

COMMONWEALTH

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - October 2022

Chief

Firefighters face cancer rates substantially greater than most Americans



- Testicular cancer - 2.02 times greater
- Multiple myeloma - 1.53 times greater
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma - 1.51 times greater
- Skin cancer - 1.39 times greater
- Brain cancer - 1.31 times greater
- Malignant melanoma - 1.31 times greater
- Prostate cancer - 1.28 times greater
- Colon cancer - 1.21 times greater
- Leukemia - 1.14 times greater

The most likely causes are the chemicals emitted from regular household products when they burn.

Source: Firefighter Cancer Support Network | facebook.com/benspraguebangor | @bensprague

CANCER AWARENESS...FIREFIGHTERS ARE AT RISK

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COMMONWEALTH

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - October 2022

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VFCA & Its Professional Interest Sections

John Prillaman, President
(540) 375-3080

Allen Baldwin, 1st Vice President
(540) 419-3358

Vance Cooper, 2nd Vice President
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Keith Johnson, Immediate Past President
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James H. Johnson, Treasurer
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Rick Tally, Division 1
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(240) 280-6839

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(757) 435-1835

Nestor Mangubat, At-Large #2
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Alec Oughton, At-Large #4
(804) 501-4901

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President
(703) 257-8458

Michael Hirsh, Company Officers
(540) 908-9376

Julien Crolet, Federal / Military
(571) 595-6966

Jay Davis, Life Safety/CRR
(804) 396-0525

R. Christian (Chris) Eudailey, Executive Director
(540) 809-9397

Lori Skytta, Administrative Assistant
(757) 754-2877

Bill Smith, Editor
(757) 810-1690



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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 are furthering the mission of the VFCA through leadership, education, and advocacy. Some of the highlights include the Virginia Fire Officer Academy, Virginia Chief Officer Academy, and the Sound the Alarm Summit

In June, I had the privilege of speaking at the 2022 Virginia Fallen Firefighters & EMS Memorial at the Richmond International Raceway. During the service we honored Sean Land (Virginia Beach Fire Department), Todd Landreth (Norfolk International Airport Fire Department), Lawrence Phillips (Hanover Fire Department) and Lyndell Woods (Fort Lewis Volunteer Fire Department). It was a great way to honor our fallen brothers and I would like to express my appreciation to everyone who coordinated or supported the event.

The Virginia Chief Officer and Virginia Fire Officer Academies were held in June at the College of William & Mary. These academies are one of a kind and truly make a difference in the lives of those that attend. If you are an aspiring company officer or chief officer, I highly recommend you apply and attend one of these great programs. I would like to thank all the staff who works so hard to make these programs a success. There is a lot of hard work in preparing for and running these programs and many of our staff come back year after year. Congratulations to all the graduates of both academies.

The first regional Shakers Forum was held in Stafford County in June. Our 1st Vice President Chief Allen Baldwin did a great job organizing the event. I would like to thank Chief Cardello and Chief Billy Shelton for leading the discussion. It was a great opportunity for those attending to learn from each other and fellowship with our fellow brothers and sisters. I would also like to thank Chief Baldwin for coordinating the event and Chief Cardello and the Stafford County Fire & Rescue Department for hosting the event. Please contact your VFCA Division Vice President if you are interested in hosting an event in your area.

The annual Sound the Alarm Summit was held in August at the Thomas Fulghum Conference Center in Midlothian. More than 60 fire marshals, public information officers and life safety educators attended the event. The event featured some great presentations on community risk reduction.

We are working on a new VFCA website that is going to be user friendly and provide our member's easier ways to pay for memberships and donate and register for events. We

are currently working with the Women in Fire organization to possibly make a new section within the VFCA. Chief Oughton continues to do a great job with our mentorship program and has made the first connection with many more to come.

Chief Baldwin is coordinating our VFCA Board of Directors Retreat in October. At the retreat the VFCA Board will update our strategic plan and identify areas we will be focusing on next year. We will also be participating in the Virginia Fire Service Legislative Summit sponsored by the Virginia Fire Service Council. This event brings leaders from our fire service organizations together to discuss and identify areas we can work together on to make Virginia's fire service better.

The 2023 Virginia Fire & Rescue Conference is just around the corner and is scheduled for February 20-25th in Virginia Beach. The vendor registration is almost full and the conference planning committee is working hard to once again put on one of the best fire service conferences in the country. Please consider attending this great event!

These are just a few of the exciting things happening within the VFCA. We are always looking for ways to add value to our members. If you have an idea or would like to take a more active role in the VFCA, please feel free to contact me or one of our outstanding board members.

I hope everyone has a great fall. Please stay safe!



C.S. Lewis, The Magician's Nephew



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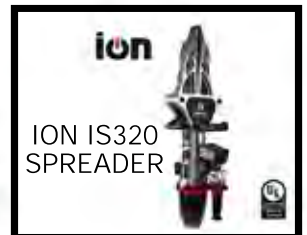


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12TH ANNUAL VFCF/ SPOTSYLVANIA GOLF TOURNAMENT A HUGE SUCCESS

Chris Eudailey



The Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation hosted the 12th Annual Golf Tournament at Lees Hill Golf Club on June 17, 2022. This year's event attracted 118 registered golfers with 106 in attendance. The level of support this year from the sponsors and donors was TREMENDOUS! The VFCF BOT would like to publicly acknowledge the following the following Sponsors:

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Between the generous sponsors, donors and the golfers that participated the VFCF raised just over \$38K that will be used to help support the Robert E. White Scholarship Program as well as the Virginia Fire Officers Academy and the Virginia Chief Officers Academy.

To date, the scholarship program has awarded 337 scholarships that total just over \$267K. It is anticipated that the total amount of awards will likely break the \$300K mark!

On behalf of the VFCF BOT I want to say a huge THANK YOU to all the generous sponsors and donors for your support!

2022 VIRGINIA EMS SYMPOSIUM

an education for life



Registration for the largest EMS training event in Virginia, and one of the largest in the country, opens this summer. **Plan to attend the Annual Virginia EMS Symposium, Nov. 9-13, 2022**, at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott, Sheraton Norfolk Waterside and Hilton Norfolk The Main, in Norfolk, Va.

The Virginia EMS Symposium is a five-day training event that offers more than 300 classes and 13 course tracks to help providers fulfill their continuing education needs. **Learn more about the Virginia EMS Symposium at: www.vdh.virginia.gov/symposium.**

Get the latest information from the Virginia Office of EMS by following us on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, or visit: www.vdh.virginia.gov/emergency-medical-services/.



THE STATE OF MENTAL HEALTH IN VIRGINIA EMS PROVIDERS – 2022

Vincent Valeriano, Epidemiologist & Health Promotion Specialist, Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services

A strategic initiative of the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) is to develop, implement and promote programs that emphasize the health and safety of EMS providers. Out of this commitment to Virginia's first responders, the OEMS launched the "Make the Call" initiative in late 2018, a statewide mental health awareness campaign aimed at destigmatizing mental health issues and encouraging first responders to seek mental health support. Visit bit.ly/MakeTheCallCampaign to learn more.

While other organizations have done national surveys, the Virginia OEMS did not have any data explicitly concerning the mental health status of Virginia's EMS providers. Thus, as an extension to the "Make the Call" initiative, the Virginia OEMS conducted its first statewide mental health survey among Virginia's providers in the summer of 2019. The aim of the study was to evaluate the mental health status of Virginia's EMS providers and assess the perceived mental health cultures, services, and barriers to seeking help within providers' agencies. As a result, the survey discovered high levels of mental health burdens among providers: approximately 3 out of 5 EMS providers believed they experienced burnout, traumatic stress, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicidal tendencies, or various combinations of all of them at some point during the past 12 months.

In spring 2022, the Virginia OEMS conducted its second statewide EMS provider mental health survey. The survey contained original questions from the 2019 survey and new questions about substance use and the impact of job satisfaction, the COVID-19 pandemic and workplace violence on provider mental health. Shockingly, results revealed that approximately 70 percent of EMS providers believed they experienced EMS-related burnout, traumatic stress, PTSD, depression, suicidal thoughts or actions, or emotional or psychological harm from verbal abuse or physical assault at some point during the past 12 months.

To view the results of the 2019 and 2022 surveys, visit bit.ly/VAEMSPROVIDERMHSURVEYS. The goal is to use these data to raise awareness and drive further action to improve EMS provider mental health resources.

The Virginia OEMS has also compiled an extensive repository of first responder-specific mental health and resiliency resources on their website at bit.ly/FirstResponderMentalHealthVA. If you have additional questions about the survey or results, do not hesitate to contact Vincent Valeriano, OEMS epidemiologist, at vincent.valeriano@vdh.virginia.gov.

BILLY HUX PROMOTED TO STATE FIRE MARSHAL

The Virginia Department of Fire Programs – State Fire Marshal's Office is pleased to announce the promotion of Billy Hux to State Fire Marshal.

Billy joined VDFP-SFMO in 2010 and has served as Deputy State Fire Marshal I/II, Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal, and most recently as Assistant State Fire Marshal – Special Operations. He brings 25 years of professional knowledge and industry experience with his background in firefighting, emergency management, fire prevention, fire investigation, explosives, code compliance, special investigation, and classroom instruction.

VFCA PROVIDES FREE "DRONES AND THE FIRE SERVICE" WEBINAR



A "Drones and the Fire Service Webinar" was provided FREE by the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association and DRONERESPONDERS on August 18th. There were 85 registered participants with 45 people actually attending. For those unable to attend, the recording link is provided below. The webinar gave an overview of drones in public safety, the various ways to start drone programs and all of the free resources available at DRONERESPONDERS.org.

Meeting Recording:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/SLV53H51QXr8xsaZW9EmP5uBe8zx0S_NQ5IhTDk6XcDMoO8T954Elpw72FHnSgg.s6N0kHUSg-CSBHxe

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- Motor: Variable-Speed DC with Standard 120-240V AC
- Setback: BD 14 ft, 4.3 m
- Angle: 10°
- Output: 9,816 cfm, 16,677 cmh

18" Variable-Speed Battery Fan

Model# V18-BD-09-AC-SP

- Battery: DeWalt FLEXVOLT 9.0Ah (2)
- Weight: 58 lbs., 26 kg
- Motor: Variable-Speed DC with Standard 120-240V AC
- Setback: 15 ft, 4.6 m
- Angle: 10°
- Output: 10,840 cfm, 18,417 cmh

20" Variable-Speed Battery Fan

Model# V20-BD-12-AC-SP

- Battery: DeWalt FLEXVOLT 12.0Ah (2)
- Weight: 63 lbs., 29 kg
- Motor: Totally Enclosed Variable-Speed DC with Standard 120-240V AC
- Setback: 15 ft, 4.6 m
- Angle: 10°
- Output: 13,000 cfm, 22,087 cmh

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- Charger
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FREDERICKSBURG MODULAR VFOA A HUGE SUCCESS

Ryan M. Passera

Lieutenant King George Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services
Incident Commander, Fredericksburg VFOA Modular Program

The Fredericksburg Modular Fire Officer Academy kicked off strong! On Sunday March 27th, 31 aspiring fire officers from around the Commonwealth of Virginia graduated from the Fredericksburg Modular delivery of the Virginia Fire Officer Academy. The academy was held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Fredericksburg, Virginia. These elite students spent a total of five days together spanning over two weekends. This was the second module program to be delivered in a residential setting.

