THE BULLETIN

AUGUST 1ST, 2026

The Voice of CAFDA since 2004
Editor, Tom Rinaldi – tom@rinaldi1.com since 2014
When you see **, highly recommended article

CAPITAL SHORT TAKES

- **Our thoughts and prayers to John D'Alessandro and the D'Alessandro family, of Halfmoon-Waterford Fire District and FASNY on the passing of John's mother Rose.**
- Will someone please slow down the passage of the summer days!!
- **BUDGET SCHEDULE** PAGE 4 also on CAFDA.net
- **ELECTION SCHEDULE** PAGE 9 also on CAFDA.net
- FTC directed to investigate the fire apparatus industry, see more below at Washington Watch.
- The heavy weight you carry is seen and your sacrifices don't go unnoticed. We are thinking of the Coldenham Fire District in Orange County who experienced a devastating fire at their fire Station causing heavy damage to the building, their apparatus and associated equipment.
- A tornado in Wisconsin has cause extensive damage in Appleton, home of Pierce Manufacturing, the power was interrupted and the roof of the aftermarket parts warehouse was damaged. They have already resumed full production capability.
- **The 2027 property tax levy growth will be capped at 2% for local governments that operate on a calendar-based fiscal year, according to data released today by State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli.** In accordance with state law, DiNapoli's office calculated the 2027 inflation factor at 3.13% for those local governments with a calendar fiscal year, above the 2% allowable levy increase.

TRAINING OPPORTUNTIES:

From CAFDA

1 **Go to the website at CAFDA.net and sign up now, it's next Friday, A DAY AT THE RACES to be held again this summer, Friday, August 7th, in the Picnic Paddock Area, lunch included.

- ✓ August 7th, 1:00pm til 6PM
- ✓ Lunch food, snacks, water & soda will be provided. BYOB in adherence with Track Policies see here: https://www.nyra.com/saratoga/visit/
- ✓ Gates open at 11am, post time is at 1pm
- ✓ **CAFDA Member Fire District officials and their guests (one guest per official), and Business Partner principals are invited and entry is free!**
- ✓ **Non-Member fire district officials and their guests (one guest per official) are invited to attend; reservations fee is $35 per person and must be paid when making your reservations.**
- ✓ **Everyone attending *must individually* register (*no group reservations*) online through this website, just click on this link: *DayAtTheRaces*** (https://cafda.net/event-registration/)
- ✓ **Your tickets with each individual's name, will be available in an envelope at the "WILL CALL" window at Gate B on Union Avenue.**
- ✓ **If you make reservations, please show up for this free annual family event there is a cost for the tickets and for the food that CAFDA is funding.**
- ✓ **When you enter the Paddock area you will receive wristbands by showing your ticket!!**

2 *.Join us at the NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING on Thursday September 10 features dinner for attendees. Please join us.*

ZOOM LINK FOR THE SEPTEMBER MEETING at 7pm:
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89275151494?pwd=H9Wzo77bprmGQd5beFEjODUJxebjJC.1

3. Mark your calendar for the CAFDA Conference '27, Lake George NY, April 9-10-11, dinner/vendor show Friday April 10th Fort William Henry Carriage House. Sponsored Mixer the evening of Thursday April 9th at the Holiday Inn Resort, food, games, beverages. The response has grown each year and we are in the process of identifying the subjects for 2027.

4. Mark your calendars now, CAFDA Fall Seminar, Saturday November 7th, at Guilderland Fire Department, 2303 Western Ave. (US Route 20), Guilderland, NY. The Education Committee has identified the subjects including the ever popular "Experts Panel".

5 CAFDA Commissioner Training for 2027 will be held in Averill Park, Thomas Corners, Clifton Park, Schoharie and Warrensburg.

CAFDA TRAINING AND EVENT DATES

Day/Date	Time	Type	Location	Notes
FY 2026				
July, 2026	**NO MEETING, See next month's Day at the Races**			
Friday, August 7, 2026	1:00 PM	**Membership Activity**	Saratoga Race Course	**NYRA Day at the Races!**
Thursday, August 13, 2026	7:00 PM	**Board of Directors Meeting**	Clifton Park	
Thursday, September 10, 2026	7:00 PM	**General Membership Mtg.**	Clifton Park	
Thursday, October 8, 2026	7:00 PM	**General Membership Mtg.**	Clifton Park	Officers/Director Nominations
Saturday, November 7, 2026	8:00 AM	**Annual Fall Workshop**	Guilderland FD	2303 Western Ave.
Thursday, November 12, 2026	7:00 PM	**General Membership Mtg.**	Clifton Park	Officer/Director Elections
DECEMBER 2026	**NO MEETING**			
FY 2027				
Saturday, January 2, 2027	9:00 AM	**General Membership Mtg.**	Clifton Park	Organizational/Morning Meeting
Thursday, April 8 - Saturday April 10, 2027		**CAFDA Conference '27**	Fort William Henry Conference Center	Lake George
Thursday, April 6 - Saturday April 8, 2028		**CAFDA Conference '28**	Fort William Henry Conference Center	

From Other Organizations

Water Supply Operations, ESIP WEBINAR SERIES

For many departments, bringing water to the fire is the key to success. Whether you call it a tanker or a tender, a mobile water supply can mean the difference between quick control and major loss.
Join our risk management team for a webinar discussing ways to enhance your rural water supply operations.

THURSDAY 8/6/29 AT 7pm

REGISTER AT THIS LINK:
https://us.list-manage.com/OeLYWDlmcof?e=781e9a2c81&c2id=df3ef39abf096be1508115a6ea1a79c8&m=sGwO5kjhQuZ874v5jDP5doKbqB64IUSGdaVlgW8Ky2U0IhwkM-Xho425XOwx

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NYSAFC is Bringing Hands-On Training to Your Area!

Open enrollment is available for NYSAFC Regional Hands-On Training this fall. The eight-hour **Fire Behavior On the Inside** course is scheduled for **Albany** (November 14-15), Ontario County (November 7-8), and **Schenectady** (October 17-18) Counties.
The three-hour **Flashover** program is coming to **Albany** (September 26-27), Ontario (October 10-11), and Orange (November 21-22) Counties.
View the Calendar and Register...

2026 Seminar Series with Chief Mike Lombardo Resumes in September

https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/2026seminarseries
Chief Mike Lombardo (Buffalo Fire Department) will present "**Dangerous Spaces: Challenges and Tactics When Dealing with Garage and Basement Fires**" at 16 sites through November. Registration is $35 (NYSAFC members) and $50 (non-members) per person. Registration will be available at the door, but pre-registration is encouraged. Join NYSAFC in Chautauqua, Chemung, Cortland, Dutchess, Erie, **Fulton**, **Greene**, Monroe, Nassau, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Otsego, **Rensselaer**, Rockland, and **Saratoga** Counties.

Requirement for Fire Police that has Statewide Implications

Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations (HMFRO) is now a required prerequisite for the Fire Police class. Fire police candidates who have not taken Basic Exterior Firefighter Operations (BEFO) will need to take this standalone course in order to register for the Fire Police course in the future.

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

From Albany

Waiting for the governor to call for the bills that were passed by both Chambers so that she can sign them into law. Technically she has until December 31st.

