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Chief

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COMMONWEALTH

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - January 2023

Chief

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Page 3

2022 VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL BOARD RETREAT

Page 4

DOD HOLDS SUCCESSFUL COMPANY OFFICER SUMMIT

Page 9

MEET THE CHIEF

Page 11

2022 GOVERNOR'S EMS AWARD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

Page 25

BOARD OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MEETS

Page 33

ANOTHER PATHWAY TO FIRST RESPONDER CANCER PREVENTION

Page 35

ON THE MOVE & ODDS AND ENDS

Page 39

TWO CAPITOLS CONSULTING

Page 44

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**COMING
ATTRACTIONS**

Page 19

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



John Prillaman
2022 VFCA President
Salem Fire and EMS Department

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Board of Directors continues to stay busy working on numerous projects. We continue to further the mission of the VFCA through leadership, education, and advocacy. Some of the highlights include the Virginia Fire/EMS Legislative Summit and the VFCA Board Retreat & Strategic Planning session.

In September, public safety associations and organizations from across the Commonwealth met in Oilville for the Virginia Fire/EMS Legislative Summit. During the summit, leaders from each organization were given an opportunity to outline their legislative goals for the upcoming year. The group selected six legislative topics to focus on for 2023 and many other informative issues that affect Virginia's fire service. I would like to personally thank Chief Steve Kopczynski (York County Fire & Life Safety) for leading the discussion and coordinating the creation of the legislative booklet.

In October, the VFCA held its annual retreat. Our 1st Vice President Chief Allen Baldwin (Stafford County Fire & Rescue) coordinated the retreat that included a full-board meeting, strategic planning session and an informative class on recruiting firefighters in today's world. We would like to thank Chief Matt Tobia and the Harrisonburg Fire Department for their generous hospitality. The retreat was a great opportunity for the board to celebrate accomplishments while planning for the future.

Our Website Work Group continues to work with our vendor to create a new dynamic and user-friendly website. The new website will allow our members to pay for memberships, register for events, share information and many more items that our current website cannot do. I can't wait to see it unveiled in the future.

The VFCA continues to work with the Women in Fire organization partnering together on various projects, including a full day educational session at the Virginia Fire Rescue Conference. We are also attempting to launch a VA Women in Fire/EMS Section within our organization. If you are interested in joining the VA Women in Fire/EMS Section, please contact one of our board members.

On June, 1st Vice President Baldwin coordinated the first VFCA Regional Shakers Forum. The forum was well attended and everyone that participated was able to network and learn from each other's experiences. On

December 14th, the VFCA will be sponsoring another VFCA Regional Shakers Forum in Chesapeake. There are plans to hold additional Shakers Forums across the state. Please continue to watch the VFCA website for additional locations and dates. If there is one scheduled in your area, I encourage you to attend.

The 2023 Virginia Fire & Rescue Conference is scheduled for February 20-25th in Virginia Beach. The vendor registration is almost full and registration for the conference is open. Please consider attending this great event!

It has been an honor of a lifetime to serve on the VFCA Board of Directors since 2011 and as the President in 2022. I have made lifelong friends and have grown both personally and professionally while serving with the best of Virginia's fire service. I want to thank our awesome VFCA Board of Directors who have once again worked hard throughout the year to grow our organization. I hope everyone has a great 2023. Please stay safe and get involved with the VFCA!



2022 VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL BOARD RETREAT

Allen Baldwin

The Virginia Fire Chief Association Board met for its annual board retreat in Harrisonburg, Va., at the Hotel Madison from October 12th through October 14th. Several board members participated in a team building and networking event, organized by Harrisonburg Fire Chief Matt Tobia, on Wednesday afternoon. Members in attendance then gathered for a board dinner and social, which provided great opportunities for all to catch up. Chief Goods' birthday was celebrated by those attending. On Thursday morning, President Prillaman opened the regular board meeting where the usual member, stakeholder, and committee reports were delivered. There was extensive discussion on the legislative committee's report on what support and direction the association should take on several important issues. After some excellent conversations, reports, and a great lunch provided by Municipal Emergency Services (MES), the board meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm. Following a quick break, First Vice President Baldwin convened the Annual Retreat. Chief Baldwin and Chief Cooper facilitated and led the retreat. The session focused on finishing some existing projects and where we want to go in 2023. This generated various discussions, which yielded the following focus areas for 2023.

2022 VFCA Retreat Focus 2023

Bylaws – Send out one month before the retreat, review them at the retreat

Job Descriptions – send out one month before the retreat; check them at the retreat

Complete Website – Spring 2023

Mentor Program – New Chiefs

- Phase 1 – started
- Phase 2 – Close loop at this meeting during VFRC
 - o Start in 2023

Shakers/Regional Forums – keep them going.

New Initiatives

- DEI – efforts – get this conference on the board member's calendars next year
 - o I-Women Section or Diversity Section
 - o Should we have a statement – how we lead, advocate, and educate to accomplish this – what, why, this is important
 - o Use panel style at VFRC?
 - o Like summit or more minor, different format like Shakers (both)

Recruit, Retention, Hiring

VA Fire Service Funding

- Cancer Screening & Presumption
- Mental Health
- Needs Assessment
- PPE, Equipment, Apparatus
- Stations: new, modifications
- Data Set
- Better reporting, consistency & messaging
 - o Influence
 - o Residential Sprinklers
- Smoke Alarms

The retreat ended at 5 pm.

The Board Members attended a social and networking session on Thursday evening sponsored by Atlantic Emergency Solutions (AES) at the Hotel Madison. It was a great evening for everyone to catch up with each other personally and professionally.

The Friday morning training session, which was open to the Commonwealth's Fire Service, kicked off at 9:00 am with Spencer Chetham from the IAFC's Work Force Solutions group, who presented a very thought-provoking presentation on Recruitment and Retention in today's fire services to the Board members and fire service leadership from all across the Commonwealth.

Next year's retreat will be held in Harrisonburg at the Hotel Madison based on the great experience at this year's retreat.

Special thanks to Chief Tobia, and The Harrisonburg Fire Department for their support in making the retreat successful.



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WILLIAMSBURG GOLF TOURNAMENT HAILED AS "SUCCESS"

Elizabeth Eberhardt

We had a great time on October 28th at The Golden Horseshoe Green Course for our 2022 Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation Golf Tournament.

The 64 golfers raised over \$5,400 for the Foundation. Those dollars will go toward various education programs across the Commonwealth.

A big thank you to all our sponsors & players! Our winners were the Norfolk Fire and Rescue team.

Thanks to all for the support!



Some of the players



On the course



Dinner together



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DOD HOLDS SUCCESSFUL COMPANY OFFICER SUMMIT

Nicole Fazio

Any opportunity to listen in and learn from those who have come before us is a long-standing tradition of the fire service. Watching Marc Davidson give his presentation is not one to be missed.

The Virginia Fire Chief's Association hosted Marc Davidson at their DOD Company Officer Summit on September 28th, 2022, in Fort AP Hill, VA. Approximately 40 individuals from various departments and ranks attended to hear Marc speak on Effective Small Unit Leadership in the Fire Service. Marc has over 20 years of experience and currently serves as a Captain with the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department in Fairfax, VA.

Throughout his presentation, Captain Davidson spoke on many topics including conflict resolution, tactical fieldcraft, 'leadership from the front' and creating a safe, healthy, and functional work environment. His background in the United States Marines along with assignments ranging from right-bucket Firefighter to Basic Training Officer have given him extensive knowledge of the trade and a humble proficiency of skills that is unmatched. Captain Davidson offers his time to teach regionally and nationally, gaining positive feedback consistently and opening doorways to new conversations about these important topics in firehouses around the country.

A strong benefit of attending this Summit was that Captain Davidson's approach is not 'one size fits all'. His presentation offered information the individual could tailor to fit their current role and departmental needs. Firefighters aspiring to be in leadership positions gained knowledge helpful for reaching their next milestone, while senior officers were given

new perspectives for yielding positive results among their companies. An important focus was shown on setting our future officers up for success prior to entering the process of advancement. This included exposing them to the challenges it will bring and ways to mitigate these common issues before being faced with them. Introducing them to new tactics and simple ways of improving crew integrity that will help them gain the acceptance and trust ahead of earning it. This is explained as 'leadership from the front' and is a surprisingly transparent way of approaching how departments can successfully promote the character of leader they desire.

Nicole Fazio is certified as a Firefighter Paramedic and has been with Fort Belvoir Fire and Emergency Services since 2021. She has worked on Fort Belvoir as a Paramedic prior to joining the fire department since 2014. Nicole has been involved with fire and EMS in Ohio and Virginia since 2009 and hopes to further her career as a future officer.

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MEET THE CHIEF



Getting to know Kristin Hawk.

In this issue we will meet one of the many fire chiefs who will be spotlighted in the coming issues of Commonwealth Chief this year. Here we take a look at Kristin Hawk, Chief of the Louisa County Fire and EMS Department.

CC: Describe your tenure in the fire service...

KH: I have been in the fire service since 1999 starting as a volunteer and then began as a career member in 2004.

CC: Please describe your career journey...

KH: If you would have told me 23 years ago that I would be in this field of work, I would have told you "no way." I was working in the veterinary field in 1999 and had been since 1988 as a veterinary technician. I loved working with animals and never saw myself doing anything different. Our veterinary clinic was located next to the local volunteer firehouse in Goochland County and many of our clients were volunteers at that station and in other stations located throughout Goochland. I signed up for an EMT class and then took my Firefighter I and II and caught "the bug." I was hooked. I became a volunteer in 1999 and then started my career in Goochland County in 2004. I then became a career firefighter/paramedic for Louisa County in 2008. I promoted to Lieutenant in 2013, Deputy Chief in 2015 and most recently promoted to Fire Chief of Louisa County in September 2022.

I have seen the county grow from when I started as one of twelve providers in a system that only had two transport units, running both fire and EMS, to a system of 72 now and growing.

I have been blessed to have some of the best mentors along the way. They have helped me with my entire career from firefighter and medic to the role I am in today and I could not have done it without their confidence in my abilities.

As the Fire Chief, I am also the Emergency Management Coordinator for Louisa County. Louisa has the unique experience of having a nuclear power facility in the county and this offers us the need to hold federally graded drills biennially. Needless to say, we take these very seriously and therefore, by drilling as often as we do they help us to be very efficient in all emergency responses. I have had the fortune of being involved in many Emergency Management responses over my career here in Louisa to include large brush fires in 2010 that burned over 1,000 acres and two houses, the earthquake of 2011 when a 5.8 struck the center of Louisa County, as well as the most recent snowstorm in January 2022 when 99% of Louisa County was without power for over a week. 2020 brought us the pandemic and setting up for weekly vaccine clinics of which many of our medics (myself included) helped give vaccines to the citizens of the county. With all of this, we have become very familiar with emergency response and the efficiency that we can handle most any incident.