The 31 students took time away from their families and departments to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities on the following topics: Team building, The Company Officer as a Coach, Work Life Balance, Principles of Leadership in the Fire Service, Stress First Aid, Safety as a Consequence of Leadership, Firefighter Health and Safety, The Art of the Difficult Conversation, and participated in role playing scenarios for personnel management. These students will utilize this new knowledge to make their departments stronger as well as make the fire service in the Commonwealth stronger. This program would not be able to succeed without support from the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation, the incredible instructors, the fantastic role players and facilitators, and the great staff.

Graduates included:

Engine Company 1

Adam Amburgey – Roanoke Co. Fire & Rescue
James Brockenbrough – Richmond Fire & Emer. Serv.
Ernest Clate – Louisa Co. Dept. of Fire and EMS

Engine Company 2

Cody Deal – Hopewell Fire and Rescue
Layton Deane – Powhatan Fire & Rescue
Zachery Flippen – Roanoke Fire-EMS
Kincaid Martin – Amherst Fire Department

Engine Company 3

Stephen Chen – Franconia Vol. Fire Department
David Farmer – White Stone Vol. Fire Department
Kevin Harbour - Roanoke Co. Fire & Rescue
James Parisi – Louisa Co. Dept. of Fire and EMS

Engine Company 4

Kevin Hatcher – Goochland Co. Fire-Rescue
Matthew Hauschildt - Louisa Co. Dept. of Fire and EMS
Tyrece Legans - Roanoke Co. Fire & Rescue
Wade Munday – City of Fairfax Fire Department

Engine Company 5

Justin Alberson – Chesapeake Fire Department
Jackson Kieran – Powhatan Fire & Rescue
James Link - Roanoke Co. Fire & Rescue
Jarred Mirza – Spotsylvania Vol. Fire Department

Engine Company 6

Taylor Buchanan – Fredericksburg Fire Department
Jared Martin - Richmond Fire & Emer. Serv.
Brandon Quinn - Roanoke Co. Fire & Rescue
John Sharp - Louisa Co. Dept. of Fire and EMS

Engine Company 7

Wayne Haight – O.W.L. Vol. Fire Department
Saul Mijangos – Hopewell Fire and rescue
Chris Poff - Roanoke Co. Fire & Rescue
Nicholas Rice – Roanoke Fire-EMS

Engine Company 8

Anthony Miller – City of Suffolk Fire and Rescue
Jacob Wilkerson - Roanoke Fire-EMS
Justin Witt - O.W.L. Vol. Fire Department
Michael Pelto – Hampton Div. of Fire and Rescue

Many thanks to the 2022 VFOA Modular Academy Command, Operations, Planning Technology and Support (Facilitators & Role Players) staff. A special thanks to the many VFOA Instructors.

Also, a very special thanks to a wonderful staff at the Hilton Garden Inn, Fredericksburg, VA.

SOUNDING THE ALARM ON COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION IN VIRGINIA

Kimberly Rideout, Fire and Life Safety Educator, Chesterfield Fire and EMS.



On August 1, 2022, the Sound the Alarm Community Risk Reduction Summit (STAS) was hosted in Chesterfield County. The STAS continues to be the only educational event in the Commonwealth of Virginia that focuses on Community Risk Reduction while providing professional development and education for Fire and Life Safety Educators and Public Information Officers (PIOs). Thank you to all the department leadership who sent their personnel to learn best practices and cutting-edge ways to reach their communities with relevant and consistent educational messages to reduce risk in their community. A few of the educational messages have not changed much over the years, yet the ways to share engaging and inspiring information have. The 2022 STAS provided new ways to engage.

The 2022 STAS had several dynamic speakers. Danielle Englund of the American Red Cross described the need for partnerships throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia to provide and install smoke alarms for those in need. Joshua Davis, State Fire Marshal described the continued importance of data in Community Risk Reduction. Jason Elmore of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management also provided a wealth of information for PIOs on working with the media. Jason shared firsthand experience and best practices for PIOs when the media are on emergency scenes.

We were fortunate to have the 2022 NFPA Fire and Life Safety Educator of the Year, Brene Duggins (Fire Prevention Coordinator/Training Captain, Holly Grove Fire Department, Lexington, NC) provide resources that will up our game in the digital world. Brene provided relevant resources and digital content that everyone could take home and quickly adapt to their community. John P. Farrell, Jr. of Lake of the Woods Fire and Rescue adapted and used some resources at a National Night Out (NNO) event the day after the STAS. Check out the resources and tutorials Brene provided on Brene's website www.busybeebe.com.

Jessica Xenakis (Life Safety Education Supervisor, Virginia Beach Fire Department) provided another fantastic presentation. Jessica described the new "Safety Squad" elementary education program she developed. The program provides engaging delivery methods that reach all elementary school students with age-appropriate, consistent fire and life safety messages. The age-appropriate messaging incorporates "Sound Off" education materials

for students in second and third grade and utilizes messages from the NFPA Educational Messages Desk Reference. The Virginia Beach program is an extraordinary program that should be emulated and adapted in communities across the Commonwealth.

If you're looking for a great day of relevant education and networking with professionals from across the Commonwealth, join us next year at the 2023 Sound the Alarm Summit. We're confident those who attended this year's event have new resources and ideas to aid in Community Risk Reduction.



HOPE TO SEE YOU IN 2023

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SEVEN SIMPLE CANCER-FREE HABITS

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

Please allow me to paraphrase an affirmation I read recently: "There are men of a rough persuasion who are willing to take care of the kinds of situations that ordinary people can't. They are called soldiers." This, in my mind, describes the men and women of the emergency



services who have dedicated their lives for their communities. And in doing so, often become afflicted by significant diseases – most notably cancer. To add irony to the situation, in the early 1990's I recall reading a series of newspaper articles highlighting unusual cancers Southern California firefighters were experiencing! The exclamation mark is placed to emphasize the fact that we as profession had been aware of or suspected the health dangers associated with firefighting over thirty years ago. And yet researchers, trainers, individuals and

now politicians are "discovering" those threats in 2022.

Some states were late to the conversation, but through the efforts of folks like Dr. Alberto Caban-Martinez at the University of Miami Hospital's Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Institute, the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC), the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF), inroads are being made. Through their efforts and those of other organizations and thousands of individuals across the United States, we are beginning to get a handle on the situation. Strategies are being established and now the tactics are being drawn up. If you or your department hasn't done so already, now is the time to develop an action plan enabling you to transmit "under control" someday hopefully soon. That may sound a bit naive – because I've been told I'm a glass-half-full kinda' guy – but every journey begins with a step.

If you are like me, normally you wouldn't sit down and read reports for pleasure, but for the sake of your survivability, I urge you to take a few minutes to read the **Lavender Ribbon Report Update** (<https://www.nvfc.org/lrr>) by the NVFC and IAFC. Once you get past all the recognitions and introductory pages – let's face it, most firefighters just "want the facts, ma'am" – it's pretty straight forward and provides firefighters and the basic tools to begin a lifetime of self-preservation.



In the interest of brevity and keeping the conversation short, below are seven habits or practices that all firefighters and fire departments can live with. Many are included in the LRRU, while some have translated and/or collected from colleagues.

Habit 1. Advocate for yourself.

Citing budget constraints, local governments or hiring authorities often take a less costly route to firefighter health care. Research your options. Get informed. Know your rights. Communicate with your colleagues and if you have an opportunity to influence bulk coverage costs or contracts...share. Push for annual physicals that include cancer screening. Don't rely on others to make decisions for your health.

Habit 2. Always wear appropriate PPE including your SCBA.

While our bunker gear is often viewed as a badge of courage many wannabes wish they could wear, it is critical to choose and use the gear appropriate for the job. Should we bunker-out for medical calls? Probably not unless the emergency entails operations in an IDLH atmosphere. Remember, always use the most appropriate tool(s) for the job at hand.

When considering SCBA use, a quick phrase may be in order – "When in doubt pack out!" Understand how it works. Know its limitations and use it. If you or your department doesn't have a strict SCBA use rule – and enforces it – you are doing yourself, your family and your team a disservice. While discussing bunker gear, bring the topic full-circle by adopting – and enforcing – a no bunker gear in the station policy. The New York Safety Officers association prints "No Bunkers Allowed in Station" posters for their members, which serves the greater good at a reasonable cost.

Habit 3. Always wash hands and contaminated areas after each medical call.

Never smoke/vape or eat after leaving a hot zone until you have deconned. Nuf' said.

Habit 4. Don't use contaminated hoods.

Hoods showed up in the firefighter's toolbox in the late 70's and early 80's. Initially, early adopters of the practice were sometimes ridiculed by their teammates. But as forward-thinkers began to realize the value of normally-formed ears, the experimental use of the hood became a universal practice. Unfortunately, firefighters-will-be-firefighters who reveled in showing how busy and bad their company was, would use and re-use the same, stank hood week after week until their colleagues began to search for the foul smell often thought to be a dead rodent in the station walls.

Not only will wearing clean hoods prevent a funky odor from following you around, more importantly it will reduce the unnecessary exposure to carcinogens and other hazards from entering your system through your head, neck and face – thus helping to prolong your health. When the job is done remove the hood from around your neck. Encourage your department to establish a hood replacement and secondary hood program. If that is not possible or supported, invest a few bucks in your health and buy a second (or third) hood.

Habit 5. Gross decon immediately following the event.

As soon as personnel and/or companies are released from conducting duties in IDLH zones, personnel should begin the important action of removing the initial layer(s) of debris, combustion products and other substances from their gear. Initially focus on cleaning the head, face, neck and hands. Removing helmets, gloves, hoods and SCBAs following debridement, then bunker gear in a top down, systematic process will help to ensure complete outer layer decontamination. Don't forget to follow local and/or state hazardous products containment requirements as well.

Habit 6. Take a shower within an hour of exposure and shower before leaving the station.

Does that mean that you need to bring at least two uniform changes to duty? Yes

That may mean a need to change to a less expensive duty uniform and save the glitz and glamour (Class A's?) for the July 4th and Christmas parades. In the scheme, uniforms are cheap – replacing firefighters is not.

Consider investing in station washers and dryers (commercial or industrial grade) to ensure whatever methyl-ethyl bad stuff you picked up at a call doesn't mix with your family's home laundry. An alternative is leasing the equipment or contracting with a commercial laundry service. There is power in numbers, so a service for several stations and/or departments is much cheaper than for one station.

Habit 7. Decon apparatus and equipment.

Fold into your routine after every call to wash and decontaminate exterior and interior compartments. When doing so, be sure to wear appropriate PPE. Pre-made decon kits are now offered by fire and emergency services equipment suppliers. If funding is an issue, do a little research and build decon kits for every response vehicle – including one for the safety officer's rig. *

Although the points raised here seem to many as common sense, I am amazed at the number of individuals and departments that still operate on another planet: one hood per person, failure to wash bunkers (including helmets and liners), lacking at-the-scene decon practices and allowing boots and bunkers in the station...

