THE BULLETIN

JULY 11, 2026

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

CAPITAL SHORT TAKES

- A recording of the video Future of the Fire Service, panel discussion and open forum is available on the AFDNYS.org website.
- ***BUDGET SCHEDULE PAGE 4 also on CAFDA.net***
- ***ELECTION SCHEDULE PAGE 9 also on CAFDA.net***
- *Greenworks Tools is recalling about 554,780 Kobalt-branded yard power tools and batteries due to a fire risk, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Charging the lithium-ion batteries through their USB-C port while the batteries are attached to the tools can cause the batteries to short-circuit, posing a fire hazard, according to the recall notice.

TRAINING OPPORTUNTIES:

From CAFDA

1 ***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 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.**
- ✓ **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

Beyond ISO Grading Score: How to Navigate ISO and Strengthen Your Fire Department

Join us on: **Monday, July 20th, 2026** at 2pm ET

Your fire department's ISO rating is more than a score; it is a powerful tool to support vital funding, staffing and operational growth. **In this webinar**, two veteran fire chiefs share how they've used the ISO process to build stronger cases for additional resources to improve service delivery while increasing both citizen and firefighter safety.

Learn about the common pitfalls in ISO reporting and how to address then before your inspection. Through real-world examples, discover how collaboration, planning, and communication can elevate your department. If you're looking to turn ISO grading into opportunity, this webinar is for you.

REGISTER AT THIS LINK:
https://endeavor.omeclk.com/portal/wts/ug%5Ec%7C9e%7Cv8vqejyywqjDkAgh%5Ej%5E8qV7fbT82TtoCzYgHDh8jO7mV3CP0N64%7CCoeOER5rGka

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NYSAFC is Bringing Hands-On Training to Your Area!

FIRE BEHAVIOR ON THE INSIDE
REGISTRATION: https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/firebehavior
FLASHOVER
REGISTRATION: https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/flashover

NYSAFC 2026 Seminar Series "Dangerous Spaces: Challenges and Tactics When Dealing with Garage and Basement Fires" With Chief/Commissioner Michael Lombardo (Buffalo Fire Department)

https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/2026seminarseries
Pre-registration is encouraged. On-site registration will be accepted if space permits.
Note: A 3% service fee will be applied if paying by credit card.
2026 Dates and Locations are available at the website for this series.

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 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	PENDING SIGNATURE
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	PENDING SIGNATURE

			FREQUENCY CERTAIN AUTHORIZED ORGANIZATIONS MAY CONDUCT BINGO GAMES	
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

📌 NHTSA Releases New Reporting Form for First Responders. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has released its First Responder Incident Advanced Reporting (FRIAR) form. The form allows all first responders, while serving in their official capacity, to report vehicle related safety concerns they discover.

➡️ View the FRIAR form here: https://www.nhtsa.gov/report-a-safety-problem#/first-responder/first-responder-selection

From Federal DOL/OSHA

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

FIRE DISTRICT FINANCIAL NEWS

FIRE DISTRICT BUDGET PROCESS SCHEDULE 2026

On or before September 29th

- Adopt proposed budget for 2027, including fund balance estimate for end of 2026
- File proposed budget with District Sectary
- Post budget on fire district's website
- Provide copy of proposed budget for 2027, including fund balance estimate for end of 2026 to town clerk of towns in which district is located

September 30th to October 5th

- Post notice of **budget hearing** on fire district website and signboard (if district maintains a website/signboard)
- Provide copy of notice of budget hearing to town clerk of towns in which district is located. Town clerks must also post the notice on clerk's bulletin board and town signboard)

On or before October 15th

- Publish notice of budget hearing in official newspaper or, if not official newspaper, in newspaper having general circulation in district, and publicly post notice
- **Treasurer Performs Following Task on Comptroller's Website**: After adopting proposed budget complete tax cap levy form for New York Comptroller's Office and "save" but do not submit. Determine if proposed budget will exceed tax cap

Annual Budget Hearing Date Selected

- 2026 Date October 20th [**can be any day in the third week of October**]

October 20th to November 4th

- Subject to certain restrictions, make changes, alternations and revisions to proposed budget. After hearing, can lower budget but not raise.
- **Before adopting Fire District Annual Budget** determine if the tax levy will exceed tax levy cap and if so the Fire District must pass a resolution by a 60% vote of its board to override the tax cap

On or before November 4th

- Before passing any resolutions necessary to override the tax cap levy and adopting the Fire District Annual Budget "submit" the Fire District budget/ tax cap form to the New York State Comptroller's Office on the form prescribed by them
- Adopt fire district annual budget

On or before November 7th

- Fire district secretary delivers two (2) certified copies of fire district annual budget for 2026 to town clerk of towns in which district is situated, (TL§181[3][c]) **and obtains receipt.**
- Make certain the final budget submitted includes any changes made to proposed budget after Budget Hearing, there is no going back!!

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

LAKE MOHEGAN FIRE DISTRICT – PROCUREMENT

Audit Objective

Did the Lake Mohegan Fire District (District) Board of Commissioners (Board) use a competitive process to procure goods and services?

Audit Period

January 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025
We extended our audit period to February 1, 2023, to review the purchase of pumper trucks.

Understanding the Audit Area

A board of fire commissioners and its officials should seek competition for goods and services to help guard against favoritism, extravagance and fraud, and help ensure public funds are used in an economical manner while allowing interested vendors a fair and equal opportunity to compete.
During the audit period, the District purchased 112 goods and services totaling $6.2 million.

Audit Summary

The Board and District officials did not always use a competitive process to procure goods and services in accordance with statutory requirements in New York State General Municipal Law (GML), the District's procurement policy or best practices. As a result, the Board and District officials lack assurance that procurements were made in a manner that promoted competition, transparency, free from favoritism and economical use of public funds. Adhering to GML and the District's procurement policy enhances public confidence in the procurement process and helps serve the best interests of taxpayers.

The Board could not support, that a competitive method was used to obtain goods and services totaling $5.3 million, representing 85 percent of the procurements made during the audit period. The Board did not:

- ***Maintain documentation to support adherence to the piggybacking exception to competitive bidding, or obtain competitive bids for 10 purchases totaling $4.7 million as required in GML and the District's procurement policy.***
- *Issue requests for proposals (RFPs) or use any other competitive process before procuring professional services from 12 vendors totaling $582,686 during the audit period.*
- *Obtain quotes for 13 purchases totaling $84,549, as required by the District's procurement policy.*

The report includes eight recommendations that, if implemented, will improve the District officials' ability to procure goods and services in accordance with statutory requirements, District policy and procurement best practices and enhance oversight and accountability and help ensure that goods and services are obtained through fair and competitive processes.

READ THE FULL REPORT HERE: https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2026/pdf/lake-mohegan-fire-district-2026-31.pdf

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SAYVILLE FIRE DISTRICT – CLAIMS AUDIT

Audit Objective

Did the Sayville Fire District (District) Board of Commissioners (Board) properly audit and approve claims before payment?

Audit Period

January 1, 2024 – February 28, 2025

Understanding the Audit Area

A board of fire commissioners (board) should conduct a thorough and deliberate audit of all claims, before authorizing them to be paid, to ensure that tax dollars are spent properly, efficiently and in the best interests of taxpayers. Auditing claims also helps the board ensure that internal controls are working as intended and monitor the financial duties of the fire district treasurer. The audit of claims is often the last line of defense for preventing unauthorized, improper or fraudulent claims from being paid. When a fire district has a strong claims auditing process, the control consciousness of its staff is enhanced because officers and employees are aware that a careful review of claims will occur before public funds are disbursed.

The District's 2024 expenditures totaled $3.6 million and were funded primarily by real property taxes. During the audit period, the District processed 1,586 claim vouchers (vouchers) totaling $2.6 million.

Audit Summary

The Board did not properly audit and approve all claims before payment. When the Board does not perform a thorough and complete review of claims to ensure that they are supported by adequate invoices or other documentation, the District has an increased risk that it could incur unnecessary costs or pay for goods or services that are not valid District expenditures.