When becoming Chief, I have had the opportunities to do several interviews relating to becoming the first female fire chief for Louisa County and one of only a few female fire chiefs in Virginia. It is a humbling experience to be a role model and mentor to a young person that would one day want to take my spot. It's exciting to ask where our staff sees themselves in 5 or 10 years and they say, "sitting in your chair." I get excited for them and follow it up with "How can I help you get there?"

Will I ever go back to the veterinary field? Maybe one day when I am retired, but for now I get too much enjoyment helping my community and hoping that I can change the life of just one person for the better. Maybe some other little girl will be encouraged in some way and know that they can do whatever they set their minds to.

CC: Please describe your Form of Government...

KH: Louisa County is a Local County Government. The Fire Chief reports directly to the County Administrator and Board of Supervisors. The position is appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

CC: Describe the sources of Funding for Your Organization...

KH: The career and volunteer departments are primarily funded by the county and EMS revenue recovery. The volunteer organizations also fundraise for their stations. There are also some grant funds that we have been awarded in the form of AFG grants for wellness, a FEMA SAFER grant for 10 positions September of 2021 and a FEMA SAFER grant for a part time recruitment and retention coordinator also in September of 2021. Because of the nuclear power station, Dominion Energy also provides the County some funding for emergency preparedness projects.

CC: What population does your department serve...

KH: 38,000 according to our last census. There is also a significant increase in tourist population during the summer months due to Lake Anna, the second largest lake in the state of Virginia. During the summer months the population can increase by as much as 10,000.

CC: How many square miles do you cover...

KH: 514 square miles.

CC: Describe the department composition and equipment...

KH: Louisa County is a combination system. There are six volunteer fire departments, three EMS departments and one county-owned fire & EMS station in addition to one station currently being built and set to open in spring of 2023. On the career side, the Department of Fire & EMS has 72 employees who provide 24/7 fire and EMS staffing at five of the seven stations. Three of the stations are fully staffed with dedicated crews for the engine and medic units. The other two stations have what we refer to as "single pull" staffing, which is two career personnel 24/7 who can take either the engine or medic unit depending on the call. The nine-volunteer fire & EMS stations list about 300 members collectively. Of those 300, fewer and fewer are regularly running calls or staffing crews. The struggle is the same here as it is nationwide. The number of people able to dedicate time to their local volunteer departments is constantly diminishing. The days where a volunteer could leave work to answer calls are gone. The economic times are too hard for local businesses and the call volumes are too high to allow for that. It's totally understandable, but really hurts our volunteer departments.

Department Equipment... Louisa County is a combination volunteer and career system. Between the seven fire stations and three rescue squad stations in Louisa County, there are twelve engines, three ladder trucks, seven tankers, nine brush trucks, two heavy rescue squads, 14 ambulances and three boats. Of those, Louisa County Fire & EMS owns two of the engines, one ladder truck, one tanker, a brush truck, seven ambulances and two boats. The volunteer fire departments and rescue squad stations own the rest of the apparatus.

CC: Describe your call summary...

KH: For 2022 we are looking to surpass 8,000 calls for service, resulting in over 15,000-unit responses. Of the 8,000 calls, approximately 4,500 will require patient transport to a hospital. The call volume for 2023 is projected to increase by 8%. This increase is due to population growth and tourism due to a large portion of Lake Anna being in Louisa County. Louisa is uniquely located in between three large metropolitan locations, Charlottesville, Richmond, and Spotsylvania. Patient transport times can take anywhere from 25-50 minutes depending on where the call location is dispatched. There is not an opportunity to drop a patient off at the hospital in 5-10 minutes so our medics must be well versed in protocols and medicine. It is not unusual to put 80,000 miles on the busiest ambulances in the county in a year's time.

CC: What is the most challenging issue or issues facing your department today?

KH: Our biggest challenge is keeping up with the growth. The county is growing so quickly, the public demand is increasing, and the number of people willing to volunteer at their local fire departments is decreasing. We're building a new fire and EMS station and have other stations listed in the comp plan for the future or replacement. All of this growth requires new staff, it requires more apparatus, it requires up to date and maintained equipment, and it also requires us to develop our existing staff to be ready for the company officer positions that come with that growth. We owe it to our firefighters to have them ready for those responsibilities. When a county starts growing like Louisa is, there's a lot of moving parts in the Fire & EMS Department that come with that growth. We must be ready.

CC: How would you describe your management style?

KH: I like to say I am a servant leader. When I describe the people in the department, it is never "My people" or "My department." I like to view it as "Ours". They are my co-workers and I truly work for them. I like to flip the triangle, so the biggest part of the triangle is at the top and I am now at the bottom. I couldn't do any of this without my co-worker's support. They work so hard, and I am here to support them in any way I can.

This position is more than about one person. To quote Tom Osborne, "work hard, stay focused and surround yourself with good people" It takes a team, and I am blessed to have a fantastic team that surrounds me.

CC: Does your department have a formal, long-range strategic plan?

KH: Our department has a 5 year strategic plan. It is due to be updated as most of the goals in the current plan have been met. This is on my 1st year plan to update and get input from not only the fire administrative officers, but also incorporate our county comprehensive plan. The county does a great job with their comp plans and capital improvement planning. We currently have a new fire station that has broken ground and is set to open in the spring of 2023.

CC: How have current economic times impacted your department?

KH: We're lucky. Louisa County's Board of Supervisors and county administration does a fantastic job at long term planning and positioning the county for economic fluctuations. They're also avid supporters of essential services like public safety. Thanks to their work, the departments haven't had to take the economic beating that a lot of other places in the Commonwealth have. The Board of Supervisors have set the department up for success with a recent pay study and increase in salary which has made Louisa County Fire and EMS one of the more sought-after counties to work.

CC: Are you doing things differently today because of the economy?

KH: We're very judicious with our spending and budget, especially for things like the consumable supplies, but thanks to those factors I mentioned earlier, we have been able to operate pretty normally. Once we got through the pandemic and supply chain issues, we have been able to maintain our supplies with very few issues. The next hurdle we are working through is the time frames for ordering and receiving apparatus. This is a challenge for everyone in this line of work.

CC: What challenges do you see facing the fire service today?

KH: I think it is finding good people that still want to do this profession is the biggest challenge facing the fire service today. The number of applications that we receive during a hiring process has significantly decreased over the last several years. This is a national issue and not just a Louisa County issue. We are trying different avenues to get good people to apply. We will train them; we just need them to want to do this type of work. We have tried to hire people fully certified and found that it limited our pool of candidates so now we hold a process and

do a full academy with fire and EMS certifications offered and our application numbers have increased. This has helped us to find not necessarily qualified people, but we have found just really good people that want to learn this trade, but have not had the opportunity to take the training.

CC: What do you look for in a new recruit?

KH: I'll start with Integrity. It is the center of the fire service. Without it all trust is lost within the department and the citizens. I also look for someone that is excited to come to the testing and agility process because they are hopeful for what passing those tests could mean for them. It is fun to watch new people want to do this job and that are excited for what the future holds. I look for people that take pride in themselves and not only looking professional, but acting professional as well. Someone that takes care of themselves in all aspects. I try within myself to set the example every day and not be the example of what not to be.

CC: How do you view training?

KH: It is the most important aspect to being prepared for a job that inherently is dangerous. One of the biggest budget line increases over the past two years in Louisa County is the Training line. We saw the need for more training here and are determined to give our volunteers and staff what they need to be efficient in their jobs. The county supported us in the request for the additional funding and we have made sure that we utilize the training funds to provide all the basic and new technological training that we can provide to the staff. Each person and age group learns differently. We need to be able to meet each person's needs in those different ways. In addition, we currently also teach the high school Firefighter I and EMT class through their CTE (career and technical education). This program is so important to us as we get to teach the younger generation and impress upon them the importance of this job and skill set. Our hope is to recruit them as an applicant when they graduate. In fact, we currently have several career and volunteer members who completed this program in high school.

CC: Do you have a close working relationship with neighboring departments?

KH: Absolutely. Most of the neighboring counties have leadership that I reach out to constantly to see how they are handling situations similar to what we are encountering. It is necessary to build those relationships and secure the trust that if needed, we can call upon and in addition, be available to assist in any way that we can.

CC: What's in the future for the fire service as you see it?

KH: The fire service is ever changing. I have seen several changes over the last two decades. We must keep up with the change if we are going to be successful. We have a wide age gap in our department from 18-65 and you cannot speak and relate to each age group in the same manner. It is the same in the community that we serve. You must be diverse and flexible in our interaction, teaching, and public education with the citizens. We must be willing to change, and open to new ways of thinking, new technologies and ways of doing things.

CC: How has being a member of the VFCA helped you become a better chief/leader?

KH: The opportunities and training that VFCA has offered has greatly helped and prepared me for the leadership roles that I have had over the last 7 years as a Deputy Chief and now Fire Chief. It has awarded me the opportunities to learn from some of the best in the Commonwealth and I look forward to continuing to learn and maybe one day mentoring another young person following in my footsteps in this great profession. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to share with you a little bit of my love for the fire service, Louisa County, our department, and the dynamics that make up our little piece of the Commonwealth.

MORE THAN 2,300 ATTEND THE 42ND ANNUAL EMS SYMPOSIUM HOSTED BY VDH OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Marian Hunter, Public Relations Coordinator, Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services

The Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) recently hosted the 42nd Annual Virginia EMS Symposium. The largest EMS training event in the state, and one of the largest in the country, welcomed more than 2,300 registered attendees, including staff, faculty, volunteers and vendors; and a total of 4,000 participants including guests. The symposium offered 15 course tracks and 365 courses, covering everything from hands-on training in trauma, medical and cardiac care to education for pediatrics, operations, and health and safety. Approximately 24,173 hours of continuing education (CE) credits were issued to EMS providers attending the symposium.

The symposium app for Apple and Android devices was also available for download. It included class schedules, course evaluations, important updates, on-site event information and more. This convenient mobile app continues to receive positive reviews from event participants.