- Law passed and signed to require mandatory recycling program for e-scooters/e-bikes.
- The use of "Piggyback Purchasing" extended one more year until June 30, 2027.

S8832 KAVANAGH (D)	**A9504 GLICK (D)**	**1/2/126 PASSED SENATE 2/10/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY**	**THE PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER AMENDMENT IS TO FACILITATE THE INCLUSION OF E-BIKE AND E-SCOOTER BATTERIES IN THE RECHARGEABLE BATTERY RECYCLING PROGRAM AND TO PROMOTE CONSUMER SAFETY, CONVENIENCE, AND AWARENESS**	**2/13/26 SIGNED CHAPTER 87**
S10075 SOLAGES (D)	**A11162 ZELLLNER**	**6/2/26 PASSED SENATE 5/29/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY**	**EXTEND THE PROVISION OF THE COMPETITIVE BIDDING STATUTE [GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW §103] WHICH PERMITS PIGGYBACK PURCHASING. THE STATUTE HAD A SUNSET PROVISION MEANING THAT IT WOULD EXPIRE ON JUNE 30, 2026. THE BILLS PROPOSE TO AMEND THE STATUTE TO EXTEND THE SUNSET PROVISION UNTIL JUNE 30, 2027**	**6/26/26 SIGNED CHAPTER 147**
S6368B SKOUFIS (D)	**A3126B LUNSFORD (D)**	**4/22/26 PASSED SENATE 3/30326 PASSED ASSEMBLY**	**AN ACT TO AMEND THE EXECUTIVE LAW, IN RELATION TO REQUIRING THAT WHEN A COMPLAINT IS MADE TO LOCAL**	**PENDING SIGNATURE**

			CODE ENFORCEMENT OF A VIOLATION OF THE UNIFORM FIRE PREVENTION AND BUILDING CODE OR LOCAL BUILDING CODES WHICH RESULTS IN THE ISSUANCE OF A COMPLIANCE ORDER, THE COMPLAINANT SHALL ALSO BE PROVIDED A COPY OF SUCH ORDER	
S9502A MARTINEZ (D)	A10885B STERN (D)	6/2/26 PASSED SENATE 6/1/26 PASSES ASSEMBLY	*TO AUTHORIZE* LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO ADOPT A PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES OF PAID FIREFIGHTERS WHO ARE KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY.	PENDING SIGNATURE PENDING PASSAGE BY EACH LOCAL GOVERNMENT BY RESOLUTION
S7316 HINCHEY (D)	A8008 LUNSFORD (D)	5/18/26 PASSED SENATE 6/1/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	REQUIRES THE FORFEITURE OF BENEFITS TO BE PAID PURSUANT TO A SERVICE AWARDS PROGRAM TO VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS WHO HAVE BEEN CONVICTED OF FELONIES COMMITTED AGAINST A VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY, FIRE DISTRICT, OR FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT.	PENDING SIGNATURE
S5614 ADDABBO (D)	A3681A WOERNER (D)	6/2/26 PASSED SENATE 1/28/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	AN ACT TO AMEND THE GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW, IN RELATION TO REMOVING RESTRICTIONS ON THE FREQUENCY CERTAIN AUTHORIZED ORGANIZATIONS MAY CONDUCT BINGO GAMES	PENDING SIGNATURE
S4675 JACKSON (D)	A688 BUTTENSCHON (D)	5/6/26 PASSED SENATE 4/29/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	AN ACT TO AMEND THE EXECUTIVE LAW, IN RELATION TO PROVIDING MINIMUM BASIC TRAINING RELATED TO HANDLING EMERGENCY SITUATIONS INVOLVING INDIVIDUALS WITH ANY PHYSICAL AND/OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY TO ALL FIRE-FIGHTERS	PENDING SIGNATURE REQUIRES ADDITIONAL TRAINING
S6233A MARTINEZ (D)	A6790A MCMAHON	6/1/26 PASSED SENATE 5/14/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	THIS BILL INCREASES THE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' AND AMBULANCE WORKERS' PERSONAL INCOME TAX CREDIT FROM $200 TO $800 FOR ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS AND FROM $400 TO $1600 FOR ELIGIBLE MARRIED JOINT FILERS. ALSO ALLOWS FIRST RESPONDERS TO TAKE THE PROPERTY TAX CREDIT ALSO.	PENDING SIGNATURE

From Washington

WASHINGTON WATCH

FTC Directed to Investigate Fire Truck Industry

Chris McLoone

Senators Jim Banks (R-IN) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) have introduced a bipartisan resolution calling for the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to investigate possible anticompetitive practices in the fire apparatus manufacturing industry.

If the resolution is adopted, it directs the FTC to investigate and report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives:

- the extent of anticompetitive practices and violations of anti-trust laws.
- the effects of anticompetitive practices and violations of the antitrust laws.
- recommendations for legislation or other remedial actions, as appropriate.

If the resolution passes, the FTC is directed to accomplish this within a year.

More information is available at:

- https://www.banks.senate.gov/news/press-releases/sen-banks-and-sen-warren-introduce-resolution-calling-for-ftc-investigation-into-fire-truck-manufacturing-industry/
- https://www.warren.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Fire-Trucks-FTC-Investigation-Resolution-7.14.pdf
- https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-joint-resolution/203/text

From Federal DOL/OSHA

When we hear something, we'll post it here.

FIRE DISTRICT FINANCIAL NEWS

FIRE DISTRICT BUDGET PROCESS SCHEDULE 2026 available on the CAFDA.NET website. CAFDA.net

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Local Government and School Accountability Contact Information:

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

NYS-OSC Fire Service Audits

No New Audits to report this week.
See all local government audits here: https://www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/audits?

THE FIRE CHIEF'S OFFICE

What We'll Learn: NERIS and the Next 50 Years of the Fire Problem

Tom Jenkins, Senior NERIS Advisor and Fire Chief (Ret.)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The next fifty years could do for prevention what the last fifty did for fire deaths.
- NERIS pairs national scale data with analytics to support local departments.
- Regular updates to the national standard will prevent fracture from continuous local customization.
- Departments will finally justify budgets with community safety wins, not just losses.

I became a firefighter in the late 1990s, a quarter century after a commission of engineers, physicians, and fire chiefs handed President Nixon a 200-page report called "America Burning." I never lived through the fire problem that report described, but I worked alongside firefighters who had.

By the time I put on a uniform, the system built in response to that report, NFIRS, was already old enough to be part of the furniture. America Burning found the country was losing roughly 12,000 people a year to fire, worse than any other industrialized nation on earth. Its central recommendation was simple: build a national system to understand the fire problem before trying to solve it.

That system became NFIRS. Fifty years later, the average number of annual fire deaths in this country has been cut roughly in half, even as the population grew by more than 120 million people. Nobody credits a data system alone for that. Smoke alarms, sprinkler requirements, more firefighting resources, and better-trained crews did the work on the ground. But none of it got funded, prioritized, or proven without a national picture of where the fires were and who they were killing. NFIRS gave the field that picture, albeit slowly and incompletely.

It was incomplete in a specific way worth naming. NFIRS was voluntary, and USFA's own quality reviews found that in some years it captured well under two-thirds of the fire deaths estimated by NFPA's separate national survey, because a meaningful share of departments never filed at all. Fifty years of national fire statistics have rested on that unstable foundation, patched by modeling to estimate what the missing departments would have reported.