- *We determined that the Board did not always perform a thorough and deliberate audit of claims before approving payments.*
- *We reviewed 365 claims totaling more than $1.5 million[1] and determined 260 claims (71 percent) totaling approximately $1.2 million should not have been approved because the claims did not contain sufficient information to allow for a proper audit, or they contained one or more discrepancies.*
- *In addition, none of the 365 claims had proper budget account codes, which prevented the Board from ensuring that there were sufficient appropriations available to pay the claims and caused some claims to be improperly approved.*

For example, although the District is a nonprofit organization, the Board approved claims that included sales taxes totaling $808. Also, claims totaling $277 were paid to purchase alcoholic beverages that officials used to dedicate (break the bottles on) a new fire truck.

The report includes nine recommendations that, if implemented, will improve the effectiveness of the District's claims audit processes

READ THE FULL REPORT HERE: https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2026/pdf/sayville-fire-district-2026-18.pdf

THE FIRE CHIEF'S OFFICE

Fire Department Professional Standards and Early Intervention Systems

Curt Varone

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Fire department Early Intervention Systems (EIS) are designed to intervene—constructively and proportionately—before a firefighter's conduct escalates into career-ending misconduct, scandalous headlines or catastrophic liability. They aren't designed to surveil or micromanage.
- An EIS is a data-informed management tool that tracks objective indicators of performance and conduct to identify personnel whose behavior reflects potential underlying issues, which might be substance-related, family-related, stress-induced or psychological in nature.
- From the firefighter's standpoint, an EIS functions as a safety net, to catch individuals who might be struggling but are unable to recognize the problem or who are unwilling to self-report. From a municipal official's perspective, an EIS helps to mitigate the risk of grievances, arbitration costs, civil litigation, and/or substantial settlements or verdicts and, in strictly economic terms, to protect taxpayers' investment.

The fire service long has held itself to high standards of conduct. The values that underlie those standards—service, integrity, courage and accountability—are more than slogans. They define expectations in a profession where a lapse in judgment can have life-altering consequences. Yet even in a culture built on integrity and accountability, problems arise. Stress accumulates. Personal struggles spill into professional performance. Minor rule violations become patterns. Left unchecked, patterns become scandals.

Recognizing this reality, progressive departments have moved beyond reactive discipline toward structured Professional Standards systems. A key component has emerged: the Early Warning System (EWS), more accurately termed an Early Intervention System (EIS).

The terminology matters. Early warning suggests impending punishment. Early intervention better reflects the purpose. These systems are not designed to surveil or micromanage. They are designed to intervene—constructively and proportionately—before a firefighter's conduct escalates into career-ending misconduct, scandalous headlines or catastrophic liability.

WHAT ARE AN EIS?

An EIS is a data-informed management tool that tracks objective indicators of performance and conduct to identify personnel whose behavior reflects potential underlying issues. Those underlying issues may be substance-related, family-related, stress-induced or psychological in nature. They rarely are directly measurable. What is measurable are the outward indicators that correlate with elevated risk.

Most EIS programs rely on objective metrics, such as:

- Repeated citizen complaints.
- A spike or pattern in sick leave usage or workers' compensation claims.
- Multiple preventable vehicle accidents.
- A cluster of disciplinary actions.
- Documented patterns of tardiness, insubordination or interpersonal conflict.

On the EMS side, some departments analyze clinical performance indicators. They may examine refusal-against-medical-advice rates, drug administration frequency, deviation from protocol, or unusually long or short average call duration. These data points are reviewed monthly, quarterly and annually, with statistical outliers flagged for supervisory review.

The key is pattern recognition. A single complaint proves little. Two accidents that occur over a decade may be random. Five citizen complaints in six months, combined with escalating sick leave and documented conflict, tell a different story.

An effective EIS does not treat each instance as an independent disciplinary event. It treats multiple instances collectively as potential indicators of distress, burnout, disengagement or impaired judgment. The system's purpose is not to accumulate charges. It is to prompt leadership to ask a question: "Do we have an employee who needs help?"

TWO JUSTIFICATIONS, ONE SYSTEM

An EIS is uniquely powerful, because it satisfies two distinct but equally compelling rationales.

Firefighter's perspective: Preventing career-ending mistakes. The fire service culture emphasizes loyalty. It is a core value that we have each other's back. However, misconduct that leads to termination often is not a sudden error in judgment. It typically is a progression: small decisions, compounded stress, a lack of intervention at earlier stages.

The loyalty firefighters have for each other should extend beyond defending colleagues after misconduct occurs. It should include intervening beforehand.

An EIS creates structured opportunities for supervisors to engage in timely conversations. These may involve referral to peer support, employee assistance programs, counseling, substance abuse resources, mentorships or remedial training. In some cases, it may involve clear boundary-setting and formal performance improvement plans. The intervention may be supportive, corrective or both. The alternative is silence until termination becomes inevitable.

From the firefighter's standpoint, an EIS functions as a safety net. It catches individuals who may be struggling but unable to recognize the problem or who are unwilling to self-report. It creates a mechanism for intervention that is not triggered solely by misconduct. When framed properly, it is not an adversarial tool. It is a protective one.

Municipal official's perspective: Protecting the investment. Municipal officials and risk managers view firefighter loyalty through a different lens, one that's grounded in fiscal responsibility.

Recruiting, onboarding, equipping and training a firefighter represent a significant public investment. By the time that a firefighter completes academy training and probation, taxpayers invested tens of thousands of dollars in each member.

That investment is analogous to the purchase of new fire apparatus. If a newly delivered pumper fails to start on its second day in service, no responsible leader would order it scrapped. The department would diagnose the issue, repair it and restore it to operational readiness.

When a firefighter is terminated for preventable misconduct, the taxpayers' investment is lost just as surely as a scrapped pumper. The cost does not stop there.

Terminations frequently generate grievances, arbitration costs, civil litigation, and, in some cases, substantial settlements or verdicts. Add reputational harm and reduced morale, and the financial impact multiplies.

An effective EIS mitigates those risks. It reduces the likelihood of high-exposure incidents by addressing risk factors early. It lowers turnover that's driven by preventable discipline. It decreases the probability of pattern-and-practice allegations or negligent retention claims. In strictly economic terms, it protects the taxpayers' investment.

IMPLEMENTATION MATTERS

An EIS is only as credible as the Professional Standards framework in which it operates. If discipline within a department is perceived as arbitrary, retaliatory or weaponized, an EIS will be viewed as a targeting mechanism rather than a supportive tool.

Successful implementation requires:

- Clearly defined triggering thresholds.
- Objective, consistently applied metrics.
- Written policies that explain the purpose and process.
- Documentation of supervisory follow-up.
- Confidential handling of EIS data.
- Training for supervisors on appropriate interventions.

Transparency is critical. Firefighters must understand that being flagged does not equate to guilt. It initiates review, not punishment. Departments that fail to communicate—and honor—this distinction undermine the trust that is so essential for the system to be successful.

Equally important is proportionality. An EIS alert should be treated as a caution light, not a red flag. Many interventions may be informal conversations documented in supervisory notes. Others may warrant structured action plans.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Fire service culture tends to value toughness and self-reliance. Those traits may be strengths operationally but can become barriers when personnel are struggling. An EIS helps institutionalize attention to behavioral drift without requiring a firefighter to self-identify vulnerability. It also reinforces the principle that accountability and support are not mutually exclusive. A department can insist on professional standards while recognizing that human performance fluctuates under stress.

When integrated with peer support, mental health resources and leadership training, an EIS becomes part of a broader wellness and risk-management strategy. It shifts the organizational posture from reactive discipline to proactive leadership.

DESIGNED TO INTERVENE

An EIS is not designed to punish isolated mistakes but to detect patterns that suggest elevated risk—to the firefighter, colleagues, the public and the municipality.

From the firefighter's perspective, an EIS can mean the difference between a difficult conversation and a termination hearing. From the municipality's perspective, it can mean the difference between a manageable personnel issue and a multimillion-dollar liability event.

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Fire District Election Schedule for 2026

October 8th, 2026

Last day to adopt resolution permitting absentee ballots at the Annual Election. Absentee ballots are optional for fire districts. If previously approved, does not have to be redone.

October 23rd, 2026

Request County Board of Elections to provide a list of registered voters as of November 16th and to provide the list to the district by November 17th and order voting machines or other equipment and telephone coverage for the night of the election, if desired and available.