During the five-day training event, a two-day rescue camp for youth (ages 8-12) and teens (ages 13-18) was offered, and it taught basic lifesaving skills. A total of 24 youth and 16 teens attended the rescue camps. Additionally, The Norfolk Department of Public Health, in collaboration with the Virginia OEMS, hosted a flu shot and COVID-19 booster clinic to help prevent and combat the spread of influenza and COVID-19. This event was open to all EMS providers and symposium participants. Many thanks to the Norfolk Department of Public Health's staff for their assistance hosting a successful clinic.

In addition to the many great educational and networking opportunities offered at the Virginia EMS Symposium, there were also two exhibit halls and a special retail row, which featured more than 100 vendors and vehicle exhibitors from across the state and country.

The week-long educational event was capped off with the Governor's EMS Awards ceremony. These awards, given in Governor Glenn Youngkin's name, recognize EMS providers and organizations from across the Commonwealth for their outstanding level of excellence and dedication to the EMS System.

The 2023 Virginia EMS Symposium Call for Presentations will be announced soon. Stay tuned to our website for more details: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/emergency-medical-services/>.



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June 3, 2023

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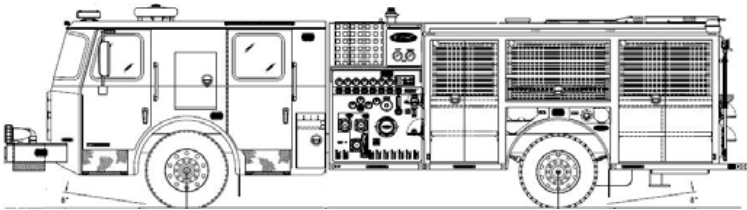


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PREVUES OF
COMING ATTRACTIONS

Just A Few Of The 2023 Educational Opportunities



Feb. 20-25

**Join The Fun And Learning
Opportunities**



“The Beach is Burning”

**2023 Virginia Fire & Rescue Conference
Hands On Training Program
February 21, 2023 - February 25, 2023**



Fire service personnel from firefighter to fire chief are invited to respond to Virginia Beach for “The Beach is Burning” training series hosted by the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Virginia Beach Fire Department, and Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department. This weeklong training event will be held as a part of the 2023 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference at the Virginia Beach Fire Training Center (VBFTC) & Virginia Beach Convention Center (VBCC) and consists of excellent hands on, realistic training. Seasoned training officers from across Virginia will offer personalized instruction for students of all skill levels. Course offerings include:

Tuesday February 21, 2023

0800-1700 - Commercial Side “Charlie” Operations (VBFTC)

0800-1700 - Engine Pump Operations Module (VBFTC)

0800-0945 - Sports Psychology for the Fireground (VBCC)

1000-1200 - Breaking the Culture of Established Training Practices - It's Not How We Always Have Done It (VBCC)

Tuesday February 21, 2023 through Thursday February 23, 2023 (VBFTC)

0800-1700 - VDFP Vehicle Rescue Technician Level I (VBFTC)

Wednesday February 22, 2023 & Thursday February 23, 2023

0800-1700 - Chief & Company Officer School (VBFTC)

0800-1700 - Truck Fundamentals School (VBFTC)

0800-1700 - Engine Operations School (VBFTC)

Friday February 24, 2023 & Saturday February 25, 2023

0800-1700 - VDFP Vehicle Rescue Technician Level II (VBFTC)

0800-1700 - Performance Under Pressure: Firefighter Survival VDFP Mayday Firefighter Down (VBFTC)

Friday February 24, 2023

0800-0945 - So You Are the Training Chief (VBCC)

Saturday February 25, 2023

0800-1200 - Fire Dynamics & Thermal Imaging (VBFTC)

Exclusive Sponsorship By:





The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association and Virginia Fire Marshal Academy are excited to announce a full week of 1031 & 1033 Recertification Courses at the 2023 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference. The VFRC will be held from February 20th through February 25th in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The schedule of classes for the week include:

Monday February 20, 2023

0800-1200 – The Company Officer and the Initial Investigation – VDFP 1033 Recertification

1300-1700 – Excessive Overhaul and its Impact on the Investigation – VDFP 1033 Recertification (HOT)

Tuesday February 21, 2023

0800-1200 - Multi-Agency Inspections - VDFP 1031 Recertification

1300-1700 - Ignitable Liquid Dog Introduction/Demo - VDFP 1033 Recertification

Wednesday February 22, 2023

0800-1700 - Use of Force/Defensive Tactics Sustainment - VDFP 1033 Recertification (HOT)

Thursday February 23, 2023

0800-1200 - Ignitable Liquid Dog Assist the Investigator - VDFP 1033 Recertification (HOT)

1300 -1700 - Public Speaking - VDFP 1031/1033 Recertification

Friday February 24, 2023

0800-1200 - Public Presentation - VDFP 1031/1033 Recertification

1300-1445 – Cold Spark Machines & NFPA 1126 - VDFP 1031 Recertification

1500-1700 - Special Event Planning - VDFP 1031 Recertification

Saturday February 25, 2023

0800-1200 - History & Response to Active Shooters - VDFP 1033 Recertification (HOT)

DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE TEAMS WORKSHOP SESSION 1

WHERE

Virginia Fire Rescue Conference in Virginia Beach, VA

WHEN

February 20/21 2023

WHY

For VFRC attendees! Through real-world scenarios you will gain knowledge & skills to support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)

LEARN MORE ABOUT:

- Defining DEI
- What is Respect?
- What is Equity?
- Exploring My Own Perspectives
- Using Inclusive Language and Making Inclusive Environments
- Calling In and Calling Out
- DEI in My Community
- Becoming a Better Ally for Inclusivity

Come away with a strong foundation in DEI to create and support inclusive environments.

REGISTER!

<https://tinyurl.com/bs3d6ref>

CLASS LIMITED TO 30 STUDENTS

Conference attendees will be reimbursed upon completion of the class.

- 2 nights of hotel stay
 - Conference registration fee
- *Limits apply.
Reimbursement only for volunteer and combination departments

PRE-COURSE

Pre-registration and 1-hour online class required

QUESTIONS?

Patrick Kidd
PKidd@IAFC.org



DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE TEAMS WORKSHOP SESSION 2

WHERE

Virginia Fire Rescue Conference in Virginia Beach, VA

WHEN

February 24/25 2023

WHY

For VFRC attendees! Through real-world scenarios you will gain knowledge & skills to support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)

LEARN MORE ABOUT:

- Defining DEI
- What is Respect?
- What is Equity?
- Exploring My Own Perspectives
- Using Inclusive Language and Making Inclusive Environments
- Calling In and Calling Out
- DEI in My Community
- Becoming a Better Ally for Inclusivity

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PRE-COURSE

Pre-registration and 1-hour online class required

QUESTIONS?

Patrick Kidd
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#38985 (Q3 2023) SHORT LEAD TIME!

Saber Chassis, 70" Cab w/ 10" Raised Roof, Seats Six (6), Enclosed Ladder Storage, Hatch Compartments, Deluge Mount, 1500 GPM Hale Pump (Similar unit shown)



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#38220 (Q3 2023) SHORT LEAD TIME!

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#37780 (Q2 2023) SHORT LEAD TIME!

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2100 GAL. TANKERS (HIGH SIDE)

#39268 (Q2 2024), #39809 (Q4 2024), #39810 (Q4 2024)

Freightliner M2-106 Chassis, 10" Newton Dump, 1250 GPM Pump (Similar unit shown)

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2022 GOVERNOR'S EMS AWARD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED AT 42ND ANNUAL VIRGINIA EMS SYMPOSIUM

Marian Hunter, Public Relations Coordinator, Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services

On Saturday, November 12, the 2022 Governor's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Award recipients were announced during the 42nd Annual Virginia EMS Symposium and Governor's EMS Awards ceremony in Norfolk, Virginia. These awards, given in Governor Glenn Youngkin's name, recognize EMS providers and organizations from across the Commonwealth for their outstanding level of excellence and dedication to the EMS system.

Presented in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Office of Emergency Medical Services' Annual EMS Symposium, the awards ceremony caps off the week-long training event. The symposium offers attendees the opportunity to earn up to 26 hours of continuing education credits for recertification as an EMS provider via more than 300 class sessions and various course tracks.

"Each year, many talented and dedicated EMS providers and organizations are recognized for their exceptional contributions to Virginia's EMS System," said **Gary Brown, director, Virginia Office of EMS**. "It's an incredible honor to be recognized at this level, and we greatly appreciate all of the nominees and award recipients for their hard work and dedication to responding to the call for help and providing the best prehospital emergency care in Virginia."

"Virginia is blessed to have an outstanding network of highly-skilled EMS providers and organizations, who stand ready 24/7 to provide life-saving care within minutes of a 911 call," said **State Health Commissioner Colin M. Greene, MD, MPH**. "My congratulations to the individuals and organizations being recognized this year, and a sincere thanks to those who strive every day to make emergency medical services in Virginia the example for others to follow."

The 2022 Governor's EMS Award recipients are:

- The Governor's EMS Award for Excellence in EMS – **Gary Samuels, Bon Secours, Rappahannock General and Mary Immaculate Hospitals**
- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to Leadership in EMS (The Kent J. Weber Trophy) – **Jon Henschel, Winchester Fire and Rescue Department**
- The Governor's EMS Award for Physician with Outstanding Contribution to EMS (The Frank M. Yeiser Trophy) – **Michel Aboutanos, M.D., VCU Health**
- The Governor's EMS Award for Nurse with Outstanding Contribution to EMS – **Lou Ann Miller, R.N., Riverside Regional Medical Center**
- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding EMS Prehospital Educator – **Penny Kelly, Fairfax County Schools**
- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding EMS Prehospital Provider – **Tyler Reid, York County Department of Fire and Life Safety**

- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Health and Safety – **Jennifer Collins, Lynchburg Fire Department**
- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS for Children – **Peninsulas EMS Council Pediatric Care Committee**
- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding EMS Agency – **Nightingale Regional Air Ambulance**
- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Telecommunication – **Adriane Heiden, Loudoun County Fire and Rescue**
- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Emergency Preparedness and Response (The James A. Nogle, Jr. Trophy) – **Kenneth Smith, CJW Medical Center**
- The Governor's EMS Award for Innovation Excellence in EMS – **Old Dominion EMS Alliance**

An additional award is presented at the ceremony to recognize the outstanding contributions to EMS by a high school senior. This is a scholarship award provided by the Virginia Office of EMS in conjunction with the State EMS Advisory Board.

- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS by a High School Senior (The Dr. Carol Gilbert \$5,000 Scholarship) – **Michael Lansing, Tuckahoe Volunteer Rescue Squad**

NATIONAL EMS WEEK



National EMS week honors the contributions of those who work on the medical front line. This year, it's celebrated from May 21 to May 23. The week gives Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and those who would like to credit them, a chance to recognize their hard work in potentially fatal situations daily. Whether an accident, a national emergency, or a terrorist act, the EMS work quickly and efficiently to save lives. This week is the perfect time to create daily themes, teach and learn something, team build and most importantly understand the magnitude of how much the EMS do. EMS this week will more than likely do special trainings to ensure up to date effective life saving treatments. Whether celebrated together or alone, across the nation a lot is going on during this week.

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How to recognize a pipeline leak

- **LOOK** for blowing dirt, discolored vegetation or continued bubbling of standing water.
- **LISTEN** for a hissing or roaring noise near a natural gas appliance or line.
- **SMELL** for the distinctive, rotten-egg odor associated with natural gas. Natural gas is colorless and odorless, so we add a chemical odorant called mercaptan for easy detection of a suspected natural gas leak. This odorant has a distinctive "rotten egg" type odor. You should act any time you detect even a small amount of this odor in the air. Be aware that "odorant fade," while uncommon, can occur. Odorant fade occurs when a physical or chemical process causes the level of odorant in the gas to be reduced. This can happen in both existing gas pipe and new installations.

Note: Be aware that "odorant fade," while uncommon, can occur. Odorant fade occurs when a physical or chemical process causes the level of odorant in the gas to be reduced. This can happen in both existing gas pipe and new installations. Be aware that some individuals may not be able to detect the smell of the natural gas odorant because they have a diminished sense of smell, because the scent is being masked by other odors in the area or because the odorant has diminished so that it is not detectable. Some gas lines, due to their unique function, may not have odor at all.

Learn more

For more information about natural gas and emergency response procedures and training, contact us at **800.552.7473**.

To learn about our emergency response plan, which recognizes and mitigates threats and also sustains the integrity of the pipelines. Visit virginiannaturalgas.com/integritymanagementplan.

Help keep everyone safe during a natural gas emergency

Even though natural gas pipeline incidents are uncommon, it is still important to be prepared by knowing the signs of a potential problem.

You should take the following action any time you detect any of the signs of a pipeline leak:

- **DO NOT** try to identify the source to stop the leak yourself.
- **AVOID** using any sources of ignition, such as cell phones, cigarettes, matches, flashlights, electronic devices, motorized vehicles, light switches or landlines, as natural gas can ignite from a spark or open flame, possibly causing a fire or explosion. Natural gas is non-toxic, lighter than air and displaces oxygen. In severe cases, if not used properly, natural gas can also lead to asphyxiation.
- **CALL** Virginia Natural Gas immediately at our 24-hour emergency response line **800.552.7473** with the location and type of emergency.
- **SECURE** the area by establishing a safety zone around the incident and control access. You may need to reroute traffic and evacuate area homes and businesses.

How we respond

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Prevention – the best defense against leaks

Emergency officials and first responders do their part daily to prevent natural gas leaks by keeping the following safety tips in mind:

- Understand that natural gas is lighter than air and displaces oxygen. Although natural gas is non-toxic, in extreme cases of oxygen displacement, it may lead to asphyxiation. Natural gas has a risk of ignition near a spark or open flame.
- Know where the pipelines are in your jurisdiction. If you notice any missing or damaged pipeline markers, contact Virginia Natural Gas at **1.877.572.3342** so they can be replaced.
- Virginia law requires all underground utilities be marked before any type of digging or excavation. Be on the lookout for any suspicious activity or unauthorized digging. If the excavator has not notified the state of their intent to dig, they must stop all activity immediately. The excavator is required to present a valid dig ticket number when requested by first responders. Also, no one, including homeowners, should be digging, ditching, drilling, leveling or plowing without having first contacted our state's One-Call number (**811**) to locate underground utilities.
- Remember, pipeline markers, like the sample pictured, indicate only the general area of the pipeline and not the exact location or depth. Pipeline markers may not be present in all areas.
- Information about transmission pipelines operating in your community is available through the National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) and online at: npms.phmsa.dot.gov.



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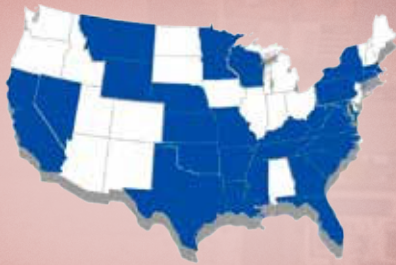
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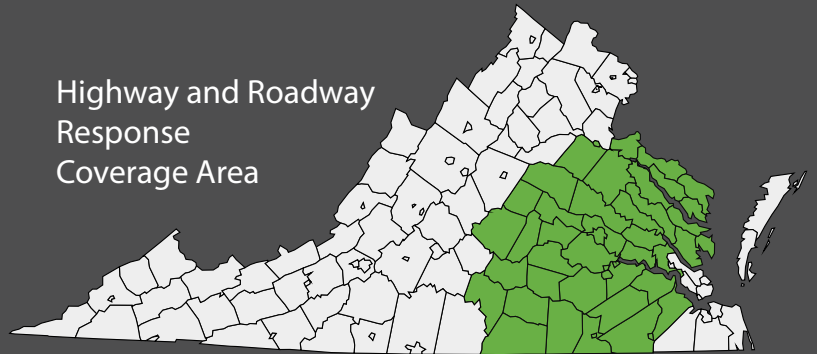
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VFCA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

17 Executive Officers Meeting
1000 Hours Virtual

22-27 Virginia Fire Officer Academy
W. E. Skelton 4H Center Wirtz, VA

February

20-25 2019 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference
0800 Hours VA Beach

22 Governor's Fire Service Awards VA Beach

23 VFCA Full Board Meeting
1300 hours VA Beach

24 Fire Service Board Meeting
1000 Hours TBD

March

21 Executive Officers Meeting
1000 Hours Virtual

April

TBD 4th Annual VFCF 5K Run/Walk
0800 hours Williamsburg

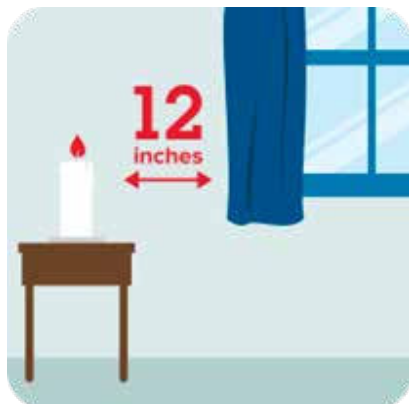
18 VFCA Full Board Meeting
1000 Hours Glen Allen - VDFP

May

11-12 9th Annual Chiefs Summit
0800 Hours Glen Allen

June

2 VFCF Spotsylvania Golf Tournament
1100 Hours Spotsylvania



ENGINEERS / ARCHITECTS / PLANNER

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DJG IS ON FIRE!
STOP, DROP AND DESIGN
WITH US!

BOARD OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MEETS

Keith H. Johnson, Fire Chief Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System
Chair of the Virginia Fire Services Board
Past President of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association
Board Member, , Board of Housing and Community Development

On Monday, October 3, 2022, the Board of Housing and Community Development (BHCD) held its board meeting to include members of the Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB). This meeting was to consider the 2021 code proposals for the Uniform Statewide Building Code, Statewide Fire Prevention Code, Virginia Amusement Device Regulations, and the Industrialized Building Safety Regulations.

The meeting began at 9:00 am at the Virginia Housing Center in Glen Allen. The full board convened to hear public comment followed by the joint VFSB/BHCD Statewide Fire Prevention Code Development Committee, the BHCD Codes and Standards Committee, and a reconvening of the full board to address the rest of the agenda

While there were only two non-consensus items for the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code, there were several significant items which were associated with the Virginia Construction Code, Virginia Residential Code and Virginia Existing Building Code.

Typically, code proposals brought before the Board of Housing fall into one of three categories.

1. Code proposals recommended by Workgroups as Consensus for Approval
2. Code proposals recommended by Workgroups as Consensus for Disapproval
3. Code proposals recommended by Workgroups as non-Consensus

1. Regarding the numerous code proposals recommended by workgroups as consensus for approval, one specific item was removed from the consensus list as motioned by a BHCD board member and voted upon individually. This item included:

- FP107.11-21 which sought increases in existing State Fire Marshal Office fees for permits and inspections and adds requirements for new operational permits for certain hazardous operations in localities where SFMO acts as fire official. After a lengthy debate and my strong opposition, this consensus item was reversed and ultimately disapproved by the board.

2. Regarding code proposals recommended by workgroups as consensus for disapproval, each of these items were voted for disapproval by the board.

3. Regarding code proposals recommended by workgroups as non-consensus, this is where much of the discussion centered.

Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFBC):

- FP906.1-21 was disapproved which would delete the existing Virginia

amendment which exempts groups A, B and E occupancies from the requirements to provide portable fire extinguishers, if the buildings are equipped throughout with quick response sprinklers (SFPC Portion of Proposal Only) The VFSB recommended approval of this change.

- B1010.2.8-21 was approved which intends to comply with SB 333 and HB 670 by adding "public buildings" to the list of uses/occupancies already allowed to be provided with ESH. The proposal was generated as a result of discussions during the Active Shooter and Hostile Threats in Public Buildings. The VFSB recommended approval of this change

Uniformed Statewide Building Code (USBC):

In a surprising motion, a BHCD board member and VFSB representative made a motion to disapprove all 33 code proposals that exceed the 2021 Model Codes (International Codes) and the 16 code proposals that exceed the existing 2018 Virginia Regulations (Virginia Amendments). This motion would basically remove all 49 code proposals from board discussion/consideration and disapprove them in a block. I immediately voiced extreme opposition to this motion, which in my time on the Board of Housing, this motion was unprecedented. After much discussion and opposition from other board members, the motion carried by a majority of the board, and these 49 code proposals received no consideration, no dialogue among board members, and ultimately were approved for disapproval.

