its one-station volunteer fire department’s suppression apparatus include 2024, 2009, and 1972 pumpers; a 1989 reserve pumper; and a ladder truck. Chief Andrew Chanler provided photos 5 through 13 and much dialogue about Geneseo’s evolution and experiences with labels/gauges ranging from its 1951 antique quad to today’s apparatus. Because its first-due pumper is only replaced every 15 to 20 years, he says keeping up with innovations and NFPA changes is challenging.

Chanler says, “Gauges and labels were never given much thought. We honestly never discussed them as a committee beforehand or later during preconstruction meetings. During our last two purchases, the numerous vendors we met with before writing specifications never mentioned gauge options and inferred NFPA color-coding was a standard. Moving forward, we would like to standardize labels.”

Chanler says he’d like to standardize the labels and color-coding on the existing apparatus as much as possible. “We have different configured pumpers with dissimilar pump panels from four different manufacturers, and two of them are out of business. Having similar labels and colors will make pump operations much easier when moving from truck to truck. We color-coded our hose per diameter size 10 years ago, and it has worked well. Firefighters and drivers liked the standardization.”

We had numerous discussions on colors and wording. Bear in mind, these are our ideas only. Everything is up to the chief, his line officers, drivers, and firefighters.

- *The four pumpers already have numbered side discharges with even numbers on the driver’s side and odd numbers on the passenger’s side. Names, locations and colors may not be necessary, as nothing is preconnected to them. All four can have the same neutral-colored labels (i.e., black or white) reading DISCHARGE #1, DISCHARGE #2, etc. or just #1 and #2, etc.

- *All four also have yellow 1½-inch hose and blue 2-inch hose in crosslays, always called the yellow line and blue line. Yellow labels can say YELLOW LINE. And blue labels can say BLUE LINE. No need to number them or say crosslay.

- *Three pumpers have red 3-inch hose in crosslays with a leader line wye called a Bomb Line. The fourth rig has it preconnected at the left rear. Red labels only have to read BOMB LINE.

- *Three pumpers have preconnected right rear 2½-inch preconnects with green hose called the green line. The reserve pumper, with five crosslays, will have its green line in a crosslay in the future. They can read GREEN LINE or REAR GREEN LINE on green labels.

- *Each pumper has a large-diameter hose (LDH) discharge that could be labeled LDH DISCHARGE on the same color labels as the side discharges.

- *Two pumpers have 3-inch hose preconnected to portable monitors at the left rear that are referred to as a BLITZ FIRE. That’ll work.

- *Two pumpers with front bumper preconnects can have orange labels. I said TRASH LINE would be appropriate. Chanler said they are used for more than that so just labeling it BUMPER LINE would work. We couldn’t agree on how to label the deck guns or agree on whether to color-code auxiliary inlets. We did agree labels don’t have to include hose diameters and hose lengths that could change in the future.

LABELS

Don’t reinvent the wheel. Manufacturers of labels specifically for apparatus pump panels include Innovative Controls and VisionMark Nameplate Company. Both are excellent resources to evaluate label materials, types, sizes, and lettering available. Most offer custom sizes and verbiage. Several apparatus dealers contacted said labels attached with adhesives are easily removed and replaced. Consider replacing T-handle labels with verbiage to plain or solid colors.

PRIORITIZE

An apparatus purchasing committee can be its own worst enemy. The time and effort spent on apparatus design to physically enhance fireground operations and firefighter safety are well spent and commendable. However, in some instances, the safest, quickest, and most efficient operation of the pump itself may have inadvertently become a secondary priority.

How and why pump houses and operator panels have shrunk in size are immaterial. When stuffing 10 pounds of controls in a 5-pound space, something suffers. Some operator panels look like they've been over labeled and over color-coded. Large, easy-to-read gauges and labels have shrunk in size. An apparatus manufacturer's minimum standard for labeling, color-coding, and even verbiage may not meet your expectations although it meets the NFPA's. Write your specifications carefully.

Committees spend exorbitant amounts of time choosing the brightest and best warning lights, extensive gold leafing, and graphics. Equal effort could be spent on making it "easy to find stuff" on the pump operator's panel.