October 29th 2026

Last day to adopt resolutions designating Fire District Board of Elections, including Chairman and Election Inspectors and/or Ballot Clerks, fixing compensation of the individual members of the District Board of Elections

November 4th - 11th, 2026

Publish Notice of Election (and publicly post) in district newspaper including the following information: the date, place and hours of election; listing offices and propositions, if any, on the ballot; whether candidate petitions are required; the last day for voter registration; the procedure for absentee ballots, if any, and optionally designating the date(s) on which the Inspectors of Election will meet to prepare the register, where the meeting will be held, and the hours of such meeting

November 16th, 2026

Last day for voters to register at County Board of Elections to be Eligible to vote on December 8th, 2026 in Annual District Election

November 17th, 2026

County Board of Elections to mail lists of registered voters to Fire District Secretary.

November 18th, 2026

Last day to file petitions for candidates for office, if required, or notify secretary in writing of intent to run for office if petition not required.

November 19th, 2026

If absentee voting is permitted, mail absentee ballots to any registered voter whose registration record is marked "permanently disabled" on receipt of list from County Board of Elections. Ballot must be finalized to complete this task.

November 18th - November 23rd , 2026

Post Notice of Election on district website and signboard, if any, ***at least 15, but not more than 20 days before date of election. Remains on website until December 8th, 2026.***

November 18th - November 23rd , 2026

Copy of Notice of Election to town clerk for posting on municipal website, if any, bulletin board and signboard, if any, at least 15, but not more than 20 days before date of election.

- These notices [for websites, signboards and bulletin boards] must include time and place of election, officers to be elected, term of office and any other details regarding matters to be voted on as well as hours of polls being open for balloting. Suggest using regular Notice of Election published in district newspaper.

November 23rd , 2026

Suggested meeting date for Fire District Board of Elections to prepare register. Can be any other date you choose after receiving registration books.

December 1st , 2026

If absentee voting is permitted, last day to receive application for absentee ballot if the ballot is to be mailed

December 7th, 2026

Last day to receive application for absentee ballots if it is delivered personally to the voter or his/her agent.

December 8th, 2026

Election Day- 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. minimum may be additional consecutive hours prior to 6:00 p.m.

December 11th , 2026

File results (Canvass of Election) with Town Clerk.

December 15th, 2026

Secretary to deliver a report to the County Board of Elections indicating the persons on the list of registered voters labeled "inactive" who voted at the fire district election.

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/

POSITIVE OUTCOMES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FIRE SERVICE

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- Town of Dryden, Tompkins County, officials are in the process of potentially creating a unified fire district. The proposal, which the town is calling the Dryden Fire District, would consolidate business operations of the fire departments that are presently under contract with the town. The fire district that is under consideration would include the W.B. Strong Fire Company of Freeville, the Varna Volunteer Fire Company and the Neptune Hose Co. No. 1 of Dryden. Town officials and the three fire companies are now in the midst of discussions, following conversations at Dryden town board meetings. *Town Supervisor Jason Leifer noted in the past that the villages of Etna and Freeville, both of which are within the town of Dryden, would have to approve the creation of the district under New York state law. If approved, a fire commissioners' election would be held starting in 2027.* Leifer said on May 21 that each fire department is a nonprofit with a separate budget, and the proposed district would merge them into one budget line. A January deadline is in place, as efforts from town officials and the three departments to work out logistics begin.

  Town Deputy Supervisor Dan Lamb recommended at the June 11 meeting that work should be completed before the deadline. "The initial structuring of the fire district is where it's going to take some intense work, and people who understand what assets are among the departments, how they should be allocated, what the current needs are and what the long-term needs are in terms of building capacity or apparatus," Lamb added. "The public will never see a difference in terms of first responders. These departments are high performing, so they're going to be out the door just like they always have been."

  Dryden Fire Board Chair Tom Pirko, who has spoken on behalf of the three fire companies, mentioned that so far, local firefighters' reactions to the proposed unified fire district have been mixed. "I think there's a lot of nerves because nobody really knows what it's going to look like," Pirko noted, adding that the firefighters do have a "strong idea" of how the district could come out. "It's very unlikely, but it could go very badly. Again, very unlikely, but it could." At the May 21 town board meeting, Pirko expressed his confidence in each of the three departments and how they operate. "This isn't an operational issue with the three departments," Pirko added. "They're very well-run departments that work together very well with very good leadership."

Kuna, Nampa, Idaho, Fire District Officers Consider Consolidating. On a good day, Assistant Fire Chief James Trumble said the Kuna Rural Fire District has six firefighters on call. From the station on the corner of Boise Street and North Linder Road, those six firefighters can operate two fire engines, which serve an area of approximately 110 square miles. "That's on a good day," Trumble said. "If somebody takes a day off, gets sick, or gets injured, and I can't get someone to come back on overtime, I have to shut down one of those engines." The station receives about four calls each day, which already has the fire district stretched to its limit, Trumble said. One in four calls the Kuna Fire District receives needs to be routed to fire departments in neighboring areas.

"Right now we don't even have a ladder truck to respond to calls," Trumble told the Idaho Statesman. A solution may be at hand. Thanks to House Bill 208, which passed in 2025, fire districts in Idaho can consolidate into a single entity to pool resources and work together to cover service areas that may be understaffed. Kuna's neighbors in the Nampa Fire Protection District may be the answer to Kuna Fire's equipment and staffing problems. *The two fire districts are considering consolidating into a single massive one, which would serve*

about 165,000 people across some 210 square miles. Both districts are holding town halls to see what the public thinks, and firefighters say there's an urgent need to address new growth.

Kuna's population is exploding. It's among the 15 fastest-growing cities in the nation, according the U.S. Census Bureau. The city's population has ballooned by 30% over the last five years to more than 30,000 residents, and city officials aren't expecting that growth to slow down.

Kuna Rural Fire District, which is an independent taxing district separate from the city of Kuna, operates with a budget of less than $6 million. Eleven miles up the road, the Nampa Fire Protection District has a budget exceeding $39 million. That pays for 110 personnel working out of six fire stations, a training division and the administrative office. It also covers a fleet of response vehicles that includes four fire engines, a 100-foot aerial platform truck, a 75-foot ladder truck company, a squad truck, a Type 5 bush rig and a technical rescue team.

If the consolidation plan between the two fire districts is approved, the newly formed district would be better able to respond when the need arises.

"People might not understand that this will have an impact on homeowner's insurance," Trumble said. "Once you have an aerial fire truck accessible to your home, it can lower your homeowner's insurance."

In Idaho, properties more than 5 miles from a fire station can be assigned a high Public Protection Classification rating, according to the Idaho Surveying and Rating Bureau. This may increase premiums and could make it harder to secure standard policies or trigger coverage denials for people living in high-wildfire zones.

An 8% growth cap on all taxing districts including cities, counties, fire districts, ambulance districts and other non-school taxing districts was passed in 2021 under House Bill 389, but lawmakers decided earlier this year to allow ambulance and fire districts to raise their caps to 15% when they passed House Bill 959.

The boards of commissioners for both districts still have to vote on whether to go ahead with the plan, and before they do, they'll give the public several opportunities to weigh in. If 25% of electors in either district were to sign a petition challenging the plan, the public would need to vote, which would then require a simple majority for the consolidation to move forward, according to Idaho Code.

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

NEW TECHNOLOGY ASSISTS IN DETERMINING RESPONSIBILITY FOR AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENTS:THE DASH CAM

Reprint from Fire District Affairs

Fire districts and fire departments invest time and resources into training and the purchase of equipment that will assist personnel in driving safely. The goal is to efficiently and effectively arrive at the emergency scene to assist those in need. *However, the first objective must be safely driving to the scene of the emergency to protect responding personnel and others in the roadway.*

The community does not derive benefit from an emergency response unit that does not arrive at the scene due to an incident that occurs driving to the emergency. Creating the need for an emergency response to assist the emergency responders is counterproductive.

Fire districts and fire departments are finding it more difficult to secure and maintain insurance coverage because of the number and serious nature of the vehicular accidents that occur with responding apparatus. The insurance carriers want fire districts and fire departments to install technology in these vehicles that will deter unsafe driving. Manufacturers install data recording systems in vehicles that provide the objective observer with information on how the vehicle was driven from point "A" to point "B".

Some insurance carriers may strongly advocate for fire districts and fire departments to install dash cameras in the vehicles, so a video record is maintained on how the vehicle was operated. They are hopeful that the video recording will show that the fire apparatus, chief vehicle or ambulance was driven in a safe and prudent manner. They are also hopeful that the presence of the camera system will convince apparatus drivers to operate the vehicles safely.