On January 1, 2026, NFIRS stopped taking new records. Its replacement, the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS), is now the primary reporting system for the American fire service, and it's voluntary too, in the same sense NFIRS was. Departments must use it for certain federal grant eligibility, but nothing forces reporting beyond that. If a compliance requirement hasn't closed the participation gap in fifty years, it isn't going to now. What closes it is departments getting real value back from their own data, which is what NERIS is built to make possible.

THE STAFFING ARGUMENT GETS A BODY OF EVIDENCE

Every chief who has fought for minimum staffing has made the same argument: fewer people on scene means worse outcomes. NFPA 1750 says as much. For fifty years, that argument has largely rested on the standard itself and on training doctrine. It hasn't rested on a national dataset connecting staffing levels to what actually happened at the incident.

NERIS captures that link structurally. Every department's baseline staffing and apparatus data lives in a standardized entity record. Every dispatch carries unit counts, staffing per unit, and operational timestamps

pulled from CAD, the same data your dispatch center already generates on every call, now tied to an outcome instead of sitting unused. Every incident carries outcome data: casualties, rescues, displacement, how far an incident spread before it was contained.

I'm not going to tell you NERIS will prove staffing saves lives. That relationship is well established already. What changes is the ability to show it with your own department's numbers, compared to departments that look like yours, using data that's current instead of years old.

TAKING FULL ACCOUNT OF THE WORK WEEK

Ask most people outside the fire service what firefighters do, and they'll describe fighting fires. Ask anyone who's worked a shift in the last twenty years, and you know that's a fraction of the job. EMS calls, technical rescue, hazmat response, and prevention work make up most of what departments actually respond to, and most of what they do outside of a response entirely.

NFIRS wasn't initially built to capture all hazards. It was a fire reporting system, built for a narrower era of the job, and asked over time to cover far more than fire. NERIS was built as an all-hazard system from the start, on a modular structure: separate, connected records for incidents and for the deeper investigative detail behind them, with modules for health and safety and community risk reduction now in development. Those will cover the prevention work departments do between calls — inspections, community paramedicine visits, hydrant inspections, public education events — tied geographically to where those risks actually sit in a community.

Fifty years from now, I'd like a chief to be able to point to a complete record of everything their department did in a given year, not just the fires, and use it to make the case for staffing, funding, and community programs with the same rigor we've applied to fire loss statistics since 1973. That record should carry its own weight without needing a tragedy attached to it. A department shouldn't have to point to a death to justify its budget. It should be able to point to the inspections that caught a hazard before it became one, the rescues that went right, and let those numbers make the case on their own.

I picture budget hearings where fire chiefs talk about specific metrics of emergency response and the non-emergency work departments do to prevent incidents before they happen. We're not there yet. But for the first time, the system is built to hold that record instead of discarding it.

WHAT'S NEXT

Systems don't fix things by themselves. Motivated people do, using the tools a system gives them. What NERIS hands them is a different order of magnitude from what NFIRS ever could.

Structured data at national scale is the raw material today's analytical tools need to do useful work: patterns a chief reading a spreadsheet on a Sunday night would never catch alone. Staffing thresholds that track with better outcomes across departments that look like theirs. Prevention programs that measurably move call volume in the years after they launch.

NERIS was built for capabilities none of us can fully see yet, the same bet the 1973 commission made recommending a national data system before anyone knew what would be done with one.

The next generation of America Burning, whenever it's written, won't be about the absence of a national reporting system. It'll be about what the fire service built with the one it finally had, and how that data helped communities across all hazards, not just fire. I don't know exactly what that report will say, but I'm confident the alarm bells that necessitated the first one are harder to hear because of the work done today.

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Fire District Election Schedule for 2026 available on the CAFDA.net website.

CAFDA.net

Click on this PDF to see notes from DOL related to Prevailing Wage Rates for Construction, Article 8

PREVAILING WAGE RATE NOTES OPEN THIS LINK:

https://cafda.net/information-on-the-nys-dol-prevailing-wage-rates-for-fire-districts/

This Week's Burning Question; what steps need to be taken to hold a public hearing to purchase apparatus

Conducting a public hearing for a fire apparatus purchase in New York requires publishing an official notice in a local newspaper at least 10 days prior, holding an open meeting compliant with the Open Meetings Law, and potentially subjecting the final financing resolution to a permissive referendum.

Legal Notice Requirements

- **Newspaper Publication**: Publish a formal notice at least **10 days** before the hearing date in the official fire district newspaper with general circulation in the fire district or municipality.
- **Notice Content**: State the exact time, place, and date of the hearing, and provide a general description of the proposed apparatus purchase or contract.
    - The same information is to be shared with the town clerk(s) of the town(s) which the fire district services, and posted on the fire district sign board if one exists, and on the website maintained by the fire district.
- **Right to be Heard**: Specify that all residents, property owners, and affected business interests within the service area have the right to attend and speak.

Conducting the Hearing

- **Open to the Public**: Convene the board of fire commissioners or town/village board in an accessible location, ensuring full compliance with NY Open Meetings Law.
- **Public Input**: Present the apparatus specifications, cost, and financing plan (such as using a capital reserve fund or serial bonds), then open the floor for public comment. ***Remember that officials listen and record comments but are not required to immediately debate or answer every public critique.***

Post-Hearing Procedures

- **Board Resolution**: Formally close the public hearing and proceed with a board vote on the purchasing or financing resolution during an open regular or special meeting.
- **Permissive Referendum**: Be aware that purchases financed outside of available capital reserve funds or specific budgetary allowances may be subject to a **permissive referendum**, allowing district taxpayers time to petition for a public vote. Permissive referendums pursuant to Section 6-g (4) of the General Municipal Law shall take effect thirty (30) days after it's adoption, unless there shall be filed in the interim with the Fire District Secretary a petition signed and acknowledged or approved in the same manner as a Deed to be recorded by resident tax payers of the District owning taxable real property aggregating at least ¼ of the assessed valuation of all taxable real property of the Fire District as such valuations appear on the latest completed assessment of the Town which is served by the fire district, protesting against such Resolution and requesting that it be submitted to the qualified electors of the Fire District for their approval.

Our best advice is to always check with your legal counsel for guidance and strict compliance with the applicable laws.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FIRE SERVICE

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- The Plumstead Township, Pennsylvania Board of Supervisors adopted an ordinance earlier this month officially establishing Bucks County's newest paid fire department. The ordinance authorizes the creation of the Plumstead Township Fire and Rescue Department and outlines the duties of the fire chief and the rank and file firefighters who will staff the new paid department. "This is an important step for this township," said Matt Given, who chairs the board of supervisors. "There has been an amazing amount of work that has been done. And there's still a lot of work to be done. This township is taking a big step to keep close to 15,000 people safe in this township." Earlier this year, the supervisors took its first step, hiring fire company veteran Bill Wiegman to lead the fledgling department as its full-time fire chief. Wiegman comes to the township with a wealth of emergency services experience, having served most recently as the full-time paid fire chief of Montgomery Township, Pennsylvania.