FIRE STATIONS

From Resistance to Resilience: The Fire Station's Rebirth Since 2004

Janet Wilmoth

Key Takeaways

- The fire service has historically resisted change, but significant progress has been made since 2004, especially in firefighter health and safety.
- Emerging technologies such as drones are being integrated into fire and emergency response strategies, enhancing operational capabilities.
- The Station Design Conference boasts sessions on trending topics, from firefighter health and wellness to expected technologies impacting emergency response.

The fire service has a long history of resisting change, and it's one of the reasons we frequently hear the old refrain, "200 years of tradition unimpeded by progress." However, it's not true anymore, and it's time to retire that worn-out phrase.

Changes in the fire service have been slow to evolve. Still, changes have escalated to a rapid pace since the turn of this century, particularly focused on firefighter health and safety.

In the early 1970s, FDNY firefighter Dennis Smith, founder of Firehouse magazine, testified before the President's National Commission on Fire Prevention and Control. Among his concerns for the fire service was "...the most pressing need is medical research."

So, 50 years ago, the need for medical research on firemen (previous term) was recognized. Obviously, things couldn't change overnight, but slowly—too slowly—changes came about, usually after a fatality or severe injuries.

There was always pushback against any changes because "firemen were tough" (maybe macho?), like riding on a rig's back step. Yet, in the early 80s, enclosed cabs underwent rapid design changes following a lawsuit for a Massachusetts fireman who fell out of a fire truck and the fire truck manufacturer ultimately went out of business.

The introduction of seatbelts to save firefighters (terminology changed) lives was another challenging, controversial issue. Research from Fire Chief Gordon Routely and Apparatus Architect authors Tom Shand and Mike Wilbur was well done, but endless arguments and resistance were fought over why firefighters should wear seatbelts. Unfortunately, firefighters still die from not wearing seatbelts.

In 2004, the [U.S. fire service's focus on firefighter health](#)—physical and mental—finally got serious.

Spurred by the increases in line-of-duty-deaths (LODDs), in March 2004, the National Fallen Firefighters Association invited 200 of the fire service and industry leaders to a Firefighter Life Safety Summit in Tampa, FL. The summit was held to focus on reducing preventable firefighter LODDs and injuries. The hard work and efforts of the summit attendees eventually resulted in the creation of the [16 Life Safety Initiatives](#). I believe it was the beginning of significant changes to improve firefighters' health and safety, a rebirth or modernization of the nation's fire service.

Every year, as we begin to search for topics and speakers for the next [Station Design Conference](#), we look back to earlier conferences and see the progress in protecting the health and safety of the men and women responding to incidents. The changes to fire station designs reflect increased concern for firefighter health and safety, as evidenced in the progression of programs offered each year.

We recently began research for new presentation topics for the 2026 Station Design Conference. We contacted progressive fire service leaders and reviewed research journals for trends and innovations. We see that the fire service is on a trajectory that was inconceivable in March 2004 at the Firefighter Life Safety Summit.

Among the presentation topics we're looking at is one by Steve Benowitz, University of Arizona, Health Sciences Office of Communications. He wrote, "Researchers at the University of Arizona's Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health found that certain kinds of long-lasting chemicals firefighters are exposed to may affect the activity of genes linked to cancer and other diseases."

Benowitz references an article published in the Environmental Research journal, which provides evidence of how PFAS, often called "forever chemicals," correspond to epigenetic changes that can lead to cancers, neurological disorders, and autoimmune conditions.

Forever chemicals, or PFAS, are frequently in the news and reported to be found in nearly everything these days. However, the research indicates firefighters have a significant risk of these invisible body invaders, which increases the risk of cancer. Could there be a preventive answer for future fire station designs? Maybe, but could we have conceived the idea of reducing cancer-causing carcinogens with Hot Zone station designs in 2004?

Looking at recent Station Design Award entries, some fire departments offer immunizations and blood pressure checks and have designed space for a clinic in their stations. Taking it one step further, a soon-to-be-built fire station will have an adjacent urgent care clinic, which will be subcontracted out.

Another topic for the next year's conference is the fire service use of drones in emergency and non-emergency situations. One Colorado fire chief shared that his new fire station will have a drone base on top of it, anticipating increased use of drones.

The chief explained that drones can be used to deliver blood and supplies to emergency medical incidents on highways or in hard-to-reach areas. He also anticipates drones will be used to transport crash victims. Besides the initial use of drones at incidents and the infrared technology, advances in drone technology will make them integral to fire and law enforcement.