When the Board of Fire Commissioners directs the dash cameras to be installed, very often they hear objections from fire department members. They do not want "Big Brother" observing their driving

techniques or other activities that may occur in the vicinity of the vehicle. Of course, those concerns do not consider that other vehicles on the roadway may have dash cameras and that the vehicle itself is already recording data on emergency vehicle operation.

It would not be surprising to find that the same members that object to dash cameras do not have time to attend EVOC and other driver training classes.

It is time for drivers of emergency vehicles and non-emergency vehicles to recognize that the technology is replacing the eyewitness and jurors favor the technology. It is best that they grasp this fact before that technology results in a jail sentence or a civil monetary judgment.

A recent newspaper article focused on a driver of a passenger vehicle being charged with second degree manslaughter and other crimes because of a fatal accident. In describing the accident, it was noted:

> *One second before the crash, ["Driver" (name removed)] was driving 81 mph, more than double the speed limit, according to an event data recorder obtained by search warrant from the Accord [the vehicle was a Honda Accord], authorities said. Prosecutors said Driver applied the brakes only one second before impact and was driving at 99% acceleration 5 seconds before the crash. Dash camera video, recovered from Driver's vehicle during the search warrant, contained footage of Driver running a red light 5 minutes before the crash while driving approximately 77 miles per hour.*

If you were sitting in a jury for a civil or criminal trial, how would you react to this evidence?

Would it be more persuasive than the testimony of driver?

The technology in fire vehicles is very advanced and very precise. Dash cameras may be an added piece to the puzzle, but they are more likely to gain the attention of your drivers and passengers.

Hopefully, they can contribute to a safer trip.

The ultimate goal has to be safer emergency driving, and we get there by training our personnel to operate these vehicles responsibly. If we can use training to build an awareness that modern onboard technology leaves a definitive paper trail when things go wrong, that accountability will drive the behavior changes we need. Ultimately, ensuring everyone makes it home safely is what matters most.

By doing a thorough job with these safety programs, we will show insurance companies that we are a risk worth backing, ensuring our departments stay fully protected and affordable to insure for years to come.

SATISTICS FOR THE FIRE SERVICE

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH AND SAFETY – PROTECTING OUR OWN

FIREFIGHTER FATALITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

39

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/

FASNY Firefighters Association of the State of New York

EsoGuard Esophageal pre-cancer/cancer screening

WHY SHOULD I GET SCREENED?

Firefighters - active, volunteer, or retired - have a 62% greater risk of developing Esophageal Adenocarcinoma (EAC) and a 39% higher likelihood or dying from EAC compared to non-firefighters. Esophageal Cancer can be PREVENTED through screening.

If you meet Risk Factor criteria, please review the available time slots below and click on the button to sign up.

Please bring your driver's license and medical insurance card to your appointment. Lucid has effectively eliminated out-of-pocket cost for EsoGuard screening, but your insurance will be billed. If you participate in an HRA through your insurance (not HSA or FSA), please notify a Lucid representative prior to screening…there may be an additional step to eliminate the out-of-pocket cost.

You are not responsible for any portion not covered by insurance, up to and including the total cost of the test if your insurance denies coverage. A "What to Expect After EsoGuard" document will be provided to you at the screening event or can be requested in advance.

No food or drink for 2 hours before your appointment time. You may have small sips of water leading up to your testing time if needed.

Date

07/15/2026 (Wed.)

Time

12:00PM - 8:00PM EDT

Location

125 Harry Howard Ave, Hudson NY 12534

SIGN UP FOR A TIME SLOT AT THIS LINK:

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0A4FACA922ABF8CF8-64654224-esoguard#/

Assessing Outcomes: Learning from Line-of-Duty Deaths and Injuries

WESLEY R. ATTWOOD, TASHINA ROBINSON, JUDITH EISENBERG, AND JAY L. TARLEY

THE LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH (LODD) or serious injury of a firefighter is one of the most difficult things a fire department and its members may experience. Communities, families, and fire departments often question, "Why or how did this happen?"

These incidents produce stressful circumstances that often create pressure for the rapid release of information to answer these questions. The sacrifices of the fallen and seriously injured can provide valuable lessons and help save subsequent lives. *Fire departments may find it helpful to reflect on these tragedies and how the lessons learned from these incidents may help departments across the United States.*

The number of firefighter deaths in the United States has decreased from 157 in 1977 to less than 100 per year since 2009.[1] While firefighter injuries have also declined, more than 63,000 injuries were reported in 2023, including an estimated 19,200 vehicle collisions that involved fire department emergency vehicles.[2] This is one of the highest numbers of collisions since record keeping started in 1990.

To help prevent firefighter deaths or serious injuries, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program (FFFIPP) conducts independent investigations of firefighter LODDs. While the investigation processes and procedures have evolved over the years, the program continues to look for ways to improve the program to help prevent the next tragedy. This article provides an overview of the FFFIPP and describes the collaborative work to identify and implement improvements to the program.

OVERVIEW

In 1998, Congress funded and directed NIOSH to conduct firefighter fatality investigations to gather information on contributing factors of firefighter LODDs and provide prevention actions. The goal of this directive was to reduce the incidence of similar incidents and develop strategies for effective intervention. Consequently, NIOSH created the FFFIPP to conduct LODD and serious injury investigations. The FFFIPP has investigated approximately 40% of U.S. firefighter LODDs since 1998—more than 750 investigations.

Keep in mind that the FFFIPP does not enforce compliance with state or federal job safety and health standards and does not determine fault or place blame on fire departments or individual firefighters. However, FFFIPP investigation reports often reference and discuss relevant Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations and National Fire Protection Association standards that were in effect at the time of the fatality or serious injury.

The goal of the FFFIPP is to learn from firefighter LODDs and serious injuries to prevent similar incidents in the future. This includes reporting characteristics and contributing factors of LODDs and serious injuries and providing educational materials that include prevention actions for the fire service. FFFIPP investigations may include up to three separate components, each centering on one area of subject matter expertise:

- Trauma.
- Medical.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE).

TRAUMA INVESTIGATIONS

The trauma component investigates fireground and non-fireground LODDs and serious injuries. These LODDs can result from structure fires, building collapses, struck-by motor vehicle incidents, emergency response, training, workplace violence, and extreme fire behavior such as flashover and explosions. Trauma LODD and serious injury investigations examine the site of the incident and gather information from personnel who were on the scene during the incident.

This information is collected to understand the sequence of events, actions, and tactical decisions that happened prior to or during the incident that relate to the LODD or serious injury. Information collected can include the following:

- Site diagrams.
- Photos and videos.
- Department standard operating procedures.
- Policies and guidelines.
- National Fire Incident Reporting System or National Emergency Response Information System reports.
- Dispatch records.
- Training records for the fallen or injured firefighters, incident commanders, and officers.
- Medical records.
- Coroner or medical examiner reports.
- Death certificates and other agency reports, such as those from state or local law enforcement.

MEDICAL INVESTIGATIONS

The FFFIPP medical component investigates LODDs that are not due to a traumatic cause. These may include fatalities caused by stress or overexertion, such as heart attack, stroke, aortic dissection, heat stroke, and rhabdomyolysis. Sudden cardiac deaths and those caused by stress or overexertion are the most common type of LODD for firefighters. Medical LODD investigations often assess personal and workplace factors. Personal factors include a firefighter's medical history, risk factors related to the cause of death, and autopsy findings. Workplace factors include estimates of acute physical demands placed on firefighters, acute exposure to hazardous chemicals, and *assessments of fire department health and wellness programs*, such as coronary artery disease screenings. The medical component does not investigate cancer deaths.

PPE INVESTIGATIONS

The PPE component can be included in trauma or medical investigations when the function or performance of respiratory protective equipment may have contributed to the LODD or serious injury. NIOSH is the federal agency responsible for evaluating and approving respirators used in U.S. workplaces. Investigators conduct in-depth testing, visual inspection, and evaluation related to the performance of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).

INVESTIGATION PROCESS AND OUTPUTS

Investigations of trauma LODDs and serious injuries begin when a fire department submits an investigation request through the NIOSH website. *Medical LODD investigations usually begin when the FFFIPP selects a case*

from fatality notifications sent by the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and contacts the fire department. However, medical investigations may also be done at the request of the affected fire department.