Many of these 49 code proposals were extremely important to the fire service. Some examples include:

- o Restores International Residential Code (IRC) requirements for providing fire protection of engineered wood floors.
- o Requires fire sprinklers in all townhouses and a secondary proposal for fire sprinklers in townhouses with more than 3 units.
- o Adding the requirement of CO alarms in each room where "combustion occurs". It also adds a requirement for gas detectors and alarms to be provided in each room where "combustion occurs".
- o Adding new requirements for existing energy storage systems to the VEBC
- o Moves 2021 International Fire Code (IFC) requirements for electrical vehicle charging stations to the body of the Virginia Construction Code.
- o Changes responsibility of providing in-building communication systems from the locality to the building owner.
- o Requirements when retrofitting energy storage systems.
- o Removes the requirements for habitable attics from the definition and places them in the body of the code.
- o Deletes exception that allowed removal of fire extinguishers if the building is protected with fire sprinklers.

There were only 7 non-consensus items that were discussed among the board which included:

- B1006.3.4-21 which would have allowed for a single stairwell in R-2 occupancies that are four or five stories tall. This was strongly opposed by me and the VFSB. This was disapproved and recommended to be sent to a DHCD study group.

- B1010.2.8-21 was approved which intends to comply with SB 333 and HB 670 by adding "public buildings" to the list of uses/occupancies already allowed to be provided with ESH. The proposal was generated as a result of discussions during the Active Shooter and Hostile Threats in Public Buildings. The VFSB recommended approval of this change

In conclusion, this 2021 Code Change final approval meeting was extremely disappointing as the voices of Virginia's Fire Service were silenced. By recommending and approving the non-consensus items in a block, the fire service views were not able to be discussed at the board level. Remember that in Virginia, only one person needs to object for an item to be considered non-consensus, it is NOT a majority vote. We will seek to discuss future legislative options that will ensure Virginia's Fire Service is not only heard, but that FIRE and LIFE SAFETY is once again a priority in Virginia's Codes and Standards.

SAVE THE DATE!!!

MAY 22-23. 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE 33RD ANNUAL NATIONAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES SYMPOSIUM AND DINNER



Each year, the Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI) has the distinct honor of hosting the annual National Fire and Emergency Services Symposium and Dinner. On May 22-23, 2023, approximately 1,500 fire service leaders from across the nation will gather for the 33rd Annual National Fire and Emergency Services Symposium and Dinner, interact with peers and share their expertise with federal leaders on the readiness and response capabilities of our nation's first responders.

To us, it's about Family,

we have your back!

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NATIONAL REMEMBRANCE OF FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS MOVES TO MAY STARTING IN 2023



Beginning in 2023 Memorial Weekend moves to May. A combination of weather uncertainties and the frequent threat of an October federal government shutdown is behind the move of the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend from its traditional October date. NFFF Board chairman Troy Markel said, "As with everything NFFF does, the priority is making sure we do right by the families of the firefighters we're honoring." The change means 2023 Memorial Weekend will be May 6 and 7. While the time of year for the Candlelight and Memorial Services changes, our other four decades of long traditions will continue. Chairman Markel said, "Removing some of the uncertainties we've faced with the October date will help avoid distractions as we focus on honoring the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice." As always, the public can help support these heroes, their families, and the Memorial Weekend events.

ANOTHER PATHWAY TO FIRST RESPONDER CANCER PREVENTION

F. R. Montes de Oca, EFO, MESH, CPM

Much has been written about the current scourge of firefighting that is cancer. Support networks and research institutions are evolving from coast to coast while several states although slow to get their act together are beginning to develop and pass firefighter cancer presumptive legislation. In June of this year, a short article, "Seven Simple Cancer-Free Habits (see below) based on The Lavender Report was published in the Pennsylvania Fireman, which addressed simple practices firefighters can adopt to help minimize the risks of cancer. I struggled with this article attempting to present another view regarding the dangers of and solutions for the cancer threat.



Simply stated: a prime contributor to the most common causes of cancer is the exposure to per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances - PFAS for short. This is not to ignore or minimize the effects that the hundreds (perhaps thousands) of combustion byproducts and other hazardous substances firefighters come into contact with, the intent is simply to lay out a sort of PFAS-101. Other articles, studies and commentaries are cropping up and available for consumption and should be incorporated in this effort to educate oneself.

As you read this, you may start piecing the puzzle together that shows how the fire service quite innocently got tangled up in the current battle for the health and wellness of its members and the presence of PFAS in the tools first responders rely on, and the products they and their loved ones come into contact within everyday life.

This is not a chemistry lesson or in-depth technical cause-and-effect report. I'm not a fan of chemistry...or hazardous materials for that matter. Me explaining chemistry is like a truckie explaining which end of the hose water exits.1 Nonetheless, I press on.

A somewhat detailed PFAS discussion is found on the CDC website Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ASTDR) describing PFAS as a group of unique chemically stable manmade compounds² that have been used in industry and consumer products worldwide since the 1950s. Although the list of products and uses number in the thousands, a brief listing includes nonstick cookware, water-repellent clothing, stain resistant fabrics and carpets, some cosmetics, some firefighting foams, firefighting and first responder personal protective equipment (PPE) and products that resist grease, water, and oil.

WARNING – CHEMICAL STUFF: The most commonly studied PFAS are perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS). The next most commonly studied are perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), and perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA).

PFOA and PFOS have been phased out of production and use in the United States, but other countries may still manufacture and use them in products we import.

During production and use, **PFAS can migrate into the soil, water, and air.** (Read THIS JUST IN at the bottom.) Most PFAS (including PFOA and PFOS) do not break down, so they remain in the environment. As reported in the ASTDR, "Because of their widespread use and their persistence in the environment, **PFAS are found in the blood of people and animals all over the world and are present at low levels in a variety of food products and in the environment.**" Some PFAS can build up in people and animals with repeated exposure over time contributing to the occurrence of cancer and other serious health issues.

Here is the confusing part of the PFAS journey: Although many scientific articles have been published about PFAS exposure and health effects it is difficult to show that substances directly cause detrimental health conditions in humans, scientific studies have shown that exposure to some PFAS in the environment may be linked to harmful health effects in humans and animals. More research is needed to better understand the health effects of PFAS exposure. However, it is through the continued dogged advocacy of firefighter and first responder organizations that the problems of PFAS exposure are remaining in the minds and efforts of legislators – and now manufacturers and suppliers.

GENERAL EXPOSURE TO PFAS

- Drinking contaminated municipal water or private well water
- Food grown or raised near places that used or made PFAS
- Eating fish caught from water contaminated by PFAS (PFOS, in particular)
- Accidentally swallowing contaminated soil or dust
- Eating food packaged in material that contains PFAS
- Using products such as stain resistant carpeting and water repellent clothing.

Alarming, PFAS have been detected in the drinking water supplies and wastewater of many major cities. PFAS are commonly described as forever chemicals³ because of their ability to persist in the fabrics, products and environment. In other words, they never break down.* PFAS persistently remain in the environment, our food sources often contain them from packaging and/or water sources.

Industrial use includes plumbing products that join and clean metals, fluoroplastic layers to create fire-resistant clothing, paper products for coatings to repel moisture and grease, such as nonfood paper packaging and food contact materials such as pizza boxes and fast-food wrappers and wire manufacturing for coating and insulation.

As reported by the CDC, the most commonly studied PFAS are perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS). The next most commonly studied are perfluoro hexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), and perfluoro nonanoic acid (PFNA). **These compounds are no longer made in the United States and have been replaced with alternative PFAS, such as GenX chemicals.**

Studies of laboratory animals given large amounts of PFAS indicate that some of these probable carcinogens may affect growth and development. In addition, these animal studies indicate PFAS may affect reproduction, thyroid function, the immune system, and injure organs such as the liver. Epidemiologic studies on PFAS exposure evaluated several health effects. Descriptions of these studies are available at: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/>. Research is continuing to assess the human health effects of exposure to PFAS.

HISTORY OF PFAS USE IN FIREFIGHTING

On 29 July 1967, the aircraft carrier USS Forrestal experienced a catastrophic fire resulting in 134 dead sailors and 161 injured crew members. Shortly after the incident, scientists developed a firefighting product containing a PFAS foam mixture commonly known as aqueous film forming foam or AFFF. It was highly effective combatting flammable liquid fires and was installed at all military aircraft units and installations, civilian airports and adopted by municipal fire departments throughout the US.



departments throughout the US.

AFFF has been the industry standard for combatting liquid fuel fires and hazards for almost 50 years. AFFF is a water-based solution that contains a fluorinated, film forming surfactant to seal the fuel surface during suppression and extinguishment.

Although the PFAS family had been around since the 1930s, its use and popularity took off following the adoption by the US military and other large-scale users. Today, thousands of products containing PFAS are used for everyday consumption including thousands of firefighting bunker gear sets, firefighting foams and assorted fire-retardant products.

Table C.1.2-1 Frequently Researched Fluorine Free Foams and Agents

Manufacturer	Type	Website	Research Areas
3F - Freedol	Foam	https://www.3f.com/uk/chemicals/foam/	Pet
Argus	Foam	https://argusfire.com/products/foam-concentrates/products/	Av, DoD, Pet
Arsoil	Foam	https://www.arsoil.com/usa/foam.html	DoD
Auxquima	Foam	http://www.auxquima.com/foam.html	
Bo-Ea	Foam	https://www.bo-ea.com/our-products/composites/foam-free-foam/	Av, DoD, Pet
Bratol - EkoSol	Foam	http://www.bratol-fire.com/	
Dr. Scherer	Foam	https://scherer.com/products/foam.html	AV, Pet
Eau et Feu	Foam	https://www.eau-et-feu.com/products/foam-free-foam/	AV, Pet
Fredol PFE	Foam	https://www.fredol.com/products/foam-free-foam/	
Furtec	Foam	https://www.furtec.com/foam-free-foam/	Av, DoD, Pet
GreenLife	Both	https://www.greenlife.com/foam-free-foam/	
National	Foam	https://nationalfoam.com/foam-concentrates/foam-free-foam/	Av, DoD, Pet
Orchidea	Foam	https://www.orchidea-fire.com/products/solutions/foam-free-foam/	
Phos-Ches	Foam	https://www.phos-ches.com/foam-free-foam/	
Solberg	Foam	https://www.solberg-foam.com/foam-free-foam/	Av, DoD, Pet
vs FOCUM	Foam	https://www.vsfocus.com/foam-free-foam/	
Amiran	Wetting	https://www.amiran.com/foam-free-foam/	
Coalite	Wetting	https://www.coalite.com/foam-free-foam/	
F500	Wetting	https://www.f500.com/foam-free-foam/	
Gettech	Wetting	https://www.gettech.com/foam-free-foam/	
Novacoil	Wetting	https://www.novacoil.com/foam-free-foam/	
Zyrocool	Wetting	https://www.zyrocool.com/foam-free-foam/	

Research Areas: AV-Aviation / DoD-US Department of Defense / Pet - Petroleum Industry

As stated above, although PFOA and PFOS have been phased out of production and use in the United States, other countries may still manufacture and use them. Keep this in mind when your department considers product purchases from companies who operate (PFAS) manufacturing plants or use suppliers out of the United States.