The CDC reports in their studies that firefighters have a 14% increase of cancer over the general population's mortality rate. And while the numbers differ depending on what study you read, we cannot as a profession escape the cold, hard truth that firefighting is an inherently dangerous job that comes with many risks including the propensity to experience cancer more so than the general population. Protect yourself and your family. Take steps to plug these steps and others into your daily practices. Save a life – your own.

* Decon kits can be easily built with items from your local hardware store.

- Decon bucket and lid
- 55 gallon, 6 mil clear bags to contain off gassing from contaminated gear
- Duct tape to seal the bags holding gear
- 14oz. spray bottle of PPE and turnout gear cleaner
- 8 oz. bottle of gear cleaner sample to use in an extractor
- Field wipes to remove heavy metals from skin areas
- 1 Qt. spray bottle to clean equipment
- Short handle scrub brush to wash gear
- 10' x 10' tarpaulin
- 50' of 5/8' hose
- Hose nozzle
- Adapter, 2.5" female X to .75" male

This article is being reprinted with permission. It originally appeared in Pennsylvania Fireman, June 2022 edition.



Frank Montes de Oca served as a firefighter/paramedic for over 38 years and served as fire chief in Springfield, OH; and Osceola County, FL. His last appointment was as Emergency Services Director of Orange County (Chapel Hill), NC. Throughout his career he has been involved in training firefighter safety, leadership and organizational change. 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 can be reach at frm1@me.com or www.responder1.org.

FIREFIGHTER GEAR DECONTAMINATION FAQs

Exposure from carcinogen is a threat all firefighters face daily. Recently, The Firefighter Cancer Initiative shared a "Contamination Exposure Cycle" that depicts ways carcinogen can enter your home. Carcinogens can cling on to your gear for several hours, contaminating your personal vehicle, home and more. To Watch this quick video covering frequently asked questions about firefighter gear decontamination to refresh your safety knowledge go to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0LXU-_ylg4.





Fire Fighter Cancer Awareness and Prevention



Female Fire Fighters and Cancer

Fire fighters face an elevated risk of being diagnosed with occupational cancer than the general public. This includes female fire fighters. The scientific studies that have been done have mainly centered around male fire fighters. This is due to the small percentage of female fire fighters in the workforce. Female fire fighters are being diagnosed with different cancers than their male colleagues and more research is needed to fully evaluate these differences.

Studies that have evaluated cancer risk among female fire fighters suggest that, like their male coworkers, they may be at an elevated risk for overall cancer incidence.¹ These studies also suggest that female fire fighters may be at an elevated risk for breast,¹ cervical, thyroid² and bladder cancers.¹

Reproductive cancers are also of interest because elevated incidence and mortality may be associated with exposures to endocrine-disrupting chemicals in the fire fighter population. Endocrine-disrupting chemicals could result in elevated incidence and mortality for reproductive cancers among female fire fighters as well. With the potential that these chemicals could affect female fire fighters, further research needs to be done to gain a better understanding of these health concerns.

Female fire fighters are documented having increased risk of developing certain cancers and some are being diagnosed at higher rates compared to female non-fire fighters:

- Cervical Cancer: 4 times higher risk¹
- Breast Cancer: Half of all cases^{1,3}
- Thyroid Cancer: 3 times higher risk^{2,3,4}
- Brain Cancer: 2.54 times higher risk⁴
- Bladder Cancer⁴
- Ovarian Cancer^{3,5,6}
- Melanoma: 1.68 times higher risk⁴

Some of these numbers are alarming; however, these studies have very small sample sizes due to the low number of female fire fighters in the workforce. More studies need to be done, and some are currently underway.

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DELIVERIES





VIRGINIA FIRE OFFICER ACADEMY CLASS OF 2022

William "Bill" Donati
2022 VFOA Incident Commander

The College of William & Mary was the host of the 2022 Virginia Fire Officer Academy. Current and future officers from all over Virginia came to take part in a well-known leadership Academy. Now in its 15th year, the VFOA continues to be one of the most top shelf opportunities available for fire officers around. Students went through a rigorous application process to be selected to attend the Academy. This is a residential Academy where the students stay on campus the entire week. The students and staff are very grateful for the support from their departments and family.

The program is intentional about several things: #1 We mix our applicants up in a way that they are assigned to an Engine Company with people from outside of their region. This enhances the ability to get to see how other departments operate on the other side of the state. #2 To double down on the networking possibilities, we offer up free time in the evening to allow for new relationships to be created in a networking environment. They can relax and have a conversation or have a friendly competitive game of corn hole. #3 We believe in the importance of health and wellness. With that being said, we have PT every day starting at 6am with students and staff.

Our program gets kicked off right away on Day 1, after check in, with an introduction of the staff and students. We take time to review the history of the program and how the VFOA was created. It is never a bad thing to be reminded of where a great program started. We learned about the value of being prepared for a LODD event and making sure that your family is prepared. The students were taught about the impact that kind of event has on your family and department. We ended that Sunday with team building exercises to get the students out of their comfort zones.

The VFOA starts every residential Academy Monday morning at 0600 with physical training that continued every morning through the week. The VFOA has always stressed the importance of mental and physical wellness. The students began their day learning about coaching and self-assessment. They then spent a majority of the morning learning about conflict. Students also spent time learning about how to create an effective mission statement and core values. Students finished the day learning about how to lead yourself.

Tuesday was focused on learning how to lead through difficult conversations. Students learned how to use several tools to navigate different conversations. They finished their Tuesday with

an informal open discussion, with two very well-known Chiefs, from two different departments in Virginia. Wednesday morning was focused on safety through critical decision making, learning about the ability and effectiveness of being well connected to your troops. They finished their morning on learning how to lead from the field and not from behind a desk.

Wednesday and Thursday afternoon was focused on different role-playing scenarios. Each rotation had a role player and facilitator to help coach the student at the end of their rotation. Students utilized their skills and lessons learned throughout the first few days and putting them to practice in different ways to navigate through conversations. They scenarios may be disgruntled employees or something that is more emotional like a mental health issue or problem at home. Both the role player and facilitator are graduates of the VFOA.

The Thursday morning session was focused on stress first aid, mental health and peer support in today's fire service. The value of mental health is very important in today's fire service. Being able to recognize different changes in behavior is a key factor in building relationships with your crew. Friday morning focused on cancer in the fire service and making cultural changes and paradigm shifts in thought processes for different fire departments. Changes in mental health and cancer awareness start with education.

Graduation ceremonies were held Friday June 10, 2022. The students and their family were in attendance, as well as, the staff. The VFOA Class 2022-2 stretched themselves out of their comfort zone all week to focus on continued personal growth. The students are proud to be Graduates of a program that commits to the continued growth of Virginia's current and future leaders in today's fire service.

Graduates of Class 22-2 included:

Engine Company 1

Tyrell Austin – Henrico County Division of Fire
Jason Focht – Roanoke Fire-EMS
Thomas Major – Middlesex Vol. Fire Department
Julianne Osbourne – Hampton Div. of Fire and Rescue
Joseph Tabor – Navy Regional Mid-Atlantic Fire & Emer. Service

Engine Company 2

Michael Barrett – Louisa Co. Fire & EMS
Micah Gnau – City of Manassas Fire & Rescue Department

Robert Hilley – Harrisonburg Fire Department
Richard Wall - Virginia Beach Fire Department
Andrew Ware – Richmond Fire & Emergency Services

Engine Company 3

Joshua Beavers – Franklin Co. Dept. of Public safety
Nikki Hatfield – Portsmouth Fire, Rescue & Emer. Services
Daniel Oursler Jr. – Spotsylvania Co. Fire, Rescue & Emer. Mgmt.
Nicholas Ramsey – Lexington Fire Department
William West - Henrico County Division of Fire

Engine Company 4

Gilbert Bidwell – Salem Fire-EMS
Cody Dunn – King George Co. Fire, Res, & Emer. Services
Manuel Franco – Suffolk Fire & Rescue
Noah Madden – County of Orange Fire & EMS
Kathleen McLaughlin – Chesterfield Fire & EMS

Engine Company 5

Andrew Bunch – Augusta County Fire Rescue
Brian Grimes – Hanover Fire & EMS
Michael Jenkins – City of Fairfax Fire and Rescue
Jason McConnie – Hampton Div. of Fire and Rescue
Seth Miller – Williamsburg Fire Department

Engine Company 6

Matthew Compton – Hopewell Fire and Rescue
Ashley Fontaine – James City County Fire Department
William Harley – Roanoke Co. Fire & Rescue Department
Brian Roth – Winchester Fire & Rescue Department

Engine Company 7

Kenneth Cregger – Loudoun County Fire and Rescue
Diana Foley – Martinsville Fire & EMS
Phillip Good – Shenandoah County Fire and Rescue
James Lett – Ft. Pickett Fire and Rescue
Michael Tamayo – Chesapeake Fire Department

Engine Company 8

Charles Davis – Norfolk Fire-Rescue
Alexander Foresman – City of Staunton Fire & Rescue
Colten Lotts – Riverheads Volunteer Fire Department
Adam Tutor – Ft. Belvoir Fire and Emergency Services
Roger Wilkins – Albemarle County Fire and Rescue

Many thanks to the 2022 VFOA Command, Operations, Curriculum, Logistics, Planning, Finance and Technology Staff. A special thanks to the many VFOA Instructors and Support (Facilitators & Role Players) staff.



2023 VIRGINIA FIRE RESCUE CONFERENCE EDUCATION UPDATE

Eugene C. Durham, Chair
Professional Development Committee



The Professional Development Committee has been working diligently to prepare another great educational program at the 2023 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference, to be held from February 20-25, 2023, in Virginia Beach.

Over the past few months, the committee received and reviewed over 100 education proposals from all over the country. Selected presentations will cover leadership, safety, human resources, strategy and tactics, mental health, and many other topics.

In addition to the proposals received, the committee is excited to announce the creation of the Hands-on-Training (HOT) Workgroup. This workgroup, led by training officers from the Virginia Beach Fire Department and Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department, has been designing a first-class hands-on training program for the conference. HOT programs will include Engine Operations, Truck Operations, and Command Operations, with many more courses to be offered as well. Be sure to check out the Virginia Fire Rescue Conference registration page to see all the courses being offered, spots in these programs will go fast so register early!

New to the VFRC in 2023, there will be three forums held. The Shakers Forum will return to allow chief officers the ability to collaborate on the challenges that face the fire service and provide insight on how each department is addressing them. The Health and Safety Forum will return, and new in 2023, the Human Resources Forum will take place, with both programs mirroring the structure of the Shakers Forum.

Finally, the VFCA is partnering with the IAFC to deliver the “Developing Inclusive Teams Workshop”. This workshop equips members of the fire service with knowledge and skills to support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workforce. The course is interactive, placing the participant in thought-provoking situations through role play, group and individual exercises, and class discussion. It includes several scenarios that are constructed to mimic real world situations, allowing participants to simulate how they would handle issues effectively as they emerge in the real world.

Registration for the 2023 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference begins on October 1st, so make sure to register early to save your spot.