The fire department's decision to participate in an investigation is voluntary. Per the requirements of 42 CFR Part 85a, reports are anonymous and do not name the fire department, fallen or injured firefighter, or other firefighters involved in the incident. While the FFFIPP is unable to investigate every LODD or serious injury, all requests and USFA notifications are reviewed against the program's decision flowchart. Once an investigation is accepted, a NIOSH investigator works with the fire department to schedule a site visit and request certain materials or records related to the incident. For trauma LODDs and serious injuries, the site visit is conducted within three weeks of the incident, ideally. For structure fires, this allows investigators to evaluate the fire building before the property is demolished or returned to the owner or insurance company. Medical investigations often begin several months after the fatality.

This allows time for the medical examiner's report to be completed to ensure investigators can accurately apply the decision flowchart to the fatality. Although an autopsy is not always done, when it is done, it provides essential information on possible causative or contributory factors to the death.

An important component of the site visit is voluntary interviews conducted by NIOSH investigators. *Interviewees include fire department personnel and firefighters who were on the scene at the time of the incident.* The FFFIPP may work closely with other investigating agencies, such as those at the federal and state government levels. For example, the FFFIPP recently completed an LODD investigation with assistance from the U.S. Coast Guard and the National Transportation Safety Board of two land-based firefighters engaged in marine firefighting.

NIOSH investigators use information from the site visit to describe the sequence of incident events, identify contributing factors, and develop prevention actions for a draft report. To ensure accuracy of incident details, the fire department and union (if applicable) are asked to review the draft report. For a medical investigation, the family may be asked to review the draft report for medical history and general health information.

The fire department, union (if applicable), and family are given the final NIOSH report prior to publication. The published report is then posted on the NIOSH website. Trauma reports are accompanied by training slides that summarize the report's content. The FFFIPP may also create complementary publications that emphasize a specific hazard or prevention action. Examples include the following:

- A fact sheet on row house firefighting tactics.
- A poster on portable radio placement for interior firefighting.
- An advisory describing the thermal degradation and failure of SCBA face piece lenses.
- A fact sheet about rhabdomyolysis for healthcare providers who treat firefighters. All NIOSH reports and publications are in the public domain and may be freely copied for training and educational purposes. Evaluations of SCBAs for potential contribution to a LODD or those involved in a serious injury are published as PPE Conformity Assessment Studies and Evaluations (CASE) reports.

IMPROVING THE FFFIPP THROUGH FIRE SERVICE FEEDBACK

The FFFIPP values input and strives to make program improvements that reflect the evolving knowledge and hazards that put firefighters at risk of injury and death. NIOSH periodically solicits input through federal register notices, meetings, surveys, and interviews to understand how fire service partners use FFFIPP reports and to request comments from the fire service community about the progress and future of FFFIPP. Additionally, NIOSH and RTI International held focus groups and conducted a national survey to assess the effects of recommendations and information products on fire department policies and procedures.

In 2022, NIOSH conducted a formal evaluation to collect more recent data. First, NIOSH worked with Advanced Technologies & Laboratories International, Inc. and Oak Ridge Associated Universities to interview members of the fire service about the effectiveness of FFFIPP reports, focusing on content and organization. Then, the group created a survey that was emailed to fire departments throughout the country. This survey asked about fire department personnel perspectives on FFFIPP reports and health and safety topics, such as standard operating procedures/standard operating guidelines in place and use of rapid intervention teams.

Between December 2023 and May 2024, the survey received 888 responses. These responses were mainly from fire chiefs who worked in career or combination departments serving smaller communities with populations between 5,000 and 50,000.

The survey identified three key topics that the FFFIPP can address:

1. Feedback on the FFFIPP reports and their utility.
2. Firefighter health and wellness.
3. Safety personnel in fire departments.

LEARNING THROUGH EVALUATION

Survey findings can enhance LODD investigations and provide insights into the safety, health, and well-being of firefighters in fire departments. *The NIOSH FFFIPP is committed to conducting high-quality investigations and sharing findings that help fire departments prevent future tragedies*.

FFFIPP continues to accept requests for serious injury and LODD investigation through the NIOSH website. Firefighters and other interested parties can see what investigations FFFIPP is currently working on by visiting the ongoing reports web page.

Disclaimer: The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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Fire Apparatus Accidents

- In an unusual event, a Carteret, NJ fireboat suffered catastrophic damage when a surfacing whale struck and sunk the craft in the Raritan Bay as it returned from assisting in Fourth of July marine security patrol. The crew were wearing their required life jackets and credited a jet ski operator and another boater for aiding the crew, while the Perth Amboy Fire Department marine unit, fished the crew out of the channel.
- First responders in Harrison County, Mississippi are on the scene of two wrecks a Harrison County Fire engine overturned at Brittany Boulevard while on the way to another wreck a pickup involved in the wreck with the fire engine rolled multiple times and at least one passenger was airlifted to a hospital.
- A Stamford, Connecticut firefighter and the driver of another vehicle were treated for injuries early Sunday when the vehicle crashed into a Stamford fire truck on the Merritt Parkway. The fire truck, Rescue 66, which is part of the Turn of River Fire Department fleet, sustained heavy damage and will be out of commission for repairs.
- Two paramedics and a patient were killed Tuesday when their ambulance collided with a truck in rural Canada, authorities said. Island EMS located on Prince Edward Island confirmed the crash involved one of its ambulances with its paramedics. The unit collided head on with a transport truck.

Firefighter Maydays, Serious Injuries and Deaths

- An Ulster County fire chief died after a downed tree he was removing from a road snapped and hit him. Fire Chief David A. Gagnon, of the Cottekill Volunteer Fire Company, was among a crew working to remove the tree when a portion of the tree unexpectedly snapped and struck him," according to the Ulster County Sheriff's Office and a news release from the fire company. Gagnon joined the Cottekill Volunteer Fire Company in 1991, soon after he graduated with an accounting degree from Siena College. He worked at his father's accounting business, Gagnon & Associates CPAs, and was a member of the Army National Guard, according to the firm's website.
- A paramedic was killed when an ambulance hauling a patient was slammed from behind and flipped over, according to the N.C. State Highway Patrol. Paramedic Ashley Moore, 37, of Lawndale, NC was treating a patient in the back of the ambulance when she was thrown out and suffered fatal injuries, investigators say. The ambulance driver and patient were not seriously injured. The driver of the striking vehicle was hospitalized with minor injuries and the crash remains under investigation and the 35 year old driver has been charged with second degree murder, driving while impaired, reckless driving and failure to wear a seat belt.
- The Estacada, Washington firefighter who was seriously injured by fireworks on July 4 has undergone one successful surgery, but has a long road of recovery ahead, according to an update from the Estacada Fire District. The fire department identified him as Micah Koch, a volunteer firefighter. Koch, who the fire department said is a "certified pyrotechnician," was injured while working at the city's

Fourth of July fireworks show at Estacada High School. After the show ended, the pyrotechnics team waited the required amount of time before checking the launch tubes for any fireworks that had failed to go off, according to Estacada fire. But as the team visually inspected the tubes, one of the mortars unexpectedly exploded, severely injuring Koch.

- The Rochester Fire Department will honor the life and service of Lt. John "JJ" Joseph with a full line-of-duty death funeral service next week at Blue Cross Arena. Lt. Joseph died following his battle with cancer.

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	46
7/3/26 Dryden, NY, Tompkins, Co., Female 38, Male 47	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	95
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	647
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA 54
	#2 NY 46
	#3 OH 39
Civilian home fire fatalities in 2026: 1040 = 37.1 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?	

Update on Recent Court Ruling Related to the Building Code!

Implementation and enforcement of the 2025 provisions of the Energy Code and Uniform Code that prohibit the installation of fossil-fuel equipment and building systems in new buildings, found at 19 NYCRR Section 1240.6 and Subpart 1229-2, continues to be suspended by the Court Order [please see the attached] and are neither effective nor enforceable. The Department of State will continue to monitor the case and will provide updates accordingly.

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

How Fire Departments are Improving Firefighter Retention

Megan Campbell

There is a known, years-long **decline in the number of firefighters** in the United States. This decline appears across career and volunteer fire departments, with a greater drop in rural areas. In some communities, the low number of firefighters is reaching a crisis state. Retaining fire service employees is essential, both to protect people and to ensure firefighters are healthy and supported.