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

- A fully involved fire in the Coldenham Fire District's firehouse in Montgomery, NY Orange County caused “significant damage” to the building, trucks and apparatus according to the Orange County Department of Emergency Services. Members were alerted to the blaze within the structure's garage bays at around 3:14 a.m., and worked to salvage some of the firefighting equipment and to help battle the flames, according to the department. Crews from neighboring departments also responded, helping to protect surrounding properties. Five firefighters were taken to area hospitals for treatment of smoke inhalation and minor injuries before being released. The state Office of Fire Prevention and Control is investigating the cause of the fire. Fire departments throughout Orange County will work in the interim to assist Coldenham Fire District with future calls. "Through everything we are still continuing to respond to calls with the limited capacity we have at this time," Chief Matthew Hunt said in a statement (below). "We are beyond heartbroken at the devastating loss of our home and the equipment we take so much pride in."



- If you visited the Bressler’s Friendship Fire Company during the first half of 2024 and bought skill game tickets, you had a significantly smaller chance of winning. That’s because the bartender, Tamas Topos, was redeeming the winning tickets and paying himself out through the bar’s cash. Topos, who told police at the time he had a gambling problem, admitted that amount totaled more than $80,000 in Dauphin County court last week. Topos, who originally faced a felony count of theft by unlawful taking, pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor of the same charge before Dauphin County Judge William Tully.

SATISTICS FOR THE FIRE SER1VICE

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH AND SAFETY – PROTECTING OUR OWN

FIREFIGHTER FATALITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

47

In 2025 we experienced 78 LODDs reported nationally.!

- **Data from US Fire Administration on LODD:** https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/firefighter-fatalities/
- **Information on FF injuries and deaths from the Secret List:** https://www.firefighterclosecalls.com/
- **Information of Fire Apparatus MVCs:** https://www.emergencyvehicleresponse.com/

Apparatus Accidents in the News:

- A driver was cited after a two-vehicle crash involving a Seguin, Texas Fire Department ladder truck Saturday evening, according to the Seguin Police Department. A preliminary investigation determined that a 2002 Honda Accord was traveling southbound at an intersection when the driver failed to stop at a posted stop sign. The vehicle entered the intersection and struck the passenger side of a Seguin Fire Department ladder truck which was traveling west bound through the uncontrolled side of the intersection. No injuries were reported.

Firefighter Deaths, Injuries, in the News

- The Indianapolis Fire Department is investigating after a heavy fire broke out in a vacant apartment building where one firefighter fell through the floor — resulting in a mayday response the firefighter was checked on scene and returned to duty on the scene.

- A firefighter is in stable condition following being injured during a response to an apartment fire in Newton Falls, Ohio according to the Newton Falls Joint Fire District.
- A Firefighter with West Metro Fire Rescue (Colorado) was critically injured after a fall during high-angle rescue training in a steep, rocky area near Morrison, when Firefighter/Paramedic Jarrod Leonard fell approximately 50' feet. One of the department's technical rescue instructors, Leonard was critically injured, treated and was transported to a local hospital.

Family Sues Fort Myers Over Firefighter Applicant's Heat-Related Death During Physical Assessment

Curt Varone

The family of a firefighter applicant who died after collapsing during a pre-employment physical abilities test has filed a wrongful death lawsuit against the City of Fort Myers, alleging that the City required candidates to complete a physically demanding evaluation outdoors in extreme heat without adequate safeguards to prevent heat illness.

The suit was filed on July 7, 2026, by Jennifer Wilcox, the mother of Nathaniel Wilcox, who died on July 9, 2024, after participating in a firefighter hiring assessment conducted by the Fort Myers Fire Department. The complaint asserts claims for negligence resulting in wrongful death and negligence per se resulting in wrongful death.

Nathaniel Wilcox was reportedly a 22-year-old former college football player who was "was physically active and athletically accomplished, and had no significant cardiac or pulmonary history." Quoting from the complaint:

- *Nathaniel applied for an open firefighter position with the City of Fort Myers and received an invitation to participate in the mandatory pre-employment Physical Assessment Evaluation (PAE) administered by FMFD.*
- *The PAE was scheduled for 3:30 p.m. on July 9, 2024, during the peak heat of the day, at FMFD Station #11, located at 2033 Jackson Street, Fort Myers, Lee County, Florida.*
- *The evaluation was administered, supervised, and controlled entirely by FMFD personnel acting within the course and scope of their employment with the City.*
- *The PAE consisted of an untimed 105-foot aerial ladder climb followed by seven timed firefighting-simulation tasks to be completed within ten minutes, a mandatory candidate-evaluation checkpoint, and navigation of a 24-foot confined-space prop.*
- *All tasks were performed outdoors, and all components after the ladder climb were performed while the candidate wore personal protective equipment and carried a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) weighing approximately 22 to 25 pounds.*
- *On July 9, 2024, the ambient temperature in Fort Myers exceeded 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Certified weather data … documented a daily maximum temperature of 94 degrees Fahrenheit and a heat index reaching approximately 105 to 107 degrees Fahrenheit during the peak hours of the day.*
- *The PAE was not the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT), the firefighter candidate evaluation jointly developed by the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the International Association of Fire Fighters and widely adopted as the industry standard for pre-employment physical screening. FMFD instead used a proprietary evaluation that, upon information and belief, involves more events and a longer duration than the CPAT and imposes greater physiological demands upon candidates.*
- *At all times material, the City of Fort Myers, acting through FMFD, owed Nathaniel Lee Wilcox a duty of ordinary care. When FMFD invited Nathaniel to its facility, directed him to perform maximal-exertion tasks in extreme heat, and assumed exclusive control over the conditions under which he would perform those tasks, it undertook a duty to exercise reasonable care for his safety.*
- *By requiring Nathaniel to perform maximal-exertion physical tasks in extreme environmental heat, while carrying protective equipment, at a time, place, and under conditions that FMFD alone selected and controlled, FMFD created a foreseeable zone of risk of serious bodily injury and death.*
- *Having created that risk and assumed control over the conditions that generated it, FMFD owed Nathaniel a common-law duty to exercise reasonable care to protect him against that risk, including*

the duty to guard against, and to respond appropriately to, the exertional and heat-related medical emergency that its own conduct made foreseeable.

- *At or near the conclusion of the most physically demanding portion of the PAE, at approximately 4:00 p.m., Nathaniel reported shortness of breath and severe leg cramping. As he was assessed by FMFD personnel, he became increasingly confused and combative and was hypotensive and tachycardic, with altered mental status and diaphoresis.*
- *These are hallmark signs and symptoms of exertional heat stroke, a recognized life-threatening emergency, and were among the very life-threatening signs identified in FMFD's own Procedure 905 as requiring transport to a medical facility.*
- *FMFD personnel failed to recognize the severity of Nathaniel's condition, failed to connect his deterioration to the heat stress created by the environmental conditions and the physical work performed at FMFD's exclusive direction and control, failed to implement any meaningful cooling intervention, failed to remove him from exertion and heat and position him appropriately, and delayed appropriate response.*
- *Rather than being placed supine with legs elevated as even the City's own Employee Safety Program directs, Nathaniel was placed in a seated position against a wall, worsening his circulatory compromise.*
- *No core (rectal) temperature, the only temperature measurement reliable in suspected exertional heat stroke, was obtained in the field. A tympanic temperature of 97.8 degrees Fahrenheit recorded by FMFD was clinically unreliable, was contradicted by Nathaniel's obvious signs and symptoms, and could not be used to exclude exertional heat stroke.*
- *The only cooling intervention attempted, a single ice pack applied at the neck, did not constitute a meaningful cooling intervention for a patient in suspected exertional heat stroke.*
- *Appropriate rapid whole-body cooling, by cold-water immersion or aggressive whole-body ice-water application, was never attempted.*
- *Emergency medical services with transport capability arrived from Lee County at approximately 4:12 p.m. By that time, Nathaniel's skin was documented as hot, dry, and pale, consistent with advanced heat stroke, with a blood pressure of 88/50 and a pulse of 138.*
- *Upon being loaded into the ambulance, Nathaniel went into pulseless electrical activity, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation was initiated.*
- *Approximately 46 minutes elapsed between the onset of Nathaniel's symptoms and his arrival at Gulf Coast Medical Center. On arrival he was in profound metabolic failure, with catastrophic acidosis and laboratory evidence of acute muscle, kidney, and cardiac injury and developing coagulopathy.*
- *His condition continued to deteriorate, and he was pronounced dead on July 9, 2024, at 6:41 p.m.*