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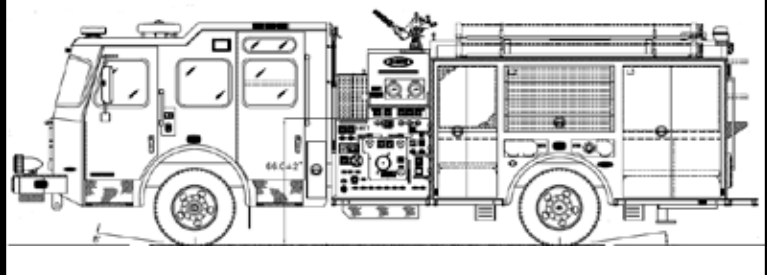
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VCOA CLASS OF 2022

Meade Whitaker, Battalion Chief
Virginia Chief Officer Academy

In June 2022, Chief Officers and aspiring Chief Officers from across the Commonwealth came together on the campus of The College of William & Mary to attend the Virginia Chief Officer Academy. Now in its seventh year, the VCOA continues to be one of the premier training programs in the region. Students were accepted from a diverse and competitive field of applicants, all of whom were willing to spend a week living and learning together with the shared interest of bettering themselves, their departments and the fire service.

The week was started bright and early at 0600 on Monday with physical training, which continued every morning throughout the week. The VCOA staff believe that both mental and physical wellness are essential to being a high performing fire officer and that it is important to model good practices in both areas for our firefighters. The morning continued with Deputy Chief Jeff Powell (Botetourt County) and Captain Rich Graulich (Norfolk) discussing leadership and change. Deputy Chief Andrew Snead (Richmond) spent the afternoon discussing trends in human resources and diversity, equity and inclusion issues in the fire service. Deputy Chief Tim McKay (Chesterfield) finished the day by leading the students in a widely varying discussion of fire service issues in a relaxed and informal setting.

Tuesday morning focused on effective communication and difficult conversations with Battalion Chief John Galganski (James City County). The bulk of the afternoon consisted of education about one of the most dreaded and challenging situations a fire chief can face – a LODD. Chief (ret.) Ian Bennett formerly of the City of Harrisonburg Fire Department provided the class with an overview of resources available from the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. Chief Bennett currently works with the NFFF as the national coordinator for Local Assistance State Teams. The resources available through the NFFF are significant and Chief Bennett's time with the VCOA was valuable and highly appreciated. In the evening, Troy Lapetina (VDFP Director, ret.) and retired U.S. Navy SEAL Scott Clark discussed resiliency and mental wellness with the group.

The class was exposed to some of a fire chief's areas of responsibility outside the fire department on Wednesday. Public information was the topic of discussion in the morning with Deputy Coordinator of Emergency Management Sara Ruch and Public Information

Officer Renee Dallman from James City County working with the group to provide information about media relations. Bob Stripling then discussed relationships between the fire chief and the city or county manager and how to be successful in that arena. District Chief Amy Valdez (Virginia Beach) presented information regarding data based decision making and maximization of available resources, both of which are important and timely topics in times of tight budgets. Chief Valdez was also gracious enough to stay for the evening session to discuss followership and leadership with the class.

Thursday the group was joined by Bill Leighty for his always entertaining and educational stories regarding crisis management and lessons learned throughout his career. Mr. Leighty was the Chief of Staff for Governors Warner and Kaine and was highly involved in managing many crises at the local, regional and national level. In the afternoon, the schedule allowed students to focus on themselves with Deputy Chief Jason Irby (Spotsylvania) discussing work / life balance and Acting Battalion Chief Chris Jett (Stafford County) and Captain Tim Furey (Camp Peary) discussing personal mental health. The day culminated with students writing letters to themselves regarding their post-VCOA goals and discussing their writing assignments in the evening in a small group setting.

Graduation day began with a Fire Chief's roundtable discussion with Chief Ryan Ashe (James City County), Chief (ret.) Pat Dent (Williamsburg) and Chief Alec Oughton (Henrico) leading a wide ranging discussion. Battalion Chief Jack McGovern (Fredericksburg) provided some guidance regarding developing and maintaining a meaningful professional network after the roundtable.

Graduation ceremonies were held in the afternoon with many students enjoying having their family in attendance as well as their command staff. The VCOA Class of 2022 worked hard, bonded together well and had a great week of learning. The VCOA is proud of their work and looks forward to the VCOA Class of 2022 beginning, and continuing, to lead the fire service in Virginia.

VCOA Class of 2022

Waverly Alley - Spotsylvania Co. Fire, Rescue & Emerg. Mgmt.
Christopher Armstrong - Richmond Fire and Emerg. Services
Matthew Bauserman - Harrisonburg Fire Department
Wesley Bowen - York County Fire and Life Safety
Courtney Cave - Shenandoah County Fire and Rescue
Bryan Crocker - Hopewell Fire & Rescue
R. Matthew DeHaven - Winchester Fire and Rescue Dept.
Michael Dugan - Portsmouth Fire, Rescue and Emerg. Services
Rhett Fleitz - Roanoke Fire-EMS Department
Duane Garrison - Chesterfield Fire & EMS
Steve Gillam - Colonial Heights Fire & EMS
Samantha Green - Fort Belvoir Fire and Emergency Services
Jeremy Hartman - Salem Fire & EMS
Jason Helms - Roanoke County Fire and Rescue
Dennis Hupman - Augusta County Fire-Rescue
Taz Lancaster - Suffolk Fire Rescue
Cary Middlebrook - City of Williamsburg Fire Department
Thomas Napier, Jr. - Danville Fire Department
Victor Podbielski - Fredericksburg Fire Department
Paul Pongratz - Chesapeake Fire Department
Matthew Stainback - Hanover Fire-EMS
Tavish Valdez - Virginia Beach Fire Department
Jason Wood - Henrico County Division of Fire
Sidney Woodcock, Jr. - Hampton Division of Fire and Rescue

VFCA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE APPOINTS NEW VICE CHAIRS

Eugene C. Durham, Chair
VFCA Professional Development Committee

The Professional Development Committee is committed to the mission of the VFCA in advancing the fire and rescue service through leadership, education, and advocacy. In March, the committee reorganized to help better serve the needs of Virginia's fire service. Three new positions were created to accomplish this task. The committee welcomes Deputy Chief Tim McKay as the Vice Chair of Chief Officer Professional Development. Chief McKay is a 28-year veteran of the fire service, Chief McKay currently serves as the Deputy Fire Chief of Operations for Chesterfield County Fire and EMS. Prior to his current position, he served as an Assistant Chief and shift commander in Operations, the Director of EMS, an operational battalion chief, and he spent several years in the Training Division in various capacities in addition to numerous assignments in the field. He earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Hampden-Sydney College, a master's degree in public leadership from Virginia State University and is a graduate of the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy. He is also a life member and Chief Emeritus of the Farmville Fire Department and is a life member of the Prince Edward Vol. Rescue Squad. Chief McKay serves as an instructor for the Virginia Fire Officer Academy and is a regular presenter at the VFRC.

In addition, Assistant Chief Steven "JR" Hall has been appointed as the Vice Chair of Company Officer Professional Development. Chief Hall began his career with the City of Richmond Department of Fire and Emergency Services in 2000 and currently serves as the Assistant Chief of Support Services. Chief Hall attended the University of Richmond where he graduated "With Honors," earning Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Human Resource Management and Leadership Studies. He is a graduate of the Executive Fire Officer Program, the VCOA and the VFOA. He holds the "Fire Officer" (FO) designation through the Center for Public Safety Excellence and Graduate (GIFireE) status with the Institution of Fire Engineers. He is also a Certified Safety Manager through the National Association of Safety Professionals and a Pro Board-certified Fire Officer IV, Fire Instructor III, Fire Inspector, Incident Safety Officer, and Health and Safety Officer.

Finally, Assistant Chief William "Bill" Donati has been appointed as the Vice Chair of Firefighter and Volunteer Professional Development. Bill served as the Incident Commander for the Virginia Fire Officer Academy in 2022 and has served on the staff in several roles and a graduate of the Virginia Chief Officer Academy. Bill has served in the fire service for many years, currently serving as the Assistant Chief of Fine Creek Volunteer Fire Department in the Powhatan Fire-Rescue System. Bill has served Fine Creek since 2000 and is the outgoing President of the Powhatan Volunteer Firefighters Association. Additionally, Bill served York County Fire & Life Safety for 15 years before becoming the Health & Safety Officer for First Call Environmental.

The committee thanks these new members for their commitment to Virginia's fire service and looks forward to their contributions in the future.



Last night during a discussion on PTSD, Class President Chris Armstrong was asked to hold a sledge hammer and not drop it as Scott Clark continued to give his presentation. After a few minutes and his arms starting to tremble Chris was asked if the weight has changed or just his ability to handle it. The lesson here is the weight of what we see and experience doesn't change, our ability to handle it does.

GRILLING SAFETY



A VDFP Safety Video in Partnership with Kents Store Volunteer Fire Company



Check your tank for leaks.



Propane Safety Checklist

- If you see bubbles, there is a leak.
- Turn off the gas and reinspect.
- If the bubbles continue, **DO NOT** use it and have it serviced by a professional.



Only use appropriate charcoal lighter fluid. Never add gasoline to a fire.



Get those BBQs going!

This summer, VDFP partnered with Kents Store Volunteer Fire Company in Fluvanna County to film a video about grilling safety. The video, which premiered in August, includes demonstrations of how to properly start and shut off a propane grill as well as lighting and disposing of charcoal. **Check out the video on VDFP's social media or YouTube channels listed below!**

If your department is interested in working with VDFP to create video content on other topics like smoke alarms, cooking or a topic of your choice, please contact us at pio@vdfp.virginia.gov.



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VDFP's Mobile Fire Investigation Lab trailers are used throughout the Commonwealth to give Virginia's fire service practical experience with real-world scenarios. The trailers are used multiple times per year by the Virginia Fire Marshal Academy.

Calling All Life Safety Professionals!

The Virginia Department of Fire Programs created a Community Risk Reduction (CRR) workgroup to identify, prioritize and address all hazard risks statewide. VDFP is seeking to fill this workgroup with highly motivated individuals from varying disciplines that are interested in furthering or creating a meaningful and effective CRR program. **Participation is not limited to fire service personnel.** As our goal is to obtain hollistic data, individuals in public education and the private sector are encouraged to participate. If you are interested in enhancing CRR efforts in your area, this is the workgroup for you! **Scan the QR code to sign up to join the workgroup.** The workgroup will meet virtually periodically starting in early 2023.



MEET THE CHIEF



Getting to know Steve Kopczynski.

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 Steve Kopczynski, Chief of the York County Department of Fire and Life Safety.

CC: Describe your tenure in the fire service

SK: I have been in the fire and rescue service for 48 years, first starting as a volunteer Firefighter in 1974 and later becoming a career member.

CC: Please describe your career journey

SK: In 1974 I became a volunteer Firefighter with York County, and during my tenure with York County, I have served as a volunteer Firefighter, career Firefighter, volunteer Fire Lieutenant, career Captain, career Battalion Chief (at the time this was the highest department rank below Fire Chief) and in 1988 was appointed as Fire Chief. After I became a career Firefighter, I did leave career employment for a short period to work in private industry at an oil refinery (serving in operations and also serving in a firefighting capacity). However, during this limited time period, I remained an active member of the fire department in York County, staying engaged as a volunteer and also assisting with training functions. Upon returning to the department as a career member, I was promoted to the position of department Training Officer and subsequently rose through the ranks as mentioned earlier.