WHY FIREFIGHTER RETENTION IS A GROWING CHALLENGE

Although improved building materials and building codes have resulted in a long-term decrease in fires and fire fatalities, firefighters are still essential in responding to fires and other emergencies in their communities. Career firefighters work full-time, and may work in firefighting, prevention/inspection, administration, etc. Volunteer firefighters include any active part-time (on-call or volunteer) firefighters who are involved in firefighting and emergency response. Of the total number of firefighters in 2020, 35% were career and 65% were volunteer.

Since 2008, the nation's volunteer fire service has lost an average of 12,000 firefighters per year, falling from about 827,000 members to 635,000 in 2023. Remaining firefighters see an **ever-increasing workload** and **fewer resources** to address fire risk in their communities.

FIREFIGHTER RETENTION STATISTICS, ATTRITION RATES & TURNOVER TRENDS

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) estimated that in 2023, there were 1,018,100 career and volunteer firefighters in the United States, approximately 85,200 less than 2010.[3]

In 2010, the rate of firefighters per 1,000 citizens was 3.57. In 2020, the rate of firefighters per 1,000 citizens was 3.14. In that 10-year span, **the number of annual calls to U.S. fire departments increased about 70%**, from roughly 25 million to 42 million, likely due to more medical emergency calls.

The fire service also struggles to recruit and retain women and people of color. Women represent 11% of volunteer firefighters and 5% of career firefighters, according to the NFPA's 2022 U.S. Fire Department Profile.[2] The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported in 2020 that 13.1% of career firefighters were Hispanic or Latino, 8.4% were African American, and 1.2% were Asian-Pacific Islanders.[4]

How Staffing Shortages Impact Departments

When fire stations are unable to retain firefighters, communities face response delays that can impact survival during emergencies. Having fewer firefighters also increases the workload and stress for those who are working in fire service. Stations may have mandatory overtime, increased demands on volunteer firefighters, safety issues, and even station closures.

WHY FIREFIGHTERS ARE LEAVING THE JOB

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) has conducted research on recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters, but there is not a lot of national-level research on career fire service satisfaction. According to a 2022 study in South Carolina, the biggest factors in firefighters leaving emergency service were **morale, benefits, pay, workload, and discrimination**. The study notes that "pay and morale were statistically significant" influences on career firefighter turnover within 10 years of hire in South Carolina fire departments. Despite these factors, firefighters who stayed in their careers for more than a decade said they did it for the "love of the job."

Mental Health: Burnout and Stress

A firefighting workweek can last over 50 hours, with little recovery time between shifts and required overtime when vacancies are unfilled. Under intense schedule pressure, firefighters suffer steadily increasing **physical and mental exhaustion**. Repeated high-acuity calls have an impact on stress and mental health, especially when there is no structure for processing these intense emotional experiences. Relationships can suffer, quality of work decreases, and firefighters may lose interest in continuing a career in emergency service.

Physical Health Issues

Annual physicals catch some health risks, but it is easy to miss smaller concerns, especially those that build up over time. Shift scheduling causes **chronic sleep deficits**, which have long-term health effects on the brain and body. Regular firefighting exposes workers to carcinogens, and there are **increased health concerns associated with PFAS** (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) contamination. Chemicals containing PFAS become gaseous under extreme heat and are absorbed through the skin. Some firefighting gear even contains PFAS. Exposure to PFAS is linked to higher rates of cancers.

AVERAGE LENGTH OF A FIREFIGHTER CAREER

Over half of all firefighters in the U.S. are between 30 and 49 years old. Volunteer firefighter tenure periods show that about 43% have more than 10 years of active service, while 64% of volunteer firefighters have more than five years of active service.

There is a known, years-long **decline in the number of firefighters** in the United States. This decline appears across career and volunteer fire departments, with a greater drop in rural areas. *In some communities, the low number of firefighters is reaching a crisis state.* Retaining fire service employees is essential, both to protect people and to ensure firefighters are healthy and supported.

Why Firefighter Retention is a Growing Challenge

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Firefighter Retention Statistics, Attrition Rates & Turnover Trends

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HOW FIRE DEPARTMENTS ARE IMPROVING FIREFIGHTER RETENTION

A 2026 NFPA study on volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention found that recruiting new staff is most effective through a personal connection, from community engagement to junior firefighter programs. Maintaining this **connection to local community** can also help retain firefighters. Leadership should encourage a respectful, family-like work culture; offer mentorship opportunities; and **recognize volunteer and staff contributions** to keep firefighters engaged long-term.

Better Scheduling and Workload Management

To reduce burnout, fire stations can offer volunteer firefighters **flexible participation levels** in emergency service and response. **Thoughtful scheduling and recognition** can also help with firefighter retention. For example, increasing the number of operational shifts allows for a shorter work week. This gives more rest and recovery time, and creates a better work/life balance.

Consistent, transparent scheduling and overtime can help create a culture of equity. Call-down lists with clear, consistent rules that follow seniority help ensure there is less space for frustration or accusations of favoritism.

Investing in Wellness

It is important to know what firefighters in a station are experiencing. Departments that take time to understand the workload and workplace morale among their crews can **intervene early** instead of waiting for staff or volunteers to self-report on their stress, physical health, and mental wellness. Mental health providers should be easy to access, and stations should cultivate a culture of **addressing and managing trauma**.

It is also important for departments to hold staff and volunteers to a physical standard. Stations can offer **comprehensive physical training programs** with qualified trainers and coaches. Physically fit firefighters are less prone to injury and more resilient.

WHAT FIREFIGHTERS WANT TODAY

The 2026 NFPA study on recruitment and retention found that volunteer firefighter training is essential in retaining employees. **High-quality training** teaches critical skills and also enhances confidence, builds camaraderie, and encourages commitment to firefighting service. All of these factors lead to long-term firefighter retention.

Types and timing of training are just as important as its content. Rigid, time-intensive training models—particularly those that require unpaid time and travel—discourage new recruits and contribute to burnout among existing volunteers.

How Departments Can Start Improving Retention Now

To encourage firefighter retention, departments can look into transparent scheduling practices, clear paths of advancement and pay increase, and encourage a strong workplace culture of respect and support.

FIRE APPARATUS

Five Things That Should Happen Before You Spec a Pump on Your Next Brush Truck

Here's a conversation that happens more than it should. A department has already committed to a chassis. The body builder has been selected. Tank size is locked. The skid layout is roughed in. Then someone asks: what pump are we putting on this?

At that point, half the decisions that actually affect pump performance—payload, mounting position, plumbing runs, priming requirements—are already made. *The pump gets spec'd around the constraints rather than the constraints being designed around the pump. It works, mostly. But it's not the right sequence.*

Wildland apparatus decisions are more consequential than they used to be. Departments that ran one brush truck as a mutual aid resource are now building genuine wildland programs, driven by fire seasons that keep getting longer and a wildland urban interface (WUI) footprint that keeps expanding. More apparatus, higher utilization, more varied terrain, and crews who, in many cases, are less mechanically experienced than the people who ran the previous generation of equipment. *The pump matters more in that environment than it did when it was a secondary resource sitting in a bay most of the year.*

These five things won't slow down your spec process. They'll focus it.

1. **KNOW YOUR PRIMARY MISSION BEFORE YOU LOOK AT A SINGLE SPEC SHEET.**

High pressure is not the same as high performance. A pump that's right for sustained direct attack over long hose lays and significant elevation changes is a different animal than one built for a WUI vehicle that needs to fill tanks from a pond, run a structure line, and maybe help knock down a roadside brush fire on the same shift.

Type 6 brush truck work demands consistent pressure over distance. The benchmark for this segment—four-stage centrifugal pumps delivering 395 to 470 pounds per square inch (psi)—exists because that's what the mission requires. If your department operates under federal specifications or works alongside federal resources, the USFS Type 6 certification (Model 643P and 643U) is worth understanding before you start comparing pump data sheets. It's not just a federal procurement requirement—it's a performance and durability validation that tells you the pump has been tested against real operational standards, not just a lab bench.

WUI and dual-mission apparatus are a different conversation. Here you want volume as much as pressure. A two-stage mid-range pump that delivers up to 300-gallon-per-minute (gpm) free flow can handle tank filling, water transfer, and active suppression without the cost and payload premium of a high-pressure four-stage unit. For departments building their first dedicated wildland apparatus on a budget, that versatility often makes more operational sense than chasing maximum psi.