It was 1736 when Ben Franklin officially started the U.S. fire service with the first volunteer fire company in Philadelphia. So, that makes the national fire service 289 years old. I propose that the official rebirth of the firefighter-centric fire service began in 2004 at the National Firefighter Life Safety Summit. To update, it's "The previous 263 years of tradition were unimpeded by progress."

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!!

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| HOME FIRE FATALITIES REPORTED BY THE MEDIA FROM THE US FIRE ADMINISTRATION FOR 2025 |
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|--|-----------|
| Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS | 52 |
| Last fire death 8/21/25 Odessa, Schuyler Co Male 22 | |
| Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS | 87 |
| Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally | 709 |
| Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths | #1 PA/55 |
| | #2 NY/52 |
| | #3 IL /41 |
| Civilian home fire fatalities in 2025: 1435 2046 civilian home fire fatalities in 2024 | |
| Week 35 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? | |

PRO CODES ACT: Act Now To Protect Our Codes

Right now, what you and your colleagues have built to create world-class safety codes and standards is under attack. That's why a bipartisan group of Members of Congress is at work to pass the Pro Codes Act, H.R. 4072. Your help is urgently needed. **Click HERE:**

<https://www.votervoice.net/ICCSafe/campaigns/128389/respond> to let your Member of Congress know your work deserves to be protected. You'll be joining a broad coalition of building and fire safety organizations to defend our work.

Click here: <https://www.votervoice.net/ICCSafe/campaigns/128389/respond> to ask your member of Congress to protect your work and co-sponsor the Pro Codes Act today!

GREEN TECHNOLOGY & THE FIRE SERVICE

Cleanup from Huge CA Battery Storage Plant Fire Expected to Take a Year

Paul Rogers, Bay Area News Group

Tens of thousands of batteries that were damaged in a fire in January at one of the world's largest battery storage plants in Moss Landing will be removed, treated and transferred to a recycling facility in Nevada starting Sept. 22, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced Wednesday.

Two truckloads a day of the batteries will be driven 330 miles to the American Battery Technology Company in McCarran, Nevada, a facility in the desert about 15 miles east of Reno that conducts commercial-scale lithium-ion battery recycling. The company recovers materials such copper, aluminum, steel and intermediate lithium from old batteries.

"Damaged batteries can be unstable," said Kazami Brockman, a civil engineer and on-scene coordinator for the EPA's Moss Landing cleanup. "We are focused on removing the batteries from the building and sending them for disposal and recycling in as safe and quick a way as possible."

The Moss Landing plant is a former PG&E natural gas-fired power plant located along Monterey Bay that was converted five years ago by Vistra, a Texas energy company, into a huge facility where solar power and other electricity could be stored in batteries for use at night and during period of high electrical demand.

It caught fire on Jan. 16, sending up a cloud of toxic smoke, and causing authorities to evacuate roughly 1,200 local residents for three days. The incident, the cause of which is still under investigation by state officials, generated international news and raised safety questions about battery storage plants, [which have been constructed at a record pace in recent years as California and other states expand renewable energy](#).

Vistra's Moss Landing battery plant remains closed, as does a separate PG&E battery storage plant next door that was not involved in the fire and did not incur damage. A natural gas plant on the site continues to generate electricity.

There were roughly 100,000 battery modules that were at the facility. Of those, about 55,000 burned or were damaged. In the weeks after the fire, there were several small flareups that sent smoke over the plant.

Crews paid by Vistra and overseen by EPA de-linked all of the batteries from electrical equipment in March. After working out cleanup plans with EPA, local fire officials and other authorities, the company began demolishing the building Aug. 11.

Brockman said Wednesday that four or five trucks a day of construction waste, some of which includes asbestos, from the wrecked building are being trucked to the Hay Road Landfill in Vacaville. Vistra continues to keep a private, company-funded fire department on the site and air monitors measure air quality 24 hours a day there, he added.

The cleanup is expected to take about a year, he said.

Vistra has not said what it plans to do with the site. It is conducting an investigation. Last month, David Yeager, a company spokesman, said the battery removal will help speed that along.

The California Public Utilities Commission also is investigating the cause of the fire. A trade journal in March reported the company estimated \$400 million in losses due to the fire. Lawsuits claim neighboring residents suffered health impacts.