Over my years, I have been most fortunate to work alongside the most dedicated and professional fire and rescue personnel (at all ranks) that one could ask for. Throughout my career, I had the good fortune to be guided by some of the best seasoned firefighters and fire officers (at all levels). I was fortunate to follow in the footsteps of a well-respected and consummate fire service professional who was the County's first paid Fire Chief--Wallace J. Robertson (who once served as President of the VFCA). As I rose through the ranks, I was blessed with exceptional staff (both uniformed and civilian) whose collective hard work and dedication resulted in our organization progressing significantly over the years. During these years, I benefitted from my volunteer experience when we only had two fire stations and becoming a career Firefighter when the department added its third fire station. When I became assigned to the role of Training Officer responsible for the Training Division, I had the opportunity to build an entire structured departmental training program (while working with so many other talented folks). Also, throughout my career, I was part of significant efforts where we built, staffed and equipped three fire stations, opening them all within an 18-month period in 1990/1991. Since then, we have constructed a replacement fire station and are in the process of adding another. We also partnered with VDEM to create the Commonwealth of Virginia's facility to train Hazardous Materials response personnel.

Through the work of so many in our organization (many now retired but many still "on the job"), we have established numerous capabilities, kept up with technological changes, changed with public expectations and demands/needs for services and improved our staffing, as well as overall operational readiness immensely, and most importantly created a safer and healthier work environment for our personnel.

I have had the good fortune to be involved in many fire/rescue/EMS and Emergency Management organizations locally, regionally, statewide and even nationally through which I have benefitted from the experience and knowledge of so many exceptional leaders. Some of them have been: a group known as the "Baggers" that was lead (or should I say nicely guided) by Chief Alan Brunacini and a few other fire service stars; I have had the honor to be a part of the Virginia Fire Service Council (having served as its Chairman), which was one of the lead organizations (along with others) that was instrumental in the creation (through legislation) of the Virginia Fire Services Board; I am immensely proud of the establishment of the first Federal Disaster Medical Assistance Team in Virginia (known as VA1DMAT), which came out of a brainstorming effort between Norfolk Fire/Rescue, the Virginia Office of EMS and the York County Department of Fire and Life Safety. And, of course, being a member of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association where I have had the benefit of previously serving as the Training Committee Chairman (long before the fantastic conferences and training opportunities of today), then ascending through the "chairs," eventually serving as the VFCA (then SFCV) President in 1996/1997 and continuing later as Health and Safety Committee Chairman. Being a member of the VFCA has been one of my career highlights and great honors.

Finally, my journey in this career could not have been possible without the constant support from my family. First, my wife Julie who has been by my side for almost the entire time, and then my kids--Hunter and Haley, (now grown successful adults) who tolerated my times away from home but understood my responsibilities and knew that my profession was important. Every Fire Chief knows of the importance of a solid support

system—from family, friends and professional fellow employees/department members as well as colleagues. In my case, I have been most fortunate and blessed to have them all.

CC: Please describe your Form of Government

SK: County Government—Fire Chief/Department Director reports to the County Administrator. County Administrator reports to five member Board of Supervisors.

CC: Describe the sources of Funding for Your Organization

SK: Primarily funded by the County General Fund. Small portion derived from various grants.

CC: What population does your department serve

SK: 70,319 (UVA Weldon Cooper Center July 2021 data). This does not include a significant tourist population.

CC: How many square miles do you cover

SK: ~106 square (land) miles

CC: Describe the department composition and equipment

SK: Our department currently operates from six fire stations with a seventh under construction. We are predominantly a career department supplemented by some volunteer support. Career crews staff all fire stations 24/7/365 and each fire station responds with full advanced life support EMS capability on each medic unit and on most days the engine and ladder/rescue companies. Each fire station operates an engine and an advanced life support medic unit. Of the engine companies, two are equipped with Skybooms (elevated master stream capability). These two units are located in the two opposite extreme ends of the County. One of the other engines is a heavy rescue engine that operates from a centrally located fire station. Additionally, the department operates 2 ladder/rescue companies (known as a task forces)—one each in the two major geographic areas of the County (northwest and southeast). Two Battalion Chief's on each shift cover the two major geographic areas of the County—1 southeast (Battalion 1) and 1 northwest (Battalion 2). The department also operates multiple specialty teams including HAZMAT, Technical Rescue, Maritime Incident response, dive rescue, ROVER (drone) and manages one of two Hampton Roads equipment caches for the Hampton Roads Metropolitan Medical Response Strike Team. We also have an honor guard team. In partnership with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, the department also operates the Commonwealth of Virginia's CBRNE Hazardous Materials Training Facility.

CC: Describe your call summary

SK: Over 12,000 fire and rescue incidents annually which is comprised of ~ 23,400 unit responses. The majority of incident activity is EMS with between 5,000 and 6,000 EMS transports annually. In addition to the traditional fire/rescue/EMS response activity, other incident responses include maritime responses covering over 200 miles of shoreline, portions of Interstate 64 between Newport News to just north of the greater Williamsburg area, the United States Coast Guard Station – Yorktown, and a large petroleum tank farm/storage facility.

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

SK: Always the greatest challenge and (more importantly) responsibility is the health, safety and well-being of our personnel and the protection of the citizens, businesses and visitors that we serve. Our workforce sees so much in their career and deals with such significant events that we need to make sure there are support systems in place to help them. Additionally, however, there are many other challenges (or should I say opportunities) in today's fire and rescue service. First recruitment and retention of personnel for our profession. The recruitment and retention of personnel today is much different than years past. Therefore, we must adapt to the needs of today's workforce and their desires and expectations. Another challenge or opportunity is providing the necessary tools for our folks to do the job at a time when costs are increasing exponentially and the supply chain is wreaking havoc on the delivery of equipment, goods and services. Having adequate workspaces (fire stations, training facilities, etc.) and work platforms (i.e., apparatus) is critically important. The home away from home at a fire station is so vital to the safety, welfare and behavioral health of our members. That is why the newest fire stations in York County have much improved living spaces (the challenge will be to eventually upgrade all of them so that they all provide similar arrangements). Apparatus also needs to meet the services expected by the community while being functional for the effective use by our personnel. In York County, we pride ourselves with good design considerations and incorporating standardization while ensuring that the personnel have a functional and reliable platform to work from. Finally, my continuous challenges involve getting all accomplished that I and our organization want to get done, but that there never seems to be enough time or enough resources to see them through. Perhaps one day, all will be "checked off" of my list.

CC: How would you describe your management style?

SK: Perhaps a better question would be—how do others see it? While I could use the normal buzz words or phrases, let me explain my feelings about this. As a Fire Chief and the looked upon, as well as relied upon, leader of an organization, I don't like to use phrases such as "they work for me" or "my department." Rather, I like to emphasize that it is "our department" and "we work together." Although a good leader (especially at the Fire Chief level) has to have the right style to be able to accomplish almost everything through others. Let's face it, we (the Fire Chief) are not the ones stopping the spread of fire or initiating the ALS skills, or extricating that family trapped in a significant vehicle crash, but we are responsible for having the right folks who are well-trained and prepared and empowered to carry out the mission. I further believe that as a leader we have to act, speak, interact, represent and care in a professional manner all of the time. This is critical, whether it is when we are in a staff meeting, doing a public presentation, on an informal fire station visit, at an emergency incident and even when away from the office just in the community (note—I did not say off-duty



because I don't think that happens too often). Showing care, compassion, understanding and empathy, whether for our internal customers or the external ones, is critical. Further, as Fire Chief, we must set a positive example in all that we do. By doing so, we demonstrate to our team that we are consistent in our actions (hopefully in a positive way). Finally, regarding leadership, we must remember that everyone in our organization is valuable and that they bring that value to the job. No matter the position in the organization, everyone deserves the opportunity to help the organization succeed through their experiences and input. Remember that we (the Fire Chief) are only one member of our organization and it takes everyone's talents to be successful—we must do our job (as Fire Chief) with humility. While I have referred much to leadership, as a Fire Chief, we are also expected to be good managers and have a management style that lends itself to being organized, someone who is reliable, and someone that has the ability to be forward-thinking regarding organizational needs and service demands. We must know that we are expected to be good stewards of the public trust, and that it is instilled within our organization and in all that serve in our great profession. Without such, we risk losing the respect of those we serve.



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

SK: While we do not have a formal departmental strategic plan (one of those things remaining on my accomplishment checklist), we do use a number of processes and documents to guide our organization. First is the County's Comprehensive Plan. We are fortunate to have the opportunity for input every five years when the "Comp Plan" is updated. Within the plan, there are a number of strategic objectives related specifically to the York County Department of Fire and Life Safety. Additionally, our Board of Supervisors has established specific strategic priorities which guide the County's organizations (including those affecting our department). Further, the County's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is the roadmap for major capital investment needs, and then the annual general operating budget requires a strategic thought process as it is developed and managed from fiscal year to fiscal year. So, while we do not currently have a formal departmental strategic plan, all of these other processes and documents inform our future planning efforts and have been developed with significant input from our department.

CC: How have current economic times impacted your department?

SK: In the course of my years with the department, we have witnessed major economic shifts from great economic times, to recessions, to disasters and their impact on our County, and most recently, the economic impact of COVID-19. At this very time, we are trying to recruit personnel and compete for their talents when the economy is "shaky." Further, we are being dramatically impacted by the cost of equipment (i.e., increased apparatus and construction costs) while dealing with extraordinarily long delivery times. I can only hope for some sense of stabilization in the near future.

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

SK: Yes, we are constantly looking at ways that make our profession (in general) and our department (more specifically) more appealing to those that we are seeking to recruit. Additionally, we have to plan for a much longer period when anticipating apparatus replacements. Finally, our budgets are being driven largely by the increased costs of equipment, goods, and services. Therefore, we have to always be looking for ways to operate more effectively, without negatively affecting services and ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of our members.

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

SK: I believe I alluded to much of this earlier, but to boil it down: member safety, welfare, and behavioral health, ever-changing workforce and workforce needs/desires/expectations, public service expectations/desires, recruitment/retention of the right folks for our profession, creating an appropriate home away from home and work environment combined, as well keeping up with infrastructure and logistical needs of an organization that must provide the services 24/7.

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

SK: Caring, compassionate, honest, and reliable. Someone who knows that the public relies on us for all kinds of circumstances, and everyone gets treated with the same courtesy, kindness, and respect, no matter their situation. Someone having the right attitude toward the profession, looking and acting professional and taking actions that are appropriate for the circumstance they are responsible for taking care of.

CC: How do you view training?

SK: In our profession, training is essentially the most important aspect of being adequately prepared to provide the services for which we are responsible. It is crucial that training, education, and career-long learning be a basic component of our profession (individually and organizationally) and a continuous process. At the point that someone in our profession no longer views training and learning as important, it might be time for a career pause and evaluation. Hopefully, a "reset" will help them continue in our profession. Further, without continuous training, education, and learning, we risk negatively impacting our crew/team/department and not being able to adequately serve those for whom we are responsible to serve and protect. Training should be considered one of the major pillars of our profession. Without high-quality training, education, and career-long learning, we risk the negative effects of that pillar collapsing.