Type 7 and utility terrain vehicle (UTV) builds are tighter still — payload constraints push toward compact configurations, and the gap between what compact pumps used to deliver and what they deliver now has closed considerably. Current compact four-stage vehicle-mount pumps can hit 310 psi and 118-gpm free flow from a footprint sized for these builds using pump end technology that didn't exist in compact configurations five years ago.

One more thing on UTVs: the loose portable pump carried on the apparatus has become standard practice in a lot of jurisdictions, and for good reason. When terrain takes the crew beyond where the skid can draft, a lightweight high-pressure portable gives you both a transfer capability to refill the tank and a secondary suppression tool. It's not a backup — it's part of the system.

2. **LOOK AT YOUR EXISTING FLEET BEFORE DECIDING WHAT TO CARRY FORWARD.**

A lot of departments expanding their wildland capability are doing it on aging apparatus. That brush truck that's been in service for 12 years might have a perfectly good chassis left in it. The question is what's living

on the back of it.

Pump systems on older wildland apparatus tend to age in predictable ways. Mechanical throttle systems wear and lose precision. Aluminum impellers corrode slowly, then all at once. If you've ever had a mechanic tell you that the pump end service is going to take longer than expected because the impellers are seized, you know the problem. It's a consequence of galvanic corrosion in high-mineral or brackish water environments, which is exactly the water most wildland crews are drafting from. It's not a maintenance failure. It's what aluminum does in that environment over time.

Analog control interfaces, on the other hand, are more of a training problem than a mechanical one. They work fine for experienced operators who know what a healthy engine sounds and feels like. For newer crew members, they leave a lot of diagnostic information on the table—problems that could be caught early instead get discovered in the field.

When you're replacing a chassis, the pump question is worth asking directly: is this pump worth carrying forward, or am I inheriting 10 years of deferred maintenance in a component that will be expensive to replace once the new apparatus is in service? Sometimes the answer is carry it forward. Sometimes it isn't. But the time to figure that out is during the spec process, not six months later.

Some pumps, like the STRIKER-4 and the MARK-3® high-pressure pumps, are made with composite pump ends with corrosion-resistant impellers and eliminate the seizure problem entirely. Digital interfaces with continuous monitoring catch the temperature and pressure anomalies that analog gauges don't until it's too late. Neither of these was standard equipment on apparatus built a decade ago.

3. **MAKE THE FUEL DECISION AT THE FLEET LEVEL, NOT THE APPARATUS LEVEL**.

Diesel standardization used to be a compromise. Diesel pump options didn't match their gasoline counterparts on performance, so departments that wanted diesel uniformity had to accept a gap somewhere. That's changed.

Current diesel platforms—the Kubota D902 at 24.8 hp and the Yanmar L100 at 9.3 hp—deliver performance that's equivalent to comparable gasoline configurations across the full range of apparatus types. A diesel four-stage high-pressure unit reaches 395 psi and 106 gpm. A diesel mid-range hits 310 gpm free flow. Compact diesel options exist for Type 7 builds. *You're not giving up pressure or volume to get diesel anymore. The logistics argument is straightforward: one fuel type across a fleet means simpler storage, no contamination risk at the pump, and cleaner refueling at remote deployments where supply chains are not always reliable*. The operational safety angle is less often discussed but worth naming—in hot, dry wildland environments, gasoline storage creates its own fire risk. Diesel's lower volatility is a practical consideration in exactly the terrain where these apparatus operate.

Make this decision before the pump spec, not after. Retrofitting a diesel pump onto an apparatus designed around gasoline, or the reverse, creates installation problems that are avoidable if fuel type is locked in early.

SPEC THE OPERATOR INTERFACE FOR THE CREW YOU ACTUALLY HAVE.

The crew that ran your brush truck 10 years ago was probably different from the crew running it now. More diverse, often less time behind a mechanical pump, managing higher turnover in some departments, and in many cases splitting time between wildland response and other assignments that keep them away from the apparatus for months at a stretch.

A mechanical pump interface—throttle cable, analog gauge, and manual choke—rewards familiarity. For operators who run the pump regularly and have built their diagnostic instincts over seasons, it's fine. For everyone else, it creates gaps. *Problems that an experienced operator would catch from sound or feel don't get caught until they show up as a stopped pump on the fire line.*

Digital control panels change this. Start/stop, throttle control, continuous engine monitoring, and protection functions on a color display give the operator real information in real time. EFI integration means the panel talks directly to the engine ECU offers precise throttle control without a separate mechanical actuator, which simplifies the installation and removes a failure point. A remote panel option lets you run dual-station control for pump-and-roll operations without the complexity of a parallel installation. What departments report after making the switch is faster crew onboarding and fewer interruptions in the field. That's the practical payoff. ***When the pump tells you what it's doing rather than making you infer it, the gap between a third-season operator and a first-season operator gets meaningfully smaller***.

5. **GET A SKID BUILDER IN THE ROOM BEFORE THE SPEC IS FINALIZED.**

The pump doesn't exist in isolation. It exists inside a skid package that involves plumbing, electrical integration, mounting hardware, chassis payload management, and water system design. These things interact. A pump that's straightforward to install on one chassis configuration can be a problem on another. Plumbing runs that work in one body layout don't work in a different one. Priming requirements vary by pump and by water source.

Departments that select the pump first and then find a builder to work around it sometimes spend time and money undoing decisions that could have been avoided. Bringing a skid builder in before the pump is locked gives you access to someone who has built these rigs before and knows where the integration issues live.

Good skid builders know the pump platforms they work with well—how they install, how they perform in the field configurations departments actually run, and where the real tradeoffs are between options at a given price point. When departments come to pump manufacturers directly for guidance, the answer is almost always: talk to a builder in your region first. That's where the apparatus design expertise lives.

A few specific questions worth putting to a builder before the spec closes:

- How does this pump affect what else can go on the apparatus given the chassis payload?
- What are the priming requirements for the water sources this apparatus will primarily use?
- Does a loose portable pump on the apparatus make sense as a companion piece?
- How does the pump's service schedule align with what the department's maintenance infrastructure can actually support?

These conversations go faster and produce better outcomes before the chassis is ordered than after. *None of these steps adds time to the process. They move certain conversations earlier—where they're easier, cheaper, and more useful.* Wildland apparatus are expensive and are being asked to do more than they used to. Getting the pump decision right is part of getting the apparatus right.

GREEN ENERGY AND THE IMPACT ON THE FIRE SERVICE

- **Los Angeles, California:** A massive blaze sparked on the roof of a Lineage Logistics warehouse in Boyle Heights. The fire, which officials suspect was sparked by subcontractors testing rooftop solar panels, breached an ammonia line and caused significant roof damage. It burned for 8+ days, prompting a major emergency response and shelter-in-place orders.
- **Amarillo, Texas:** The Amarillo Fire Department extinguished a rooftop solar panel fire at a two-story apartment complex at 900 SE 10th Avenue. The incident displaced 10 residents, though no injuries were reported, and the Fire Marshal ruled the fire as accidental.
- **Kobalt Tools Recall:** Greenworks Tools, in conjunction with the Consumer Product Safety Commission, recalled over 550,000 Kobalt-branded yard tools and batteries. The manufacturer received 34 reports of 24-volt USB-C lithium-ion batteries smoking, sparking, or catching fire while inserted in tools and charging.
- **Scio Township, Michigan:** One person was hospitalized after a lithium-ion battery exploded and caught fire on the production line at the Edge Autonomy Energy Systems manufacturing facility.
- **Rostock, Germany:** Three firefighters suffered minor injuries after a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) exploded during a residential property fire. The fire broke out in a wooden shed at a single-family home in Bentwisch. According to the local fire service, the battery storage system had overheated before firefighters arrived. During firefighting operations, the battery exploded, blowing the roof off the shed and causing the structure to collapse. Flying debris also damaged two neighboring properties.