(Several of the following details and recommendations are based on the NFPA publication Firefighting Foams: Fire Service Roadmap)

MINIMIZING FIREFIGHTER EXPOSURES

There is a double-edged sword regarding the need to limit exposure to PFAS and the need to protect firefighters and first responders when performing their duties. Read on.



Although not always strictly enforced, for decades it has been recommended that firefighters (and other emergency response personal) wear proper personal protective equipment (PPE) when there is a risk of exposure to AFFF. This equipment should be properly fitted, worn, maintained and ultimately decontaminated after exposure to AFFF.

Firefighters face additional PFAS exposure risks due to the use of remaining inventories of PFAS-containing AFFF in training and firefighting foam applications. Handling, training and emergency use of AFFF exposes emergency personnel to PFAS through ingestion, inhalation or dermal absorption. AFFF contains fluorinated, film forming surfactants (per- and poly- fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)) to seal the fuel surface during suppression/extinguishment. All AFFFs (as well as all other fluorinated firefighting foams) contain PFAS. Firefighters can also be exposed to PFAS through the combustion of PFAS-containing products (e.g., carpets, upholstery, etc.).

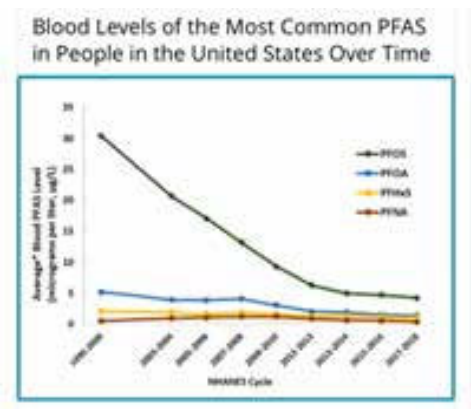
Additionally, **firefighters can be exposed to PFAS via turnout gear.** PFAS have been used in water-repellent fabrics in all layers of gear to provide water-resistance and to protect firefighters from steam. Some States have passed additional regulation for PFAS in firefighting PPE and there is ongoing research to determine the risks of PFAS exposure through turnout gear.

There is only limited information quantifying the long-term health effects of foam exposures on firefighters. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have also conducted research on exposures and ailments and have posted a significant amount of information and guidance on their website: https://www.cdc.gov/biomonitoring/PFAS_FactSheet.html.

PFAS exposure can have both short and long-term effects on the human body.

Exposure to AFFF and PFAS can cause short-term effects such as:

- irritation of the skin, throat, nose and eye and mucous membranes,
- rashes,
- dizziness,
- headaches,
- and drowsiness.



Research also ties leukemia, lymphoma, and neuroendocrine tumors to prolonged exposure to some PFAS.

Firefighters are shown to have disproportionately high rates of cancer in comparison to the public. Additional data is being collected through the FEMA-funded Firefighter Cancer Cohort Study to provide an epidemiological survey of PFAS exposure and cancer. Below are several general precautions firefighters and first responders should consider during and following use of products suspected of containing PFAS:

- Personnel should use self-contained breathing apparatus of positive pressure-supplied air respirators during handling, mixing, application or immediate clean-up of AFFF.
- Skin should be covered with proper water-resistant clothing and gloves to avoid dermal contact with AFFF.
- During standard fire operations, firefighters should wear turnout gear per specific department requirements.
- First responders should follow best hygiene practices to reduce PFAS exposure.
- Firefighters should wash hands and other exposed skin after using AFFF reduce irritation.
- Firefighters should also wash hands prior to eating or smoking to prevent accidental ingestion of PFAS.

Now here is the other edge of the sword:

In other words, as soon as your bunker gear is no longer necessary for firefighting or related emergency operations, it should be removed. No longer is it appropriate or recommended for firefighters and other responders to wear their gear after the fire, slogging around the scene, taking a breather and hanging out with their buddies until time to head back to the station.

This recommendation while timely and well-regarded places the responsibility of fire departments across the nation to develop, implement and enforce a new set of directives that reflect this new caution.

SAFETY ALERT

"The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association (Metro Chiefs) have come together to notify members of the adverse health risks from fire fighter turnout gear. Recent studies have shown that all three layers of fire fighter turnout gear contain Per and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), a class of fluorinated chemicals known as "forever chemicals" which have been linked to cancer and other serious health effects. These studies highlight the risks associated with the materials and finishes used in turnout gear even before it is exposed to its first fire. Identifying safe and effective PFAS-free materials for turnout gear is a long and challenging process. Until PFAS is fully removed from turnout gear, the IAFF and Metro Chiefs are asking fire fighters to reduce exposure to PFAS in turnout gear by using the following precautions:

- Turnout gear should NOT be taken into firehouse living areas.
- When transporting gear in personal vehicles, it should be in a sealed container or bag, and preferably NOT transported in the passenger compartment.
- Apparatus cabs should be cleaned regularly and after every fire.
- Wash your hands after handling turnout gear.
- Legacy turnout gear should be replaced as new PFAS-free technologies become available.
- Do not wear turnout gear on responses where this level of protection is not necessary."

PPE CLEANING AND DECONTAMINATION

Taking another step to further protect the responder and their loved ones, turnout gear should not be washed in home washing machines, but should be cleaned in a dedicated washing machine to avoid contaminating other clothes.

So, if your department doesn't have an appropriate process (read that commercial/ industrial grade washing system with specific wastewater catch/filtering system or a contract with a certified PPE cleaning contractor) it is strongly advisable to do so without delay.

PPE has an expected lifecycle for use. At the end of life, PPE should be discarded due to damage or excessive use in accordance with local, State and federal regulation.

THIS JUST IN

Many of you may have heard about microplastics and the suspected impact on our health. Well, as a bearer of bad news..."A new study finds how nanoplastics journey up the food chain, from being absorbed from the soil ... moving to insects, and eventually winding up in fish. The authors note this could pose potential health risks if this process is replicated with crops and organisms. Recent studies have found microplastics in human lungs and blood, and nanoplastics have even been found in the remote North and South Poles of the Earth. To further relay distressing news,

studies show that microplastics are often made of or contain PFAS further threatening the health and well-being of humans. A study has found that micro and nano plastics that are inhaled can increase by 10X the lethality in humans. And

finally, the results of an Israeli study published by Environmental International has found microplastics in 80% of the subjects blood it tested.



Desiree Martin/AFP Getty Images

SUMMARY

Unfortunately, PFAS-containing products and equipment will remain in the firefighting and first response universe for many years to come. Whether it's due to budget constraints, lack of inertia, overwhelming "other" priorities or lack of understanding, it is critical that those who defend our communities continue pressuring their legislators and decisionmakers to commit to the rapid replacement of all PFAS-containing tools, products, PPE and equipment to ensure a safer, healthier environment.

SEVEN SIMPLE CANCER PREVENTION HABITS

- Habit 1. Advocate for yourself.
- Habit 2. Always wear appropriate PPE including your SCBA.
- Habit 3. Always wash hands and contaminated areas after each medical call.
- Habit 4. Don't use contaminated hoods.
- Habit 5. Gross decon immediately following the event.
- Habit 6. Take a shower within an hour of exposure and shower before leaving the station.
- Habit 7. Decon apparatus and equipment.

1. I trust my attempt at levity was taken simply as that. I served one year as a ladder driver operator and profess my undying admiration and respect for those who work above the oven.
2. C. Cook and E. Steinle-Darling
3. Linstrom et al. and Bech et al.

*Recently commercial startups are reporting the possibility of treating AFFF products to reduce their harmful properties.



F. R. Montes de Oca served as a firefighter/paramedic for over 25 years in Orlando, Florida, before appointment as chief of department for Springfield, Ohio, and fire chief and emergency services director for Osceola County, Florida. His last appointment was as emergency services director and fire marshal for Orange County, North Carolina. Throughout his career he has been involved in developing and managing firefighter safety and leadership programs. He is a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer program, a certified Manager of Environmental Safety and Health,

and a Certified Public Manager. Chief Montes de Oca is an adjunct instructor for the National Fire Academy and qualified to present training programs for OSHA and the EPA. He is a member of the National Volunteer Fire Council and a lifetime member of the North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs. He can be reached at frm1@me.com or www.responder1.org.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONAL NEWS

Melissa Heiderman, President

On behalf of the entire Administrative Professionals Section (APS), we hope that you have had a happy holiday season with family and friends! It has been a busy few months for the APS; our annual retreat was held in September 2022, hosted by the City of Manassas, with assistance provided by the City of Manassas Park. Participants came from all parts of the Commonwealth to attend, along with many new faces to our section. Speakers included:

- Angela Bailey, Founder and CEO of AnandaLife, LLC "It's Your Life, It's Your Story to Write"
- Lt. Brenda Pamperin, Lt. Evelyn Edwards, and Capt. Sam Green "Women in Fire Service"
- Patty Prince, Communications Director for City of Manassas "Social Media Tips"
- Michelle Albert, Igneous Solutions "Managing Vicarious Trauma, Burnout & Compassion Fatigue"

At the end of the two day retreat there was an interactive, team building scavenger hunt through Historic Manassas. Teams were able to work together to solve riddles while learning a bit more about Manassas, including a visit to Fire Rescue Station 1. Many guests, including local Fire Chiefs and VFCA Board Members, stopped by to share their support of the group. During the business meeting portion of the retreat, it was voted that the current APS Board of Directors would extend their terms by one year. Therefore, your 2023 Board is: Melissa Heiderman, President (City of Manassas); Mandy Waybright, Vice President (City of Harrisonburg); Dana Campbell, Secretary (City of Manassas).

Our next event was a quarterly meeting on December 2nd in James City County. Member Amanda Deal has been gracious to host our December meeting for the past two years. The business meeting and presentation are done first, and then some team building fun at the end of the event. This is a great tradition that dates back several years for our section.

Finally, we will be assisting with fundraising for the VFCA at the Virginia Fire Rescue Conference in Virginia Beach in February. There will be a larger showing of APS professionals this year thanks in part to support of the VFCA and jurisdictions who are allowing their administrative professionals to partake in the event.