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

SK: In the greater Hampton Roads area, we are fortunate to have extraordinary relationships among all of the fire and rescue agencies. Under the auspices of the Hampton Roads Fire Chiefs Association, we operate the Hampton Roads Fire Academy (regional recruit school), the Hampton Roads Fire Officer Academy for new officer development (originally established in the 1990s as the York County Fire Officer

Command School), and we have a Hampton Roads wide mutual aid agreement. On the Virginia Peninsula, we have had long-standing automatic aid agreements among the local government fire and rescue agencies, as well as the military bases. More specifically, in the greater Williamsburg area (upper York County, Williamsburg, and James City County), we have operated under automatic aid for over 40 years. In this latter case, there are circumstances where one department may totally handle an incident in another jurisdiction. In most cases, jurisdictional lines are disregarded and the closest fire station responds regardless of jurisdiction.

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

SK: Changing expectations of the public, as well as our members. Changes in demographics, especially in York County, where the average age of our population is continuously increasing. Further, changes in technology will drive how we handle emergencies—examples are electric vehicles that we respond to and eventually that will be our response apparatus and a recent construction example where an entire roof is composed of solar Tesla roofing materials (that closely resemble traditional roof shingles). Dealing with dynamic changes in budgets, I also believe that there will be an even greater need for public interaction with those we serve in the community—getting into neighborhoods, knowing our citizens on a greater personal level, etc. Finally, using new technology to accomplish our mission, whether robotics (i.e., aerial and water-borne drones) or advanced medical technology that allows for more to be accomplished for patient care in the field or can improve the transmittal of information to the emergency physician in the emergency department.

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

SK: As I alluded to earlier, I have had the good fortune to be involved with the VFCA at a number of levels. In every case, I have grown both professionally and personally. Professionally, it provided me with opportunities to learn from so many before me and give back a little to the organization. Personally, I have developed lifelong friendships that will forever be cherished. When I was part of the "Executive Board," then as an executive officer and eventually President of the VFCA (then SFCV), I was proud of the many accomplishments throughout that period. Now, I observe so much that is occurring and being accomplished by so many talented fire service leaders, who are truly leading this organization, and are a major part of leading the fire and rescue service in the Commonwealth of Virginia, as well across our nation. I am proud to say I am a member of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association and I am grateful to all of its members, as well its leadership—past and present. I look forward to its continued bright future. Thank you for allowing me to benefit from you all.

VFCA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October

3	7th Annual VFCA Salem Golf Tournament Blacksburg Country Club 1200 Hours	Blacksburg
13	VFCA Full Board Meeting	Harrisonburg
13-14	VFCA Annual Retreat 0800 Hours	Harrisonburg

November

15	Executive Officers Meeting 1000 Hours	Virtual
18-19	Company Officers Summit 0800 Hours	Sandston

December

20	VFCA Full Board Meeting 1000 Hours	Glen Allen - VDFP
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TENTATIVE 2023 DATES

January

17	Executive Officers Meeting 1000 Hours	Virtual
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February

20-25	Virginia Fire Rescue Conference	VA Beach
23	VFCA Full Board Meeting 1300 hours	VA Beach

March

Mar. 11	3rd Annual Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation 5K Run/Walk	Williamsburg
May 11-12	9th Annual Chiefs Summit	Henrico



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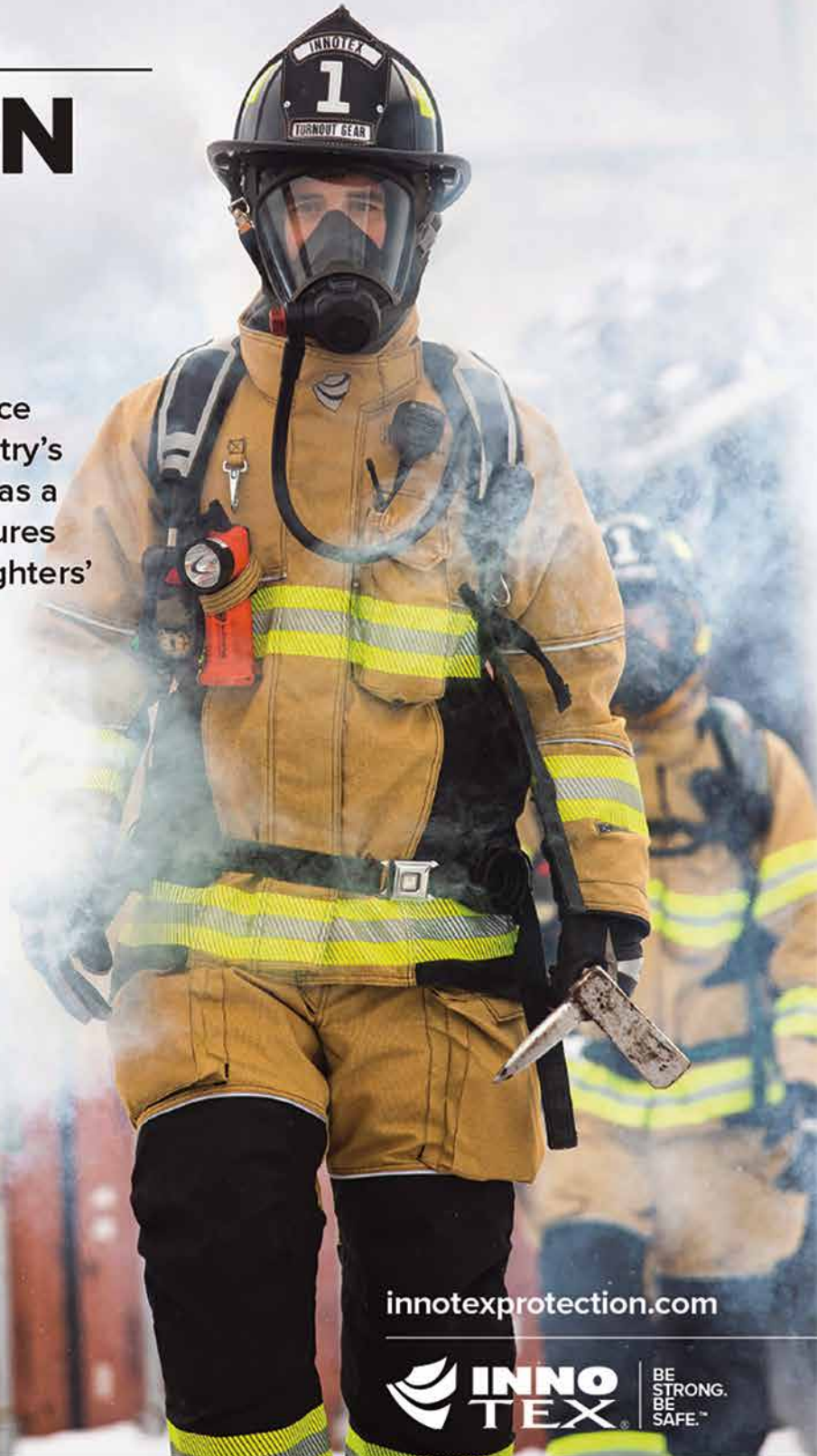
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WHAT IS A LEADER?

Adam Tutor

I have had the benefit of serving with some amazing leaders as well as some not so good, throughout a 12-year career as an Infantryman in the US Army as well as my time in the fire service. During my service in the Army, I was afforded the opportunity to serve in many leadership roles, from a team leader of three guys to a platoon sergeant leading forty-five personnel. While serving in these positions I was able to attend several leadership courses and to be mentored and learn from some great leaders. The military has the best leadership development programs around and produces some of the greatest leaders around.

What is Leadership? The definition of leadership is the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to influence and guide followers or other members of an organization. That is a broad definition. The true meaning of leadership is all about developing people and helping others reach their full potential. It is about equipping others with the right tools and strategies to not only maximize the success of an organization, but also the lives of individuals. It is about breaking down barriers and leading others through the uncertainty of the future. Leadership is the process of influencing people by providing them with purpose, direction, and motivation while you are operating to accomplish a mission and improve the organization.

What is a leader? A leader is anyone who, by virtue of assumed role or assigned responsibility, inspires and influences people to accomplish organizational goals. Leaders motivate people both inside and outside the organization to pursue actions, focus thinking, and shape decisions for the greater good of the organization. Being a leader is not holding a certain rank or title, it is a lot more complex than just giving orders. Your influence on others can take many forms. Your words and your deeds, the values you talk about, the example you set, every action you take are all part of your influence on others.

How do you become an effective leader? Before you can become an effective leader you first need to know what an effective leader is. Being a true leader is a lot more than just the brief definitions above.

A leader provides purpose, direction, and motivation, but what does all that mean?

By providing purpose, you enable everyone to see the underlying rationale for a mission; you provide them the reason to act to achieve a desired outcome. Leaders should provide clear purpose for their personnel. This does not mean that as a leader you must explain every decision to the satisfaction of your subordinates. It does mean you must earn their trust: they must know from experience that you care about them and would not ask them to do something you have not or would not do.

Direction is more than telling others what to do. Providing effective direction requires that leaders communicate the desired end state for the direction they provide. To accomplish a mission, leaders prioritize tasks, assign responsibility, supervise, and ensure personnel perform to a standard. Don't micromanage, empower people the ability to complete the task how they see fit.

To motivate your people, give them tasks that challenge them. Get to know your people and their capabilities; that way you can tell just how far to push each one. Learn what motivates each one. Give them as much responsibility

as they can handle; then let them do the work without looking over their shoulders and nagging them. When they succeed, praise them. When they fall short, give them credit for what they have done and coach them on how to do better next time.

Leaders must always lead by example. A great philosophy to live by is the Army's Be, Know, Do, model. What is the Be, Know, Do model?

BE has to do with internal character. It is who you are. You must believe in yourself, your team, and the mission. Somehow you must influence others to believe in you. Be authentic. Align your character and behaviors. When you make a mistake, then own it, and take responsibility for fixing it. Be a person of integrity and stick to your word. Be trustworthy, always doing what you say you will do. Live your life with no excuses, blaming or whining. BE means taking responsibility for yourself and your actions. Be a model of the right thing to do.

KNOW has to do with your competence and knowledge in doing your job. Without the knowledge and competence, a leader will lose legitimacy in the eyes of others. Leaders must strive to be an expert in the space in which they operate. NEVER STOP LEARNING and don't be arrogant, be humble. You will never know everything, and your way is not always right.

DO is the fruit of BE and KNOW. This is where results live. It requires a relentless focus on the right priorities—those that move you toward accomplishing the mission or fulfilling a bigger purpose. It means listening to others and understanding the situation before acting. Always act to do the right thing consistent with your values and those of the organization. Do your duty even when you don't feel like it. Always keep your emotions in check.

These attributes and living by this philosophy are what being a true leader is. Remember...you work for your team members they do not work for you. Never quit learning and become a great leader in your organization.



Adam Tutor is a firefighter with Fort Belvoir Fire and Emergency Services. He started the fire service volunteering in 1999 at the age of 16 with Falmouth Volunteer Fire Department in Stafford County. In 2004 he joined the US Army as an Infantryman where he had served in many different leadership roles during multiple combat deployments. After a 12-year tenure in the military, he transitioned into the civilian world and began his firefighting career in 2016.



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THE VFCA...