Brockman said each of the battery modules — some of which did not burn — will be inspected, removed from its rack, cleaned and placed on pallets. They then will be connected to electrical equipment called load banks to offload their electricity to the grid before they are packaged and placed on trucks for Nevada.

Thermal cameras will be set up to detect any batteries that may heat up and be at risk of fire. Vistra has “battery isolation boxes” it can place over such batteries to further reduce the risk of a fire he added.

“It’s our goal to ensure that each battery is dealt with as quickly as possible for both the safety of the workers and community,” Brockman said, “and to maintain the speed of the operations.”

STUFF FOR YOUR OFFICERS AND MEMBERS!



Anatomy of an Intersection Crash ESIP WEBINAR SERIES

During this presentation, Lee Price will break down what happens as we approach intersections while using lights and sirens. We’ll explore the perceptions of other motorists, evaluate the various hazards, and try to understand how it is up to what we do to prevent a crash.

Wednesday 9/10/25 at 7:00PM

REGISTER AT THIS LINK:

<https://mcneilandcompany.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=03596f243a9d922954ebaf15e&id=6719afc0ab&e=781e9a2c81>



2025 Seminar Series, Short-Handed Firefighting

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

Mike Healy has been a member of the Rockland County fire service for 54 years, serving with the Blauvelt F.D. for 14 years, followed by the Central Nyack F.D. for 40 years. He has served as a chief for three terms. Healy is

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

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

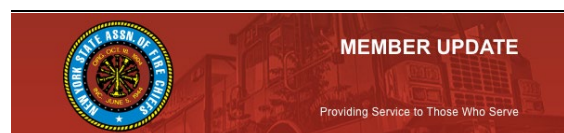
Cortland (October 28) • Erie (October 8) • **Fulton (September 9)** • Jefferson (October 15)
• Monroe (September 30) • Nassau (November 5) • Niagara (March 12) • Oneida (September 24)
• Onondaga (February 18) • Orange (April 29) • Otsego (September 15) • **Rensselaer (October 20)**
• Rockland (April 23) • St. Lawrence (March 24) • Suffolk (April 2) • Westchester (September 3)

\$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](#).



New York Yankees Firefighter Appreciation Special

Join the **New York Yankees** at Yankee Stadium as they show their appreciation to the dedicated members of the fire and emergency services!

This [special event](#) on **September 9** and **September 11** (vs. the Detroit Tigers).

All purchased tickets will include a \$15 meal and beverage voucher, and a Yankees firefighter trucker hat.

Questions? [Email](#) Jess Tragale, New York Yankees Account Executive, Group Sales & Service, for assistance!

LEARN MORE AND PURCHASE TICKETS AT THE FOLLOWING LINK:

<https://www.gofevo.com/group/Firefighterappreciation33?ref=Tragale>

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

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 in October 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

Is A Grant Writer The Answer For Your Fire Department?

Jerry Brant

I'm sure many of you have debated the idea of hiring a grant writer. There's always that member who broadcasts the fact that a nearby department just received their 10th grant and replaced three pieces of apparatus while your department has yet to score a single award. "The reason," the member says, "is because they have a grant writer and we don't!" Then, after some intense discussion, someone typically suggest appointing a committee to check out options and addressing the topic at the next meeting.

How often does that really happen, though?

Without action, say goodbye to another grant cycle without a grant writer.

SEARCH FOR A GRANT WRITER

If you're familiar with departments that have used a grant writer's services, they should be the first points of contact in your search. If you don't know anyone who has used a grant writer or you're not comfortable with the grant writer that neighboring departments have used, then search the internet, go to trade shows to connect with others who can help or advise, review fire service websites or talk with vendors. All of these are great sources. And remember that [FireGrantsHelp offers assistance finding grant writers](#), too.

INTERVIEW POTENTIAL GRANT WRITERS

Identify two or three grant writers to interview.

For the interview, develop a set list of questions so you are soliciting the same information from each grant writer.

At a minimum, ask the grant writer for the following basic information:

- The number of years they have written grant applications;
- The types of applications they have written and have had awarded; and
- Their formal training or education.

It's also important to ask the grant writer if they are a single-person shop or if they utilize other grant writers in their business. If they are utilizing other writers, inquire how you will know who will be writing your grant and whether you can learn more about that person before hiring the team.

Finally, request a list of references. These references should include clients who were awarded grants similar to the type you are pursuing. This is important because there is a big difference between writing a grant for 10 sets of turnout gear and writing a grant for a new aerial.