I'm overjoyed to say that the APS has one of the largest and most active group of professionals, and the most support from our Chiefs and jurisdictions, that I've seen in my 10+ years as a member. This would not be possible without each and every one of you and of course the support of the VFCA Board of Directors! There is a renewed excitement and willingness to support each other. The professionals of the APS have proven time and again that this is far more than a group that meets quarterly to say hello. Almost monthly, or even weekly, we have members reaching out to the group for advice, research, policies, etc. I can speak for Manassas when I say the assistance received from our APS counterparts has been invaluable.

I continue to ask that you please share our section information with your administrative staff and encourage them to participate. If you or your staff any questions about the group, please do not hesitate to reach out to a member of the Board. You may also visit our Facebook page at [administrativeprofessionalssection](https://www.facebook.com/administrativeprofessionalssection).

ON THE MOVE & ODDS AND ENDS



Roanoke Fire-EMS appoints its first female fire marshal

Photo: Roanoke Fire-EMS

Roanoke Fire-EMS is pleased to announce that Rebecca "Becky" Smith has been appointed to the position of Fire Marshal/Battalion Chief of Fire Prevention. Chief Smith has served Roanoke Fire-EMS for almost 19 years, beginning as a firefighter/EMT in 2003. In 2007, she became a certified fire investigator for the department, and a fire inspector in 2010. Smith was promoted to Assistant Fire Marshal in 2019, and was promoted to Deputy Fire Marshal in 2021. In addition to her service with Roanoke Fire-EMS, she worked for Franklin County Public Safety as a firefighter/EMT and fire investigator from 2008 to 2019, and she has served on the staff of the Virginia Fire Officer Academy since 2015. Smith is a graduate of the Virginia Fire Marshal Academy Fire Marshal Law Enforcement School, the Virginia Fire Officers' Academy, and she holds an Executive Certificate in Leadership from the Hollins University Batten Leadership Institute.

"We have full confidence that Chief Smith is the right choice to continue to advance the growth of the Fire Marshal's Office," says Roanoke Fire-EMS Deputy Chief David Guynn. The first female to hold the position of fire marshal in Roanoke Fire-EMS history, Smith is dedicated to serving her department and her community. Please join the City of Roanoke Fire-EMS Department in congratulating Battalion Chief Becky Smith on this promotion.

Charlottesville Fire Chief Hezedeane Smith leaving the department

Charlottesville Fire Chief Hezedeane Smith is leaving the department for another job. In a letter to CFD staff on Friday, September 23, Chief Smith says he has accepted a fire chief position in Polk County, Florida but his last day with CFD is not yet confirmed. Charlottesville Mayor Llyod Snook says he expects Smith's last day to be some time in October. Chief Smith started with the department in 2020.

Deputy Chief Michael Thomas named Charlottesville interim fire chief

City Manager Michael Rogers has named Deputy Fire Chief Michael Thomas as the interim chief upon Hezedeane Smith's departure next week. While in his first 100 days with CFD, Rogers says Chief Thomas has 31 years of experience prior

in the Lynchburg Fire Department. "He has the right perspective on the current status of the department, and the need for stabilization," Rogers said. He'll assume the interim position upon Chief Smith's departure October 21. Rogers thanked Chief Smith for putting the city in the position to have successful succession planning. Rogers said they interviewed three deputies for the interim position before deciding on Chief Thomas. Smith is leaving to become fire chief in Polk County, FL, close to his Orlando home.

Governor Glenn Youngkin Appoints Frankel to EMS Advisory Board

In late September, Governor Glenn Youngkin announced additional appointments to his Administration and various boards.

Brian J. Frankel of Fredericksburg, Deputy Chief EMS, Stafford County Fire and Rescue Department was appointed to the Governors EMS Advisory Board. Brian is replacing Lisa Simba as the VFCA rep on that Board.

In his press release the Governor said, "Today I am announcing a new group of appointees to serve the citizens of Virginia by working in my administration and on boards throughout state government. He went on to say "I look forward to the great work these dedicated individuals will do for the commonwealth."

Amherst County hires new director of public safety

Amherst County announced in late October the hiring of Bradley Beam as the county's new director of public safety. A Henry County native, Beam brings more than 20 years of experience to the position. He previously served as a battalion chief with the Williamsburg Fire Department and worked with Martinsville Fire and EMS for 12 years. While working in public safety, he has acquired multiple certifications and training credentials. Beam holds a bachelor's degree from Radford University and currently is enrolled in the Local Government Leadership Graduate program at Virginia Tech. He and his family are excited about the move to Amherst and look forward to becoming an active part of the community, according to a news release from the county. Beam succeeds Sam Bryant, who recently retired after serving the position for four and a half years.

VDFFP names new Deputy Director and Chief Safety Officer

We are pleased to announce that Chief Nick Nanna of Prince William County will begin as our Deputy Director on October 31, 2022. Chief Nanna has been in the Fire Rescue EMS service for over 40 years. He is a retired U.S. Marine Colonel, with 33 years of service as career intelligence officer who commanded at every level in both service and joint staffs. He was a Commander in Okinawa, Japan for his last duty station where he was responsible for 5 camps and 11 sites. He has had several combat tours and holds the Defense Superior Service Medal, 2 Legions of Merit, Joint Meritorious Service Medal, 4 Meritorious Service Medals, a Joint Service Commendation Medal, 2 Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medals, a Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon, and numerous campaign medals and awards. Since his retirement he has worked as a contractor for several intelligence organizations. Initially a member of the Mount Vernon, NY VFD, he joined the Dumfries-Triangle VFD in 1985 and served on both Engines and Truck Companies. He has been a Chief Officer for almost 10 years and is currently the Chief of the DTVFD. He is an Officer IV and Instructor II with numerous other certifications from both NY and Virginia. Chief Nanna holds an MBA and an MS and is currently a Doctoral Candidate in Public Administration. He is a certified Project Management Professional. He is an Adjunct Professor of Military Science at the Naval War College. He was designated as a Chief Fire Officer in 2020. He is a published author in both military and fire rescue magazines and is currently working on his first book.

We're also very pleased to announce that Matt Dewhirst has been hired to fill the Chief Safety Officer position. Chief Dewhirst recently retired from the Roanoke Fire-EMS Department as a Battalion Chief of Training with 24 years of experience. He also served as a Battalion Chief in Operations and oversaw several major projects such as the implementation of an exhaust removal system and SCBA replacement. Chief Dewhirst received his undergraduate degree from American Military University and is also a graduate of the National Fire Academy's EFO program. He also holds the CFO designation from the Center for Public

Effective October 10, Michael Parris was promoted from Division Chief of the Division 4 office in Marion to Deputy Chief of Training and Operations for the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. He has served the agency since May 2016 as a Division Chief. Congratulations Michael!

Virginia Beach stays in house to find new fire chief

After a nationwide search to find Virginia Beach's next fire chief, the city found its man in-house. Kenneth Pravetz, who has served in Virginia Beach for 23 years and has 35 years of career fire experience, has been named the city's new fire chief. Pravetz is currently the deputy chief of services, responsible for personnel, finance, training, logistics, planning and community risk reduction. He will begin his new role Jan.1.

"Pravetz has the proven leadership and communication skills needed to be successful across our organization, in collaboration with our community partners and through a wide range of public safety emergencies," City Manager Patrick Duhaney said in a statement. "His decades of diversified management experience will help Virginia Beach continue to be a national leader in public safety for many more years to come."

Pravetz, as a member of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Urban Search & Rescue Virginia Task Force 2, based out of Virginia Beach, has deployed to several national disasters as a planning team member and task force leader.

Pravetz, a U.S. Air Force veteran, has an associate degree in fire science, a bachelor's degree in health and safety and a master of public administration degree. In 2019, Pravetz finished a master's degree in security studies from the Naval Postgraduate School, Center for Homeland Defense and Security.

He also has a certificate from the Senior Executives in State and Local Government at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, and is close to finishing at the International Association of Fire Chiefs Fire Service Executive Development Institute.

Williamsburg hires new chief

City Manager Andrew O. Trivette has announce the hire of Larry Snyder Jr. as the City of Williamsburg's Fire Chief, effective immediately.

Snyder has served as the interim fire chief since March 2022, and as deputy fire chief since 2014.

As fire chief, Snyder will plan and direct programs and services to ensure the community's safety; formulate strategies and make organizational decisions that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the city manager and City Council; and serve as the City's Coordinator of Emergency Management.

Snyder has more than 27 years of Fire and EMS experience. Prior to his career in Williamsburg, Snyder rose through the ranks of the Hanover County Fire-EMS Department. He started in the field at age 16, volunteering for the Ashcake Volunteer Rescue Squad in Hanover County. After graduating from William & Mary with a bachelor's degree in biology, Snyder returned to Hanover, working

as a full-time firefighter/medic with Hanover Fire and EMS, serving in operations, training, logistics, and administration, eventually achieving the rank of battalion chief. He has a master's degree in public administration from Virginia Tech and is a graduate of the Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program at the National Fire Academy.

Fort Lee Chief retires

Congratulations to Fort Lee Deputy Fire Chief Bradley Burgess on his retirement from the Federal Fire Service. Chief Burgess is an active member in our Federal/Military Section and currently serves as Fire Chief of Abingdon Volunteer Fire & Rescue In Gloucester County. Please join the #VFCA in wishing him a safe and healthy retirement!



Matt Dewhirst Joins VDFP as the Chief Safety Officer

The Virginia Department of Fire Programs is pleased to welcome Matt Dewhirst as the Chief Safety Officer.

Matt retired from the Roanoke Fire-EMS Department where he spent 24 years, with eight years at the Battalion Chief level in both operations and training. Dewhirst has more than three decades of fire service experience in both volunteer and career capacities.

Dewhirst is a proud 2018 graduate of the National Fire Academy - Executive Fire Officer (EFO) program. Additionally, he graduated from American Military University in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in Fire Science Management. He has also been credentialed as a Chief Fire Officer (CFO) since 2016 by the Center of Public Safety Excellence

Erin E. Sutton to leave position at VDEM

Erin E. Sutton, Chief Deputy State Coordinator at the Virginia Department of Emergency Management has announced her intent to leave her position at the first of the year. She will be sorely missed.

Michelle Oblinsky (Michelle.oblinsky@vdem.virginia.gov) will be moved into the Chief Deputy position in an acting capacity. Michelle has a similar background as Erin and was a local EM in both Chesapeake and Chesterfield and has been with VDEM for over 6 years as the lead for the Virginia Emergency Support Team (VEST).