WHAT ARE THE COMPANY OFFICER SECTION MEMBERS SAYING?



Rebecca Smith – Captain/Deputy Fire Marshal Roanoke Fire EMS

Why did you join the VFCA? I joined the VFCA to obtain valuable educational, leadership mentoring and networking opportunities. I also feel that others would benefit from joining this organization to help better themselves for leadership.

What are the benefits of being a VFCA member? The benefits to me are getting to network with other members, from firefighters to chiefs, to obtain insight and mentorship to help make me a better leader in this profession.

What is your experience with the VFCA? I have been a member of the VFCA since I was a graduate from the VFOA in 2014 and have created a bond with other members that have become family. I now have a network of people to call on when I have challenges or questions about the fire service.

How would you describe the VFCA to a new member? The VFCA is an advocate for fire service professionals across the Commonwealth, it provides leadership, education and advocacy for all members.

What is the culture of the VFCA? The VFCA is working toward being a more inclusive, advocacy group that can aid any member regardless of age, tenure, gender, race, etc.

What does the VFCA do that makes you proud? I am proud that the VFCA has allowed me to have a voice and feel included in the vision of the fire service future through involvement with the VFOA. I truly feel they support our brothers and sisters and their families from all walks of life, in work and educational opportunities.



Troy W. Ellis – Captain, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Fire and Emergency Services

Why did you join the VFCA? I wanted to be better informed with information being put out in the fire service.

Why should anyone join the VFCA? The VFCA is a great resource for information, training, and even networking.

What are the benefits of being a VFCA member? Some of the benefits I have seen are access to great training set up by the organization.

What is your experience with the VFCA? I have worked with the VFCA as a staff member of the VFOA, as well as helping with the upcoming DoD Company Officer Summit.

How would you describe the VFCA to a new member? The best way that I can describe it, is by saying that it is a network of past and present Fire Service members from all over the state. These members have come together to spread information, training, and benefits to all that are interested. The VFCA is also greatly involved with various fundraising activities.

What is the culture of the VFCA? I believe that the culture is relaxed yet still very professional. Whenever I have needed assistance from any VFCA member they have been nothing short of helpful and professional.

What does the VFCA do that makes you proud? All of the benefits sponsored by the organization make me proud to be a member.



Daniel Owens - Master Firefighter, City of Richmond, Va Department of Fire & Emergency Services

Why did you join the VFCA? I joined the VFCA in 2015 after hearing more about it as a student in the VFOA.

Why should anyone join the VFCA? The VFCA offers something for everyone. I am not a company officer, but it has made me a better Firefighter and a leader.

What are the benefits of being a VFCA member? Networking is the biggest benefit of the VFCA. Being involved in the fire service on a larger scale than just your department is a great way to expand your own professional and personal development.

What is your experience with the VFCA? I have been heavily involved in the VFOA since 2015 as a student and 2016 as a staff member. I also assisted with two VFCA Company Officer Summits and was even a presenter at the VFCA Fire Rescue Conference in 2020. It has been a great experience thus far and I encourage everyone to join.

How would you describe the VFCA to a new member? I would tell them it's an association of like-minded people who love the Virginia fire service and want to see it progress to the best it can be.

What is the culture of the VFCA? The culture is very positive and everyone I've met so far is very supportive and focused on making the Virginia fire service the best it can be.

What does the VFCA do that makes you proud? I am very proud of the VFOA and the reputation it has across the state and even the nation. It truly is the premier leadership academy in the state.



SAVE THE DATE!

17 – 18 NOV 2022

2022 VFCA COMPANY OFFICERS' SUMMIT

LOCATION:

Eanes-Pittman Public Safety Training Center

6610 Public Safety Way

Chesterfield, VA 23832

THEME:

“USING MENTORING TO ADAPT TO CHANGE”

CAN A NEWSLETTER HELP YOUR VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT?

Ryan White

How can you and your volunteer organization harness the importance of internal communications through the utilization of a newsletter? What is the best medium to use for your newsletter?

There are many communications strategies that volunteer organizations can incorporate into their operations that can have positive effects in leadership, recruitment and retention, training, and social interactions. By using a newsletter, especially if employing the BEDS method, volunteer organizations can increase a variety of organizational factors. Just what is the BEDS newsletter strategy?

B: Birthdays, Brides, and Bowling Scores

The Trip Hammer, developed in 1885 by the Massey Manufacturing Company, was the first employee-directed newsletter in history. Only lasting a year of publication, it focused heavily on the social facets within its organization. These included births, brides, birthdays, babies, and bowling scores.

When developing a newsletter, it is important to ensure that you show interest in your members. Remember, volunteer members are often giving up free time with their families to be involved with the organization. By communicating social aspects of the department's members, a family environment can be fostered in which members feel valued and appreciated for more than their advances within the organization. This type of information often conveys the organization's values and morals by placing its members at the top of the proverbial totem pole.

Other examples of social aspects can include professional and personal accomplishments outside of the department, a member of the month spotlight which highlights their hobbies and family, social events, and functions that your department may put on that includes members families. Members that feel valued and appreciated can lead to an increase in organizational commitment.

E: Engagement

Engagement of members is also pivotal to the creation of organizational commitment. Buy-in can be linked to voluntary actions the member takes that go beyond what is normally required of them. In a volunteer organization, where formalization of roles may be burdensome or difficult, delegation via voluntary action can lead to an increase in organizational commitment and effectiveness. By increasing commitment and effectiveness, the organization can increase its organizational knowledge and convey its mission and values to the public through its members. Engaged members also have been shown to have higher satisfaction and can increase volunteer retention rates.

The engagement section of the newsletter can include training opportunities available both internally and externally to members. Volunteer organizations that need to fulfill extra responsibilities and roles can use this section to post a "Help Wanted" ad. This can be used to solicit members to help take on extra responsibility and, quite possibly, help find the best internal candidate to take on that role.

D: Developments

Developments, such as SOGs and policies, are often under-communicated facets of any organization. Many times, members feel left in the dark about the direction their organization is headed or what the expectations of them from leadership are. Developments, internal and external, to the organization often require communication to ensure successful outcomes. Communication as a function of change management can reduce the grapevine and rumor mill, which is all too often found in volunteer fire departments. Members that receive consistent and frequent information are often found to project the department's mission and vision more frequently.

The development and policies section should include a brief message from the fire chief, ensuring direct and consistent communication from the top. New directions the organization is taking, or even current political activities that involve boards and commissions can be included in this section. Furthermore, new policies can be included in this section for broad communication. Old policies can be placed here that may require a revisit by the membership. Organizational updates should also be included in this section of the newsletter.

S: Safety

Safety should be paramount in any organization. Leaders should show the members that they value their wellbeing just as much as the communication of expectations and performance. This section of the newsletter should be devoted to trends in health and safety, mental health awareness topics, a workout-of-the-month, highlighting LODD's or near-misses, or national initiatives like the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives or Safety Stand Down Week.

Newsletter Mediums

Choosing the most appropriate medium for your newsletter may not be so difficult. Print newsletters are often used when consistency of information is needed. Many members may prefer a print newsletter, something they can hold in their hand and bring with them. This means some aspects or sections of your newsletter may find their way onto a printed newsletter.

Traditional electronic communications like email and department intranets may also be utilized to transmit newsletters. However, it must be understood that not all members may be proficient with the internet. Generations X, Y, and Millennials are more adept at the web, or mediums that include ways for the member to be connected and involved in the communication flow. Social media, wikis, video interfaces, blogs, and instant messaging are all technologies that many departments must work into their newsletters and greater overall communication strategy. This type of medium allows for a communication flow that goes both up and down.

To ensure your department takes into consideration the different ways people consume information, it should consider both electronic and print mediums. It must also be understood that the newsletter, in whatever chosen medium, is part of a greater internal communication strategy that the department should effectively implement to ensure organizational success.

Ryan White is a career firefighter with New Kent-Fire Rescue and part-time captain for West Point Volunteer Fire Department with 15 years in the fire service. He holds an undergraduate degree in Fire Administration and graduate degree in Executive Leadership. Much of his graduate research focused on organizational theory and management, succession management, and internal and change communication.

Help keep residents safe during a natural gas emergency

Every day, natural gas is safely and efficiently delivered to millions of businesses and homes in the United States through more than 2 million miles of underground pipeline.

Virginia Natural Gas operates, secures and maintains the pipeline in our service territory. With safety being our highest priority, we adhere to federal, state and local pipeline safety regulations by performing extensive quality control checks, educate the public on natural gas pipeline, leak recognition and damage prevention and work closely with emergency and public officials to develop emergency response plans.

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 some individuals may not be able to detect the odorant because they have a diminished sense of smell, olfactory fatigue or because the odor is being masked by other odors in the area. Certain conditions may cause the odorant to diminish 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.

Complete your training today!

Earn a one-hour training credit and certificate of course completion while learning about the importance of natural gas pipeline safety.

virginiannaturalgas.com/respondertraining
(Use password: virginia)

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

Once we are notified of the emergency, we will immediately dispatch trained personnel to the site, keeping you informed of our progress. We will take all necessary actions to correct the problem. We will work together to ensure our community is safe.

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 **1.866.229.3578** 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.



 Virginia Natural Gas



Online Survey

Please take a moment to complete a survey about natural gas safety and you by scanning the QR code or visiting surveymonkey.com/r/FV2MQPB to help us make sure we are keeping our communities safe.

VFCA VIRGINIA FIRE/EMS SERVICE VIDEO TRAINING PROGRAM



The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association recently partnered with Online Video Mastery™ in Charlottesville to provide an effective new education and marketing communications tool for fire/EMS service organizations. The Virginia Fire/EMS Service Video Training Program is designed to teach fire/EMS department members how to create unlimited professional-looking videos with their smartphones, thereby eliminating the need to purchase expensive video production equipment or to hire professional crews.

Videos captured on firefighters/EMS providers devices will be an invaluable tool to recruit new department members, conduct public safety education, train personnel, present community risk reduction initiatives, and inform the community about departmental services.

Video is all around us. Messages contained in videos are retained at 95% compared to 10% when reading it in text, and six out of 10 people would rather watch online videos than live television. According to Wyzowl, "People are twice as likely to share video content with their friends than any other type of content, including social media posts, blog posts/articles and product pages."

And, as demonstrated by the expansive growth of YouTube, Instagram Reels, and TikTok, video is the most effective way to gain the attention of and influence the younger generation.

This program includes coursework in a supportive community with weekly live Q&A and video review sessions along with presentations by professionals from the worlds of video marketing and production. Examples include how to batch videos during downtime, creating a compelling one-minute story, and how to make short-form videos for platforms like YouTube Shorts.

The community will foster teamwork and sharing among departments and is offered through a subscription service. A portion of the fee will be donated to the VFCA to support programs such as its Scholarship Program, Fire Officer Academy, Chief Officer Program, and the VFCA Fire Rescue Conference.

For further information and to register, visit www.videomastery.link/vfca.

THE "BRICK WALL"

Jay Cullinan



As I occasionally scroll through the feed on the "book of faces," there is no shortage of criticism being spewed towards all types of leaders. Some of it is constructive, while some is definitely not. Most of those negative statements come from those who have never had to deal with the challenges of leadership, being caught between the interests of those we are responsible to and those we are responsible for, having to balance a number of competing high priorities with finite resources that won't meet everyone's needs, and sometimes finding ourselves trying to protect people from their own actions or inactions.