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GENERAL INTEREST TO ALL

EFO Research Brief: Overcoming Barriers to Collaboration for Fire Protection

Brian Carlson

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *The research capstone for the **E**xecutive **F**ire **O**fficer program identified local pride and community expectations as two key hinderances for collaboration between fire departments, citing fears of losing control and identity.*
- *Legal and regulatory restrictions pose significant challenges, requiring leadership bodies to understand laws and advocate for improve service delivery.*
- *Recommendations for fire department collaboration include public education, transparent governance, comprehensive planning, legislative advocacy, and stakeholder engagement to promote a successful effort.*

Collaboration is widely regarded as a critical strategy for enhancing efficiency in public services, particularly in fire protection. The potential benefits of collaboration, such as improved service delivery, reduced costs, and elimination of redundancies, offer a promising and optimistic future for fire protection services.

Despite these benefits, fire departments in many regions still operate independently. This fragmentation leads to the duplication of services, inconsistent response times, higher administrative costs, and overall inefficiency. This article summarizes the qualitative study I conducted for my Executive Fire Officer capstone research that explores the barriers preventing effective collaboration between fire departments and offers solutions for overcoming these challenges.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Fire protection services are decentralized in many areas, with multiple fire departments operating independently, each serving their community. These departments vary in funding, staffing, resources, and operational procedures. *While collaboration is common in other public safety sectors, fire departments often resist merging their operations*. The consequences of this fragmentation include overlapping services, slower response times due to jurisdictional boundaries, and a lack of resource sharing. As a result, opportunities to streamline operations and improve public safety are missed.

This study aimed to understand the barriers that prevent fire departments from collaborating more effectively. Through interviews with fire chiefs, *the research identified six significant obstacles that hinder collaborative efforts.* If not addressed, these barriers could continue to hamper the efficiency and effectiveness of fire services. Understanding these barriers is crucial to fostering cooperation between fire protection agencies, thereby improving the efficiency and effectiveness of fire services.

WHERE DO THE KEY BARRIERS LIE?

The study's central research question, "What are the barriers to collaboration of community leaders to provide efficient fire protection?," is of paramount and significant importance. It served as the guiding principle for the

research, directing the focus toward understanding the obstacles that hinder effective collaboration among fire departments.

By focusing on the experiences of fire chiefs, who are key decision-makers within their departments, this research provides a foundation for future collaborative efforts. The research adopted a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews to gather detailed insights from fire chiefs about the specific challenges and obstacles they encounter when considering or attempting to collaborate with neighboring fire departments.

A qualitative research design was employed to delve deeply into the personal experiences of fire chiefs. Twelve fire chiefs from various fire departments were selected for in-depth interviews. These chiefs provided valuable perspectives on the barriers they face when considering collaboration. The data collected from these interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis, which helped identify recurring themes and patterns in the qualitative data. This approach allowed for the identification of barriers to fire department collaboration.

KEY FINDINGS OF FIRE DEPARTMENT COLLABORATION

The analysis revealed six significant barriers that prevent effective collaboration between fire departments:

1. **Community Expectations** - *Fire departments are often viewed as integral to a community's identity.* Residents may see their local fire department as an essential public service and a source of local pride. *As a result, communities can be reluctant to collaborate with other departments for fear of losing this connection*. Chiefs pointed out that communities have different expectations for service levels. In some communities, residents might demand a higher level of fire protection and faster response times, while others may be satisfied with basic services due to budget constraints. This expectation divergence complicates efforts to create standardized services in a collaborative framework, as communities are hesitant to compromise on their perceived level of service.
2. **Loss of Control** - *Another critical barrier is the fear among elected officials and fire chiefs of losing control over their operations.* In a collaborative model, decision-making authority is often shared among multiple stakeholders, reducing individual leaders' direct influence over service priorities, budget allocation, and staff management. *Fire chiefs expressed concern that collaboration could limit their ability to tailor fire services to the specific needs of their communities*. Elected officials, too, worry about losing the ability to respond quickly to local emergencies and address their constituents' concerns. The reluctance to relinquish control creates significant resistance to collaboration, even if it could improve efficiency.
3. **Financial Disparities** - *Financial inequality between communities is a significant hurdle to collaboration.* Wealthier communities often fear collaboration will require subsidizing fire protection services for poorer areas. ***They worry that their taxpayers will end up footing the bill for services that primarily benefit others.*** On the other hand, less affluent communities fear that they will not receive adequate service under a shared model, as wealthier areas might dominate the allocation of resources. Chiefs highlighted the importance of addressing these financial disparities through transparent budgeting and equitable cost-sharing agreements. Collaboration efforts will likely falter without careful financial planning due to fairness and resource distribution concerns.
4. **Fear of Change** - Fear of change is a common barrier to collaboration. *Fire chiefs and community leaders often resist collaborative efforts because they are uncertain about the potential consequences*. They fear merging fire services could lead to reduced service quality, loss of jobs, or increased bureaucracy. Chiefs noted that change, even when it promises benefits, can be challenging to implement in public services where tradition and local pride play a significant role. Some stakeholders expressed the belief that "if it isn't broken, don't fix it," which further discourages the exploration of collaborative models. Overcoming this resistance to change requires clear communication about the benefits of collaboration and a well-structured transition plan that addresses potential risks.
5. **Legal Restraints** - Legal and regulatory barriers can pose significant obstacles to collaboration. *In many regions, state laws or local regulations limit the ability of fire departments to merge or share resources across jurisdictions****. For example, some states restrict counties from directly providing fire services or forming joint fire districts****.* These legal limitations complicate efforts to pool resources or standardize service levels. In some cases, ***outdated legislation creates barriers that prevent departments from adopting more efficient, collaborative models***. Chiefs emphasized that changing

these laws would require advocacy at the state level, and until that happens, fire departments will continue to face legal roadblocks to collaboration.

6. **Employee Resistance** - Fire department employees, particularly unionized firefighters, often resist collaboration due to concerns about job security, pay, and working conditions. Differences in union contracts, pay scales, and benefits across departments create significant challenges when merging services. Chiefs noted that aligning these contracts can be lengthy and complex, and employees fear collaboration could lead to job cuts or reduced benefits. Additionally, firefighters take great pride in their department's identity, and the prospect of losing that identity can lead to resistance. *Collaboration efforts will likely face strong internal opposition without securing employee buy-in, derailing even the most well-intentioned initiatives.*

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to overcome the barriers to collaboration:

1. **Community Education** - Educating the public about the benefits of collaboration is essential to gaining support. Residents must understand how collaboration can improve response times, reduce costs, and enhance fire protection services. Public outreach, including town hall meetings and informational campaigns, can help build community buy-in and address concerns about losing local control over fire services.
2. **Addressing Control Concerns** - A transparent governance structure should be established to mitigate fears of losing control. This structure should allow each community to have a voice in decision-making, ensuring that no one community dominates the process. A joint board of representatives from each participating community could oversee the collaborative effort and provide equal representation in decision-making.
3. **Financial Transparency and Equitable Cost Sharing** - Addressing financial disparities is crucial for successful collaboration. *Clear, equitable cost-sharing agreements must be established to ensure that no community feels it unfairly subsidizes another*. Financial transparency through regular audits and financial forecasts will help build participant trust and ensure the collaboration remains financially sustainable.
4. **Comprehensive Planning** - A comprehensive, detailed roadmap for collaboration should be developed. This plan should include contingency strategies for potential challenges and detailed timelines for implementation. Pilot programs or phased rollouts can also help ease the transition and address concerns before fully committing to a collaborative model.
5. **Legislative Advocacy** - Communities interested in collaboration should work with state legislators to update outdated laws restricting joint fire districts or collaborative efforts. Advocacy at the state level is essential to removing legal barriers and ensuring fire departments can adopt collaborative models.
6. **Engaging Employees Early** - Employee buy-in is critical for success. Fire department leaders should engage union representatives and employees early to address concerns about job security, pay, and working conditions. Open communication and assurances about maintaining jobs and benefits can help reduce resistance and foster a more collaborative work environment.

CONCLUSION

Collaboration between fire departments can improve service delivery, reduce inefficiencies, and cut costs. However, this study highlights significant barriers that must be addressed to achieve successful collaboration. By identifying these challenges and offering clear recommendations, this research provides a roadmap for fire departments to move toward a more collaborative and efficient future. With careful planning, transparent governance, and strong community engagement, fire services can overcome these barriers and deliver improved public safety.

TAKE A MOMENT TO SMILE

Dear Mother-in-Law, please don't tell me how to bring up my children.

I'm living with one of yours and there is need for a lot of improvement!!

CLASSIFIED

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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.