AGREE TO A CONTRACT

Once you have selected a grant writer, it's time to develop a contract for their services. A contract protects both you and the grant writer by spelling out the details of the arrangement.

The contract should detail who will be responsible for what and how long the writer's services will be needed. It should also set the grant writer's compensation and list the grant (or grants) on which the writer will work. It's best to designate two contact people from your department for the grant writer, and make it clear that they are the only people with whom the grant writer communicates. After all, you don't want other members getting in the weeds and creating any confusion about grant priorities. If the grant writer balks at giving you a written agreement, move on to the next grant writer on your list.

CLARIFY KEY DUTIES AND DETAILS

It's important to establish a clear understanding of the grant writer's responsibilities along with what the department will handle. For example, will the grant writer be responsible for completing the entire application or only the grant narratives? Will the grant writer have someone conduct a review when the grant is completed or is that the department's duty?

Additionally, establish a clear deadline for providing the grant writer with department and community information. Note: If the writer tells you that they don't need any such information, that's a red flag. How would they be able to craft narratives about your current needs without this information?

Tip: Make sure you have all the login and password information for your application. Never let your grant writer be the only one with the login.

HELP YOUR GRANT WRITER

A final word of advice: Grant writers are not mind-readers. If you think you can just hire someone to write your grant and then sit back and do nothing, you are sadly mistaken. A grant writer doesn't know your department's characteristics, its financial situation, the community you serve, or the condition of the items you want to replace. You are responsible for providing the writer with this data. You are also responsible for providing the grant writer with an accurate description of the items you are requesting and a current cost estimate. Remember, even if you utilize a grant writer for your application, you are ultimately responsible for all the information that is submitted — so it better be accurate.

LAUGH OUT LOUD!!

I watched a dude carry a screaming toddler across the parking lot. He noticed me looking at him and said, "he's mine, I'm not kidnapping him" and then before I could reply he added, "if I was gonna kidnap one, it definitely would not be this little asshole."

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Nothing this week.

CAFDA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

President, Tom Rinaldi, Commissioner, Stillwater Fire District

1st Vice President, John Meehan, Commissioner West Crescent Fire District

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

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Les Bonesteel Commissioner Burnt Hills/Saratoga,

Fred Richards Commissioner Harmony Corners/Saratoga,

Joyce Petkus Treasurer Greenfield/Saratoga,

Ed Woehrle Commissioner Niskayuna #1/Schenectady

Art Hunsinger, Ex-Officio Member Clifton Park Fire District

APPOINTEES

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

Treasurer: Tony Hill

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

Chaplain: Fred Richards, Commissioner, Harmony Corners Fire District

Legal Counsel: Greg Serio, Safety Officer, Verday 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](tel:518-407-5020)

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

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

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

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

Business Partner Applications Available At: WWW.CAFDA.NET

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

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

FIRE SERVICE LEGAL SERVICES



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Alyssa B. Snyder, Partner
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*The Weekly Capital Bulletin is reaching well over **650+** subscribed fire district members and now other members of the fire service on a regular basis. This is a service of CAFDA through the effort of Tom Rinaldi who can be reached at tom@rinaldi1.com for comments and content contributions are always welcome.*

BECOME A MEMBER OF CAFDA!

The Capital Area Association has voted to amend its By-laws to allow both individual and regional or county Fire District Associations to join. The updated By-laws are posted to the CAFDA.NET website. Individual membership fee will be \$50 annually, fire district association fees will be \$300 annually. Download THE APPLICATION available on the home page at CAFDA.NET

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION (CAFDA)

Would you like to join Capital Area Fire Districts Association along with 100 members in 14 counties? Individuals, fire district associations, fire protection districts and Village departments are all eligible for membership. Annual dues (January 1st to December 31st) shall be as follows and shall be based on the annual budget of the Fire District/Organization;

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| \$0 to \$200,000: | \$50 |
| \$200,001 to \$400,000: | \$100 |
| \$400,001 to \$600,000: | \$200 |
| \$600,001 plus: | \$300 |

Individuals \$50.00 or Other County or Regional Associations \$300 annually.
Business Partners: \$100.00 annual member fee

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

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

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

<https://cafda.net/membership-info/>

CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

SAVE THE DATES!

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

COMMISSIONER TRAINING

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

OTHER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

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



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.