The complaint further alleges that Wilcox had a documented medical history placing him at risk for exertional collapse associated with sickle cell trait (ECAST), and that his collapse and death resulted from exertional heat stroke, ECAST, or a combination of the two.

According to the complaint, Fort Myers Fire had no protocol for identifying candidates with sickle cell trait, no modified testing procedures or enhanced monitoring for such candidates during extreme heat, and no process to advise applicants that the assessment would take place outdoors during a Southwest Florida summer afternoon. The complaint further alleges that written instructions provided to test proctors directed them to suspend testing only in the event of severe rain and contained no guidance concerning heat monitoring, recognition of heat illness, or emergency cooling procedures.

The complaint alleges that the Lee County Medical Examiner declined to accept the case, so Wilcox's family retained forensic pathologist Dr. Rebecca MacDougall to perform a private autopsy. Dr. MacDougall concluded that Wilcox died from complications of heat-related illness associated with physical exertion.

The lawsuit also references the 2017 heat-stroke death of a Lee County high school athlete. According to the complaint, that incident led the Florida Legislature to enact heat-safety requirements for school athletic activities that took effect in 2020. Those requirements include heat stress monitoring, written guidelines for modifying or suspending activities based on heat conditions, annual heat illness training, cold-water immersion or equivalent cooling methods, and on-site cooling before transport. The complaint cites those

statutory requirements as evidence that effective heat-illness prevention measures were well recognized before Wilcox's assessment was conducted.
The lawsuit seeks damages for wrongful death based on the City's failure to provide a reasonably safe physical assessment, failure to implement appropriate heat-related safety procedures, and failure to respond appropriately once he exhibited signs of heat illness.

THE BUILDING AND FIRE CODE ISSUES – WEEKLY REPORT ON FIRE FATALITIES

- **Home Fire Fatalities in the News**: https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/civilian-fatalities/

Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	49
7/25/26 Queens, NYC, Female 78	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	97
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	679
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA 55
	#2 NY 49
	#3 OH 42
Civilian home fire fatalities in 2026: 1088 = 35.0 weekly	
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 my question to you is; when does a new home become an old home?	

***Maryland Firefighters Respond to Several CSST Fires in Single Day

Susan Nicol

Lightning strikes caused failures of corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST) that sparked fires in structures in five Maryland counties.
Like fire departments across the country, Maryland firefighters responded to several structure fires during a recent storm.
But there was more to the five July 18 incidents than simple lighting strikes. All involved corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST), a pipe often covered in yellow plastic that carries natural gas or propane into homes and businesses.
While there were no injuries during the most recent incidents, two Maryland firefighters were killed in fires involving CSST – Howard County Lt. Nathan Flynn in 2018, and Frederick County Capt. Josh Laird in 2021.
Their widows weren't willing to sit idly by. They researched what caused their husbands' deaths, and armed with the information, took it to Maryland lawmakers.
In 2022, then Gov. Larry Hogan signed the Flynn and Laird Act that prohibits the use of non-arc-resistant jacketed CSST.
In 2025, legislators took it another step further by making it illegal to sell, offer to sell or distributing the tubing.
But, the two didn't take a victory lap. They stayed focused.
And, the issue is likely to come up in next year's session in Annapolis.
"Builders have simply changed the color from yellow to black. It's just as dangerous and we're documenting the failures. It's not safe," Laird told Firehouse.
A legislative committee was ordered to study the issue and report back before the Maryland General Assembly convenes in January.
"We weren't allowed to testify. But contractors and builders were," she said.
Depending on the outcome of the study, Laird added additional legislation may be prepared.
Two of the recent fires occurred in jurisdictions where their husbands answered their final alarms.

FREDERICK COUNTY

Lightning struck and followed the line from the outside into the basement of an Urbana home where the CSST failed and arced.
"The flame broke a water pipe above that put out the fire. But the gas continued to flow and fill the house," explained Frederick County Deputy Fire Marshal Eddie Ruch.

“The homeowners were out of town. A person who came to walk the dog, hours after the storm, noticed the gas odor and called it in.
"We were very, very lucky.”
The incident occurred three miles from where Laird was killed after falling into the basement after the CSST-related fire.
Ruch said since the line-of-duty death, he and other firefighters in the county are more aware of the dangers of basement fires.

HOWARD COUNTY
Howard County firefighters found a basement fire in a bed and breakfast in Ellicott City.
They contained the fire to the basement, and there were no injuries.
Investigators with the county fire marshal’s office determined lightning struck the CSST line that was carrying natural gas.
They determined the building was unsafe and could not be occupied pending repairs and an inspection, a county fire department spokesperson wrote in statement to Firehouse.
The fire occurred five days before the eighth anniversary of Flynn's final alarm.

CECIL COUNTY
A resident in an Elkton house found a fire in the ceiling space after hearing a crackling sound.
“He used a fire extinguisher and a garden hose until the fire company arrived,” Deputy State Fire Marshal Oliver Alkire said.
The fire that caused $2,000 damage was tied to a lightning strike and subsequent CSST failure.
The smoke alarm didn’t activate due to the location of the fire.

CARROLL COUNTY
A CSST failure also was determined to have caused a house fire in Sykesville.
The occupants, a father and daughter, noticed a light haze in their house, and called 9-1-1, Sykesville Fire Department Deputy Chief David Polikoff explained.
The fire damaged the basement ceiling and first floor.
Firefighters in Salisbury also responded to a similar incident that weekend. However, no further information could be obtained.
Laird and Flynn, who have shared their stories across the country, encourage firefighters to report the CSST-related incidents on their website: Phoenix Advocates.