MACHINE LEARNING-BASED SOLUTION COULD HELP FIREFIGHTERS CIRCUMVENT DEADLY BACKDRAFTS

National Institute of Standards and Technology



To learn how firefighters could anticipate deadly backdraft events in the field, NIST researchers conducted hundreds of fire experiments while taking a plethora of measurements. Many of these tests resulted in a backdraft, which caused fireballs to burst from the opening of a metal chamber. Credit: D. Stewart/NIST

A lack of oxygen can reduce even the most furious flame to smoldering ash. But when fresh air rushes in, say after a firefighter opens a window or door to a room, the blaze may be suddenly and violently resurrected. This explosive phenomenon, called backdraft, can be lethal and has been challenging for firefighters to anticipate.

Now, researchers at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) have hatched a plan for informing firefighters of what dangers lie behind closed doors. The team obtained data from hundreds of backdrafts in the lab to use as a basis for a model that can predict backdrafts. The results of a new study, described at the 2022 Suppression, Detection and Signaling Research and Applications Conference, suggest that the model offers a viable solution to make predictions based on particular measurements. In the future, the team seeks to implement the technology into small-scale devices that firefighters could deploy in the field to avoid or adapt to dangerous conditions.

Currently, firefighters look for visual indicators of a potential backdraft, including soot-stained windows, smoke puffing through small openings and the absence of flames. If the cues are present, they may vent the room by creating holes in its ceiling to reduce their risk. If not, they may charge right in. Ultimately, first responders must rely on their eyes in a hazy environment to guess the correct action. And guessing wrong could come at a steep cost.

"If you can take measurements at the scene and reliably know the likelihood of a backdraft, you can open a door without taking as much of a risk. Or you can be

more confident that you need to cool down the compartment before entering, either by venting or hosing down the space through small openings," said NIST engineer Ryan Falkenstein-Smith.

At NIST's National Fire Research Laboratory, Falkenstein-Smith and colleagues conducted experiments where they lit a stream of gaseous fuel that poured into a small chamber and then sealed its door shut. In each case, the door remained closed for several minutes as the researchers continued to pump gas into the chamber and the fire burnt itself out by depleting its available oxygen.

NIST researchers conducted hundreds of fire experiments to find out what conditions make a room ripe for backdraft and fed the data to a machine learning algorithm. The result was a backdraft-predicting computer model. The NIST's team plans to incorporate the model into handheld devices that firefighters could use to take simple measurements through small openings in a room.

Then, from a safe distance, they remotely sprang open the door. Some experiments were rather uneventful, with no hint of reignition. In others, fireballs accompanied by pressure waves erupted in the doorway, Falkenstein-Smith said.

Throughout nearly 500 experiments, in which the researchers altered factors such as the type and amount of gas injected into the chamber, they took measurements that ran the gamut. They recorded temperatures, pressures, the dimensions of the fireballs and more. To determine the abundance of the fuel in particular, they improved upon an instrument developed at NIST decades prior called a phi meter.

The meter sampled fuel and air gas mixtures from the chamber, added a known amount of oxygen and then combusted the sample internally, measuring the difference in oxygen before and after. The less oxygen consumed in the reaction, the greater the relative abundance of fuel in the mixture.

"We aimed to capture all these different components that create the conducive conditions for a backdraft," Falkenstein-Smith said.

The team analyzed the measurements and picked up on certain trends. Fuel pouring into the chamber at higher rates coincided with a higher likelihood of backdrafts, for instance. To get more out of the data, the researchers also used a machine learning algorithm to establish a predictive backdraft model from their treasure trove of information.

As an initial trial for the model, they fed it readings of gas concentrations, fuel richness and temperature taken at a single location in the chamber before the door opened during their experiments. Based on that information alone, the model had to estimate the chance of a backdraft occurring.

Taking an estimate of above 50% as an affirmative prediction and below 50% as a negative, the model was correct in 70.8% of the experiments it was tested on. The accuracy increased to 82.4% with the addition of measurements taken at a second location in the chamber.

The team is confident in its technique and aims to keep the ball rolling, improving the performance and practicality of the technology, Falkenstein-Smith said.

The next steps are to develop a portable device that houses the measurement technology they used in the lab as well as their computer model and then battle-test the technology in a more realistic building fire scenario. The team envisions that firefighters using the handheld device would either probe the air of a room through existing openings, such as cracks around a door, or create small openings.

With further development, the new approach could keep firefighters safe and make saving lives less of a risky business.

VIRGINIA TASK FORCE 1 RETURNS HOME TO FAIRFAX COUNTY AFTER HURRICANE IAN RELIEF MISSION

Virginia Task Force 1 returned home in mid-October after helping Floridians recover from the catastrophic impact of Hurricane Ian. The crew landed around 1:30 pm where dozens of folks greeted the crew with a warm 'welcome back' and signs. The 45-person team, made up of Fairfax County Urban Search and Rescue Team members, was sent to Florida to assist with preparation efforts ahead of Hurricane Ian.

Alongside two other FEMA Type-3 teams, Virginia Task Force 1 members were able to work rapidly to aid those impacted by the storms. Just last week, three Virginia Task Force One (TF1) canine teams were sent down to Florida to help search and rescue groups. The three canine teams are doing their best to make sure all of those who were affected by the storm are accounted for, Virginia TF1 said in a statement.

VIRGINIA TASK FORCE 2 RETURNS TO HOME AFTER TWO-WEEK RESCUE MISSION IN FLORIDA



Credit: Sarah Hammond

Virginia Task Force 2 returned to Virginia Beach in mid-October after almost two weeks in Southwest Florida.

The team was part of the search and rescue mission after Hurricane Ian decimated places like Fort Myers Beach.

On September 24, 45 members of the task force set out for Florida. They saw the destruction Hurricane Ian left behind firsthand.

"It was mostly the single-family homes, the mobile homes and the RVs on the island that just got completely destroyed. Families lost everything," said Task Force Leader Brian Sullivan.

He led the team on their search and rescue mission through Charlotte County, Fort Myers Beach and Sanibel Island.

They worked off a missing persons list and recovered people who didn't make it through the storm. He said they also spend time helping get survivors off the island since there was hardly anything left.

"This group is easy to lead. They know their jobs very well, and they're eager to do them," said Sullivan.

Shawn Hall was in the second group of 35 people to travel to Florida.

"Houses flipped over totally destroyed, washed off their foundations. You could tell where the water had washed inward, you know, 10 to 12-foot storm surge and just piled all the debris up in one area," Hall said.

He said he was blown away by the communities they searched.

"It's unbelievable how the Floridians were coming together and helping each other out and helping us out. It's very humbling to be down there to help those people out and to be a part of that recovery and rebuilding."

It wasn't just men and women who traveled to Florida to help, it was also search and rescue dogs, like Manion.

"He did great. You cannot replicate the type of stuff that we were doing down there in training. You can't flip a house upside down, fill it with water, drain it, and send your dog in to go search," Hall said. "For them to do that was amazing to see the training that went into training those dogs coming to the surface. It was amazing."

On Monday afternoon, the team returned to the Virginia Beach Fire Training Center and reunited with their friends and families.

"It feels really good to be home with family who supported me," said Hall, as he stood with his wife, mother-in-law, sister-in-law and niece.

"I've had tears in my eyes since the trucks rolled in," Hall's mother-in-law Fran said.

Shawn's wife, Lacey, said she's so proud of him and the rest of the team.

"They are the best. They take care of each other and they're doing something to help others," she said.

Sullivan said it's been a long, but rewarding couple of weeks.

"It feels really good to be home. I'm very proud of this team," he said.

He said after a brief rest period to spend time with their families, it's time to prepare for the next time disaster strikes. They'll go through all their equipment, replace or fix whatever they need to, and jump right back into training.

VATF-2 is one of 28 FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Teams.

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2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION: KEY DATES AND LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Written by Two Capitols Consulting
VFCA's full service Government Relations firm

The General Assembly will convene in Richmond for the 2023 Legislative Session on Wednesday, January 11, 2023. Since we are not writing a new budget this year, session should last 45 days. Here are a few important key dates to keep in mind:

- On December 15, 2022, Governor Glenn Youngkin will present his budget priorities for the upcoming year. The General Assembly will then have an opportunity to review and offer amendments during session.
- Moving forward, February 7 is known as "crossover", or the deadline for any bill to be reviewed in the respective chamber it was introduced by. The legislature will then take up bills that passed from the opposite chamber.
- On February 25, the legislature should adjourn sine die, marking the end of the 2023 legislative session.

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA) has three main legislative initiatives for the 2023 Legislative Session. The first item is to address fire service funding by establishing a workgroup to study needs, costs, and sustainability of current funding streams. This is a step towards our effort to secure dedicated, sustainable funding for fire services as the current funding model through the Virginia Fire Programs Fund is not sufficient or sustainable long-term.

The second priority item focuses on preventative cancer screenings for firefighters. While only certain health screenings are available to those at a particular age through traditional health insurance, the VFCA wants to encourage localities and regional entities to offer expanded screenings to firefighters, regardless of age, through an incentive grant fund.

The last item is to begin to address the longstanding need for safer building practices through the building code, specifically as it relates to sprinklers in construction of new townhomes. Currently, the installation of residential sprinkler systems in townhomes is optional, and fire officials have been trying for years to change this in the building code to no avail. The VFCA legislative committee is exploring an initiative to allow localities to pass an ordinance in excess of the building code, but only as it relates to sprinklers in new townhomes.

In addition to the three VFCA priorities, Chief Kopczynski of York County brought all the fire and EMS stakeholders together to agree on a combined legislative package to advocate for this session. There are six legislative items being worked on by the various stakeholder groups, including:

- Expanding cancer coverage by adding bladder, non-hodgkin's lymphoma, melanoma, and thyroid to the list of cancers covered under the Workmen's Compensation presumption;
- Conducting a needs assessment to identify sustainable finding stream from the Commonwealth for the fire services;
- Expanding behavioral health coverage by defining anxiety and depressive disorders as an occupational disease, the same as PTSD, for Virginia's firefighters and other first responders;
- Adding certain hazardous duty positions to the VaLORS Retirement System;
- Increasing funding for Emergency Medical Services;
- Recognizing Emergency Medical Services (EMS) as an essential service.

If you have any questions for your legislative team in Richmond, please feel free to contact Devon Cabot (devon@2capconsulting.com), Kate Baker (kate@2capconsulting.com), or Maddy Busse (maddy@2capconsulting.com).

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