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

Southern York County, Pennsylvania Junior Fire Camp aims to inspire next generation of volunteer firefighters

Turnout gear, fire trucks and hands-on training marked the first day of Southern York County Junior Fire Camp Monday at the Shrewsbury Volunteer Fire Company.
The weeklong camp gives teens ages 12 to 17 an inside look at the fire service while encouraging them to consider volunteering in the future.
Volunteers from the Shrewsbury, Glen Rock, New Freedom and Stewartstown volunteer fire companies are leading the camp, teaching participants skills like CPR and first aid, hose operations, ladder safety, search and rescue, vehicle extrication and leadership.
Organizers say the goal isn’t just to teach firefighting skills, it’s to introduce young people to the fire service at a time when volunteer departments across Pennsylvania continue to face recruitment challenges.
The Firefighter Chase Hartlaub Memorial Foundation is covering the cost for every camper, making it possible for participants to attend at no cost to their families.
[The Chase Hartlaub Memorial Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused on promoting volunteer firefighting and addressing the need for mental health awareness in the emergency services field. Funding is used to pay for mental health care, financial need or medical care for volunteers in the community and to pay for training for youth in Pennsylvania. Gogetembrothers.org]

Fire fight cools down, but issues remain

After months of infighting over ways to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters, it seems the multiple associations that attempt to represent those firefighters finally have found some common ground.

But that doesn't mean the disputes are over.

Last month, both houses of the State Legislature passed a bill, which was sponsored by Sen. Monica Martinez in the Senate, that would quadruple an income tax credit offered to firefighters and ambulance workers — pushing it from $200 to $800.

If Gov. Kathy Hochul signs the legislation, it would mark the first bump in the tax credit since it was introduced 20 years ago.

And it could help volunteer departments in their efforts to recruit and retain firefighters — an issue that has been a problem for years.

That issue has led to disputes between the largest association — the Firefighters Association of the State of New York, or FASNY — and some of the other groups that represent fire chiefs, commissioners, coordinators and others.

But the various groups have come together in support of the tax credit legislation — even as everyone recognizes it's not the sole answer.

"We are eager to utilize this important measure as a tool to help address the statewide volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention issue," said Ralph Raymond, a commissioner with the North Massapequa Fire District who serves as second vice president with the Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York.

"I do think that we're pretty much shoulder to shoulder in supporting this," said FASNY secretary John D'Alessandro.

D'Alessandro said there's an ongoing campaign to encourage Hochul to sign the legislation, including more than 2,000 members who've signed online letters in support.

Hochul has previously provided funding for the volunteer firefighters' infrastructure and training needs, but it's unknown whether she will sign the tax credit legislation.

"Governor Hochul recognizes the vital role volunteer firefighters play in maintaining the safety and security of New York communities across the state," spokesman Gordon Tepper said in an email. "This administration has made record investments in recruitment, retention, and mental health initiatives to support New York's volunteer firefighters and first responders, and the Governor will review this legislation."

Even if she signs it, however, the tax credit won't alone solve the problem.

"It is not the magic bullet," D'Alessandro said. "It is not the magic ingredient that is going to solve the recruitment and retention challenges, but it is another valuable option in the toolbox."

And Raymond noted that he and his association continue to seek legislation that would allow nominal compensation for volunteer firefighters. The Assembly support is there, he said, and the group is working to gain State Senate support. A FASNY spokesman said the larger group, too, supports current incarnations of the nominal compensation proposal.

"The residents of New York State deserve the highest level of fire and emergency services, and we will continue to advocate for policies that strengthen and sustain our volunteer fire service for generations to come," Raymond said.

Despite the newfound agreement between the associations, there are still signs that issues remain. Next month, FASNY will hold its annual officer elections. Typically, there is no competition for the positions, as a FASNY representative in one position simply moves up the ladder to the next rung. But this year, there is a competition for the FASNY presidency, as Sayville Fire Department's Donald Corkery, the former president of the fire chiefs group and the Association of Fire Districts, is challenging current FASNY first vice president Donald Farrell, in what some are calling the battle of the Donalds.

And some are already taking sides in an election that may help to determine what comes next for FASNY, and for firefighters across the state.

The Sayville Fire Department, unsurprisingly, has lent its support to Corkery. The Hudson Valley Volunteer Firefighters Association, meanwhile, backed Farrell.

"His opponent who is from downstate has very little past involvement with FASNY," the Hudson Valley association said of Corkery on its website.

But no matter who's elected, D'Alessandro noted that the central concern — the need for more volunteer firefighters — remains the same.
"We need people," he said. "That's the bottom line."

FIRE APPARATUS

This week's Burning Question Concerning: When Do I Replace My Apparatus?

The easy answer is, it depends.
NFPA 1900 the standard dealing with motorized apparatus states the following;
Service Life Benchmarks (The 15/25 Rule)15 Years:

- Recommended maximum years for frontline service, after which the apparatus should move to reserve status or undergo major evaluation for refurbishment.
- 25 Years: Recommended hard stop for total retirement and removal from the emergency vehicle fleet entirely.

It depends on how many calls a year you go on and what those calls entail, are the EMS calls or are they working fires or are they alarm bells? 1900 is the standard that applies to all fire apparatus whether you respond to 200 calls or 2,000 calls, it's a benchmark.
Here are some other considerations:

- **NFPA 1900 Compliance:** Governs ongoing inspection, testing, and criteria for determining whether an aging vehicle is safe to keep in service or must be retired.
- **Safety Tech Gaps**: Older units often lack modern critical safety features like electronic stability control, rollover protection systems (ROPS), and 3-point seat belts. You would have to evaluate what your apparatus has or doesn't have.
- **Financial Tipping Point:** Industry best practice suggests replacing a vehicle if a single major repair exceeds 50% of its current value, or if yearly maintenance costs climb past 10% of a new build cost. Remember a new build today is $1M per unit. I'm thinking that it would be hard for many smaller departments to achieve these numbers with limited use of your apparatus.

The following are physical indicators that your apparatus has reached the end of its useful life:

- **Parts obsolescence:** When a manufacturer goes out of business or stops supporting a chassis, finding original equipment manufacturer (OEM) parts becomes nearly impossible. A simple electronic or mechanical failure can render an otherwise functional truck permanently inoperable for an undetermined amount of time.
- **Structural corrosion:** A major difference exists between cosmetic surface rust and deep, structural decay. Once corrosion gets into the main frame rails, the torque box that supports an aerial or the substructure of a pumper body, the truck's integrity is compromised. This damage is often a nonnegotiable sign that the apparatus is no longer safe to operate.
- **Change in mission profile:** If your service area has gained new high-rise developments, increased call volume or increased highway traffic, a 20-year-old pumper might be physically incapable of meeting the new demands within your service area.
- **Recurring safety failures:** If a truck repeatedly fails pump tests or experiences recurring issues with its brakes, steering or transmission engagement, it is a liability.

These days there are several options; new, re-furbish or used vehicles from departments that have not abused the apparatus. A re-furbished piece of apparatus will normally provide an additional 5 to 15 years of service life, depending on the extent and quality of the rebuild and how the vehicle is used.

GREEN ENERGY AND THE IMPACT ON THE FIRE SERVICE

Cause of Oswego County transfer station fire revealed: lithium batteries not disposed of properly

The cause of an overnight fire at the Bristol Hill Transfer Station has been revealed to be lithium-ion batteries that were thrown away and not disposed of properly.
This is the second fire caused by lithium batteries at the landfill in the last two years.

In Syracuse, the improper disposal of lithium batteries has become a reoccurring issue. “Over the last two years, ***we’ve had (at least) twenty incidents***,” said Syracuse Fire Department Deputy Chief Rusty Cowburn back in April 2026. “Twenty that were either caused directly or indirectly – or a contributing factor – lithium batteries were in that equation.”

When it comes to the disposal of batteries, it’s important to read the label to identify if it’s rechargeable, or contains lithium. “You don’t actually want to throw these things away,” said OCRRA Director of Recycling & Reduction Kristen Lawton.

“One, it’s technically illegal in New York State to throw out your rechargeable batteries. They cannot go in your trash, but also those materials can be recycled and recovered from them.”

[THEN NYS NEEDS TO MAKE IT EASY FOR CONSUMERS TO DISPOSE OF LI-ION BATTERIES OR THIS PROBLEM WILL CONTINUE, DO YOU KNOW HOW/WHERE YOU CAN RECYCLE L-I BATTERIES? THE CITY OF SYRACUSE HAS 4 LOCATIONS TO DISPOSE OF RECHARGABLES, THEY CAN ALSO BE DROPPED OFF NEAR YOU BY GOING TO BATTERYNETWORK.ORG/LOCATOR]

NEIGHBOR’S HELPING NEIGHBORS, thank you for your support!!

Gansevoort Fire Department Car Show

Saturday August 8th, 10am until 2pm, rain date August 9th
1870 Route 32 Gansevoort, NY
Chick BBQ, Raffles, T-Shirt sale, Trophies in several categories
Registration $15, Day of Show $20

Gansevoort Fire Department Breakfast

See you in the fall, September 20th to be exact.

Clifton Park Fire Department Breakfast

Next Breakfast will be held in October at a date to be announced.

Speigletown Fire Department Breakfast 2nd Sunday of each month

Sunday October 11th from 7:30 to 11:30, $10 adults, $5 children, under 5 free

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We salute all of the kitchen help who hustle, giving up their Sunday mornings, to make these events special for all the attendees and work hard to support their fire company’s. Thank you for your tough work and dedication.

GENERAL INTEREST TO ALL

Mindset: An Age of Change

Jerry Tracy, Kevin Yoos

KEY TAKAWAYS

- Firefighters must adapt to new technologies and methodologies related to fire dynamics, suppression techniques, and ventilation to enhance life safety.
- Ventilation practices have evolved from historical tactics based on wooden structures to modern approaches considering fire-resistive construction and flow paths.
- Tactical actions such as venting windows can unintentionally accelerate fire development, especially when wind is a factor or when a fire has progressed to a decay stage.
- Understanding building construction is critical for firefighters, especially with new materials and designs that may present unique challenges during firefighting operations.

The 21st century has thus far proven to be an “age of change,” with extreme weather incidents, social unrest, and violence. Material science and engineering have introduced new construction and renovations that present new challenges to the fire service. The fire service must remain open-minded, adaptable, and aware

of the advancements in technology and methodologies. These may pertain to fire dynamics, fire suppression techniques, ventilation, and firefighter health and well-being, all of which will improve our mission, focusing on the life safety for the people we serve to protect. Our spirit and culture will remain the same, yet our mindset needs to remain curious and amenable to change. Every member entering the fire service should be given the history of their organization or the development of the volunteer forces they are about to join. They should have an understanding as to how their fire department evolved with respect to its practice and policy of fire extinguishment and the fact that ventilation can be beneficial or detrimental to that effort.

VENTILATION AND CONSTRUCTION

Ventilation was usually considered to have a positive effect in conjunction with fire suppression and search. It's also worth mentioning that much of the tactics published came from the firefighting experience of the 18th century. Structural firefighting tactics emerged from crews' experiences in structures built solely of wood and then evolved to what is considered ordinary construction, built of brick walls supporting wood joist for floors and roofs. That would include heavy timber used for places of worship, factories, warehouses, and shipping terminals. Fire-resistive construction would not become common until the 19th century, yet the characteristics of fire dynamics changed as flow paths for fire and smoke changed. Wood, ordinary construction, and heavy timber structures had flow paths that allowed fire and smoke to extend horizontally and vertically by means of voids in ceilings and walls that housed plumbing, gas and electric utilities, dumbwaiters, elevator shafts, and stairs; oxygen was available because of leakage in the envelope of the fire space and building itself. Fire-resistive construction with fewer voids meant we playing the same sport but in a different arena. For the most part, our ventilation practice was the same in all of these construction types—perform vertical ventilations as soon as possible and horizontal ventilation (opposite the nozzle) when a hoseline was charged and in place for extinguishment. The practice of venting roof hatches/doors and skylights was used to expedite the removal of smoke from what was usually the one and only primary stairs leading to all the occupied spaces, providing better visibility for the hose advance and search effort on the fire floor and those above. Of course, horizontal ventilation would assist, and it was suggested not to vent prematurely before water was available and applied.

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

There have been many books published about strategy and tactics over the years but many lack a comprehensive understanding of fire dynamics and the fact that our tactical actions could precipitate a negative fire development. Venting windows with wind being a factor will stoke a fire. Arriving to a fire late because of delayed notification may conceal a fire having progressed to the stage of decay. Our awareness must realize that the first opening (door or window) could initiate rapid fire development (RFD). As the cost of energy to heat homes became a factor, insulation was used to eliminate drafts or leakage, which also eliminated drafts providing oxygen to incipient fires. Most common fuels will burn to the stage of decay having consumed what oxygen is available to levels below 14% in the space of origin. This would set the stage for the phenomena of a backdraft. In such a condition, the space has an ignition source, fuel that contributed to the inception, and fire gases (smoke) that are at their temperature to ignite, yet the oxygen level is below the point of ignition. When firefighters open a door or window, this could cause the space to ignite with the power of an explosion. It was a common dictum during the "War Years" (1960-70s) of the FDNY that before we opened a door companies ought to "stay low and let it blow." In other words, the fire may accelerate with the introduction of air to the point of blowing back out of this opening—we now effectively refer to that opening as a "flow path." These tactical pauses gave the firefighters a moment to observe what happened and avoid being in the path of that event. It may be worth mentioning how that has been refined with current practice as the fire service has gained knowledge with ventilation research conducted by the National Institute of Technology (NIST), Underwriters Laboratories (UL), and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF).

Smoke explosions are another phenomenon that may be conflated with backdraft. In these instances, the fire is burning in a closed space, producing fire gases (smoke) rich with carbon monoxide and other fuels that are above their limits of ignition. They do not necessarily have to be at their ignition temperature as in the case of backdraft. Introducing additional air (oxygen) enables these gases to mix and balance to their optimal limits of ignition. The fire (ignition source) can be remote to the area or space where this fuel (smoke) is accumulating and our operations change the ventilation profile of the structure by opening doors, windows, or roof cuts.

MORE ON VENTILATION

It is also important to acknowledge that ventilation is performed not merely to release or remove heat and smoke from a space or building but also to manage and control conditions by directing and control by providing a path and flow. Our understanding of controlling flow has been practiced in strip mall structures (taxpayers). By placing a vent hole directly above the fire store/space, this would reduce/eliminate lateral fire spread in a common cockloft. If a hole was cut and placed remote from the fire location, it would draw not only the smoke but fire as well. Our understanding of methods and controls can now incorporate procedures of smoke management in multistory buildings from areas where smoke is expected to travel and accumulate to create untenable conditions for the presence of life.

It is a fact that more people die from smoke inhalation than direct exposure to fire. It is incumbent upon the fire service to educate members of all ranks where smoke will accumulate to lethal concentrations in each type of construction and the methods and disciplines required to manage and control that. As reviewed in the recent Firefighter Air Supplement, crews can use a variety of methods for smoke management and control to enhance the work effort and reduction of self-contained breathing apparatus use and replenishment for firefighters, focusing on the life safety of occupants residing in multifamily housing, especially high rise. Ultimately it is the responsibility of the incident commander, but the actions of every member on the fireground will influence the outcome. The FDNY has sought to educate membership on these risks as well as the use of tools and equipment in these efforts. The fire service in general must be aware of these concepts and consider implementation in their strategy and tactics. Europe has been a leader with respect to smoke management with the use of "smoke blockers," curtains hung in doorways to fire areas and stair doors to limit smoke migration and still allow entry by fire teams for fire extinguishment and search. Crews can also use fans for smoke control and pressurization of arteries of access and egress on a limited scale.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

New fire service members must also be given a comprehensive understanding of building construction, including what's on the horizon in this age of change. Advancements in material science are being introduced so often it's a chore to keep abreast of what challenges are being brought to the fore that should raise our attention. Structures are appearing on skylines with design features never before imagined, such as the use of concrete with additives providing added strength. The skyline of Miami has changed with the construction of a 62-story residential tower designed by Zaha Hadid Architects, named the "One Thousand Museum" opposite Museum Park. It incorporates glass fibre reinforced concrete formwork supporting an exoskeleton frame for the height of the building (see also Dunn's *Collapse of Burning Buildings*). The use of cross-laminated timber, particle board, and oriented strand board (OSB) is becoming more common in the construction of private dwellings and apartment complexes throughout North America. Their design and structural integrity is being supported with the use of lightweight elements like wood truss I-beams. Manufactured with engineered wood of less mass and materials, these web members are subject to early failure. Firefighters must understand what constitutes structural integrity, the weaknesses of each construction type, points of connection, and the fact that structural failure can be expected because of the degradation by fire. Larger commercial buildings supported by block or cement walls may reveal upon arrival a wall to be out of plumb, leaning, or bulging. That is a warning sign that a structural element may be compromised or suggest impending potential failure That area should be considered a collapse zone. Firefighters must also understand which walls of a building are load bearing and could fail early. Consider those buildings that share bearing walls referred to as "party walls," which are usually on the B and D sides of a building. These are commonly found with row housing of wood frame and ordinary construction (brownstones). The front A and C sides may not be bearing and may be subject to failure if heavy fire compromises their support. If a rear wall has the added eccentric (weight) load of a fire escape and you are dealing with an advanced fire degrading the connections to those walls, that will precipitate an early collapse.

We have also learned lessons from buildings with bow-truss roofs. [11] Not only are the side walls bearing if the trusses span in that direction, but also the front and rear walls are susceptible to failure—there may be hip rafters supporting the roof from these end trusses that slope down to the top of these walls. If the truss fails, it pushes out the hip rafters, causing these walls to collapse outward, meaning all four sides of the structure must be considered a collapse zone

Tilt-slab construction is becoming more common in the construction of commercial buildings. These walls are subject to failure if the roof supports are compromised. The walls may fall into the structure, but they usually fall outwards. The height of the wall must be considered a collapse zone.

TAKE A MOMENT TO SMILE

CLASSIFIED

CAFDA IS SEEKING A TREASURER FOR OUR FIRE SERVICE NOT-FOR-PROFIT ASSOCIATION.

Our current excellent treasurer has announced that he will be giving up the position as soon as we find a replacement due to increased workload with his own business. Any candidate should be familiar with Quick Books and the structure and operation of a not-for-profit organization as well as some familiarization with the operation of fire districts in New York State. CAFDA offers a stipend which won't make you rich, but you get to hang out with some great people, get free meals prior to meetings and trying to provide a service to fire district officials. The Association requires our treasurers to be bonded. If you are interested let us know by providing a resume and cover letter to secretary@cafda.net.

WHO ARE YOUR CAFDA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR 2026?

OFFICERS

President, Tom Rinaldi, Commissioner, Stillwater Fire District
1st Vice President, Ellen Martin, Deputy Treasurer Clifton Park Fire District

DIRECTORS:

Les Bonesteel Past Commissioner, Burnt Hills/Saratoga,
Skip Smith, Commissioner, West Crescent/Saratoga
Joyce Petkus Treasurer Greenfield/Saratoga,
Ed Woehrle Commissioner Niskayuna #1/Schenectady
Art Hunsinger, Ex-Officio Member Clifton Park Fire District.
We would consider expanding the number of Directors if individuals from other counties would volunteer to participate!!

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

The Capital Area Association represents any fire district that wishes to join CAFDA. Fire District Officials include Commissioners, Treasurers, and Deputy Treasurers. Secretaries and Chiefs are also invited to join in!
If your Fire District is a member, you are a member!!

Please advise your secretaries that all correspondence should be mailed to:
All correspondence & Capital Area Fire Districts Association Mailing Address should be directed to:
CAFDA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063 or EMAIL: SECRETARY@CAFDA.NET
Financial issues should be addressed to: TREASURER@CAFDA.NET
518-407-5020

Wish to become a member of CAFDA, go to CAFDA.net/membership to apply.

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

Business Partner Applications Available At: WWW.CAFDA.NET

Stay tuned for some new Business Partners for 2026.

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 2026. You are invited to our monthly membership meeting and to any of our social events..

FIRE SERVICE LEGAL SERVICES

D'AMATO LAW GROUP

The D'Amato Law Group LLP
Gregory Serio, Partner
Alyssa B. Snyder, Partner
111 Washington Ave Suite 600
Albany, NY 12210
518.426.3800
Email: gserio@dlgny.com or asnyder@dlgny.com
damatolawgroup.com

MONACO COOPER LAMME & CARR PLLC

Monaco Cooper Lamme & Carr PLLC
1881 Western Ave, Suite 200 Albany, NY 12203
Nicole Strippoli 518-941-9040
NSTRIPPOLI@MCLCLAW.COM
https://mclclaw.com

HANNIGAN LAW FIRM PLLC
Terence, Emily and Tim Hannigan
388 Kenwood Ave, Delmar NY 12054
Tel 518-869-9911
Litigation-Fire & EMS-Municipal Law-Not-for-Profit Corp Law-Personal Injury-Labor & Employment
Hannigan.law

Ducharme, Clark & Sovern, LLP
Jack Clark, Fire District Attorney
646 Plank Rd. Clifton Park, NY 12065
518-373-1482
Ducharmeclark.com

Whiteman Osterman & Hanna LLP
Bond Counsel
Robert J. McLaughlin, Partner
One Commerce Plaza, Albany, NY 12260
518-487-7697 Cell 518-813-6333
mclaughlin@woh.com
www.woh.com

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n.lobosco@ctmale.com

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Melissa Smith – mlsmith@labellapc.com
Senior Marketing Manager
518-903-8394
4 British American Blvd
Latham, NY 12110

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Ryan Sapienza
Project Manager/Technology Consultant
518-754-4623
Service 518-869-3614
930 Albany Shaker Rd, Latham, NY 12110

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Wendel, Centerpointe Corporate Park, 375 Essjay Road, Suite 200, Williamsville, NY 14221
716.688.0766
Amy Numrich, MBA
Digital Marketing & Events Specialist
anumrich@wendelcompanies.com

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Dennis Ross, Practice Leader
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