As a leader, it can be easy to become frustrated and discouraged when you read those comments after sometimes beating your head against a figurative brick wall all day, trying to pursue opportunities to meet the needs of those you lead, while often being forced into an entirely different direction due to the actions of someone you are responsible for but have little direct control over. You may find yourself taking the snipes of others personally, wondering if those descriptions actually depict your own leadership abilities.

I want to encourage you to not let your heart be troubled. While all leaders need to have a certain level of tough skin, if you find yourself reflecting on how you actually fulfill your leadership responsibilities, you are continuing to grow as a leader. None of us are perfect, and we are all continuing to grow and develop into the leader we hope to be. It's a journey that never ends.

Recognize criticism for what it is and who it comes from. They often don't benefit from the perspective you are seeing the situation from. Don't let the criticism paralyze you, and never let it get in the way of doing what you can to accomplish those goals and objectives that are needed by those you lead (whether they realize they need them or not).

Keep your head up. Eventually all brick walls begin to crumble.

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NC State Highway Patrol | Mobile Command Unit | North Carolina
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ON THE MOVE & ODDS AND ENDS

Town of Bedford appoints new fire chief

A new Bedford Fire Department chief was appointed by Town Council on a unanimous vote in late June, filling the vacancy left by former chief Brad Creasy, who recently left the role to accept a state-level appointment. Todd Stone is the new chief, stepping in after working as a member of the town's volunteer fire department and life-saving crew since 1990. Stone served several years in the position, from 2003 to 2006, prior to Creasy's tenure. "He obviously knows the job," Town Manager Bart Warner said Thursday. A firefighter paramedic at the beginning of his career, Stone was hired by Roanoke as a paramedic in 1988. In 1995, he became a firefighter paramedic with the Roanoke Fire-EMS Department, where he worked until he retired in 2018 at the rank of captain, according to a news release from the Town of Bedford.

Michael L. Thomas takes over Charlottesville Deputy Chief position

There is a new Deputy Chief of Community Risk Reduction at the Charlottesville Fire Department. According to a release, Michael L. Thomas started working Tuesday. He has more than 30 years of experience with fire and EMS service. CRR is focused on community partnerships, public engagement, and strategic decision-making through risk assessments. The release says it also includes accreditation and internal affairs as well as ISO rating, the Fire Marshal's Office, technology, planning and analysis, FOIA and public information. He has taken over for Joe Phillips, who was sworn in in late April as the city's new fire marshal.

Longtime employee takes over as Deputy Chief at South Boston Fire Department

A longtime member of the South Boston Fire Department, Capt. Ray Conner, has been named deputy fire chief. Conner was promoted from captain to deputy fire chief on June 1. In his new post, Conner has remained in charge of training as well as the day-to-day operations of the department. "I'm very honored to be the deputy fire chief of the South Boston Fire Department," Conner stated. The position of deputy fire chief most recently was held by Dwight Spangler, who retired on Jan. 1. Fire chief Steve Phillips said candidates for the deputy fire chief position went through a process of completing scenario tests and answering oral interview questions, and Conner "came out on top" in that process. Phillips added Conner's promotion is "well deserved." "In this job, you have to love what you do," Phillips said. "Conner is always giving over 100% every day he's there."

Michael Reilly added to the VFCA Board of Trustees

At their June meeting, the VFCA Board voted to add Michael T. Reilly as a member of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation Board of Trustees effective immediately. Michael has a long and distinguished public safety career serving with Fairfax County, Executive Director of VDFP and currently working with Loudoun County Fire and Rescue.

Albemarle County Fire Rescue names new Deputy Chief of Community Risk and Resilience

The Albemarle County Department of Fire Rescue has announced that it will welcome Emily Pelliccia as its new Deputy Chief for Albemarle County fire Rescue. According

to a release, Pelliccia has a track record of success, having established collaborative relationships with government officials, businesses, and community members that will be very important to the department. She started her career as a volunteer with the Charlottesville-Albemarle Rescue Squad while she was an undergraduate student at the University of Virginia. She also has 28 years of fire and rescue experience with the Charlottesville Fire Department. During her years with the CFD, Pelliccia has served on many levels, including being a firefighter, EMT, captain, Battalion Chief, Deputy Chief, Emergency Manager, and Wellness Director.

Virginia Beach fire chief to retire after 35 years of service

Virginia Beach Fire Chief David Hutcheson is set to retire at the end of the year, after 35 years in service. Chief Hutcheson started as a volunteer with the Kempsville Fire Station #9 before joining the Virginia Beach Fire Department (VBFD) in August 1988. Throughout his career, Hutcheson climbed up the ladder in ranks, including 17 years in various fire station assignments, captain of fire administration, chief public information officer, district chief of the North Division and deputy chief of operations. He was appointed interim fire chief on November 7, 2016, and later appointed the fifth fire chief on June 8, 2017. According to Chief Hutcheson, he is most proud of the appointment of the first LGBTQ liaison officer for the department and the region, as well as the implementation of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee for the VBFD.

Louisa County chief retires

In late June, Louisa County chief Robert Dube announced that he would retire effective July 29, 2022. He said "It's been a great ride for 50 years from the time I was a young volunteer in Leesburg to now, but it's time to step away. The fire service is in great hands with the group of current and upcoming leaders, and I look forward to watching it evolve in the future. The VFCA is an outstanding organization and has made a positive difference in Virginia as well as nationwide. Keep up the great work!"

Brown appointed to head CRR at VDFP

The Virginia Department of Fire Programs is excited to welcome Ken Brown who has been appointed by Governor Youngkin to serve as the Coordinator of Community Risk Reduction. Ken will start his position on June 13.

Ken retired from the position of Fire-Rescue Chief and Coordinator of Emergency Services for Goochland County Virginia after 33 years of career experience. Ken has a long career in the Virginia Fire Services, holding the previous positions as Director of Fire Services for Prince George County, Company Officer with the City of Newport News Fire Department, and Fire Chief for the 909th CES Fire Dept. USAFR (Ret).

Ken is a certified Instructor IV and has been an adjunct with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs for 38 years. He is a proud graduate of the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program.

Ken has been a member of many fire service organizations, including the Virginia State Firefighters Association, the Metro Chiefs Association, the Emergency Fleet Management Association, where he was the former President, Metro Regional Fire Investigation Task Force, and Virginia State Public Fire and Life Safety Coalition where he was the former Chairman. In 2003, he was appointed to the Virginia Fire Services Board and remained on the Board for ten years.

Currently, he is the State Director for the NVFC, serving as chairman of the Recruitment and Retention committee and Past President of the Virginia State Firefighters Association. Ken has been active in the volunteer fire service for 45 years

and is currently an active member of Fire Company 4 of Goochland Fire Rescue.

Chris Key Named Public Safety Director for Pittsylvania

After two successful months of serving in the position on an interim basis, Chris Key has been named the full-time Public Safety Director for Pittsylvania County. Key has decades of experience in public safety and fire service management and operations.

"I am excited and honored for the opportunity to lead the Pittsylvania County Public Safety Department by coordinating emergency preparation and responses, overseeing the operations of our first responders, and working alongside of our volunteer agencies and community," said Chris Key. "It is both a great pleasure and responsibility to prepare our community for disasters and to ensure that the proper resources are available, accessible, and properly deployed for all kinds of emergencies."

"Chris is a proven leader," said Interim County Administrator Clarence Monday. "In the two months he's been interim, Chris has demonstrated professionalism, superior leadership, and a strong vision for the Department. He was the obvious choice to lead Pittsylvania County Public Safety into the future."

Key was named Interim Director effective May 1, and he will assume the position permanently on July 1.

Before joining Pittsylvania County Public Safety in December of 2021, Key had a long and accomplished career with the City of Danville Fire Department and volunteer fire experience across several agencies. Key spent more than 30 years with the Danville Fire Department, rising to the rank of Battalion Chief beginning in 2014. He also has memberships at volunteer departments across the Piedmont, including Brosville Volunteer Fire and Rescue. Key holds an Associate Degree in Fire Science from Danville Community College.

Pittsylvania County Public Safety oversees a variety of operations and services, including Animal Control, EMS, Dispatch, and Emergency Management. The Department also coordinates with all of the volunteer fire and rescue agencies in Pittsylvania County.

Staunton's Scott Garber elected president of Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs

The City of Staunton's Fire Chief has earned many honors during his nearly 30 years of service, including a new title he earned last month. Chief Scott Garber was elected the president of the Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs, an organization made up of leaders from fire departments across 10 states, along with Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Chief Garber has made his way up the ladder in the organization, starting out as the Virginia director for the region. In this role, Garber says he hopes to form a new unified communication system between the states to address issues being faced by fire departments across the region and the country as a whole. "We're very big proponents of in-building sprinkler systems, residential sprinklers and there's a lot of kickback on that and most of it is due to education on that. Everybody thinks it's a very expensive project when you look at the overall project it's a very small percentage of cost," Chief Garber explained.

Charlottesville Fire Department announces promotion of a new Deputy Chief

The Charlottesville Fire Department will have a new Deputy Chief of Operations beginning on Aug. 1. Deputy Chief Scott Carpenter has served the department for more than 22 years. In his new role, he will be responsible for emergency service operations, peer support, health and safety, the chaplain, and serve as the Albemarle

County Fire Rescue and University of Virginia liaison for service delivery. He recently served as the battalion chief of professional standards. Carpenter has a bachelor of science from Waldorf University in organizational leadership and he is one of the few chief fire officers in CFD who has completed the USFA O-305 All-Hazards Incident Management Team program and coordinated the department's Tactical Emergency Casualty Care program delivery.

New Addition to the Two Capitols Team

We are excited to announce the addition of Kate Baker to the Two Capitols Consulting team. Kate is a talented government relations professional with a decade of experience working with the Virginia General Assembly and state government on a variety of issues.

Prior to joining Two Capitols, Kate directed government relations for the Virginia Retail Federation, one of the largest trade associations in Virginia. Kate successfully represented the interests of some of America's largest corporations as well as independent, small businesses across the Commonwealth.

During her tenure, Kate has worked on a wide range of legislative and policy issues, including tax, budget, ABC, health care, transportation, and environmental. Kate has an innate ability to analyze policy and develop the best strategy for a variety of issues, and her skills will be a tremendous addition to the Two Capitols team and all our clients.

Kate is a cum laude graduate of the University of Mississippi School of Law, as well as a cum laude graduate of North Carolina State University with a BA in English. After college graduation, she interned for the George W. Bush White House where she played an integral role in the Office of Public Liaison. During law school, Kate held a judicial internship for the Honorable Judge Jon Barnwell.

Kate lives in the Hampton Roads area with her husband, John, and their two young children, Carter and Emery.

Kate's contact info is Kate@2capconsulting.com and (919) 215-6273 (cell). She officially starts on August 1.

Prince William County fire and rescue chief retiring this summer

Chief Timothy L. Keen is retiring effective Sept. 1 after 40 years of service to Prince William County fire and rescue. Keen began his career in Prince William County as a volunteer in January 1982. He has led the county's fire and rescue system as chief for the past three years. "It has been an honor and privilege to serve the residents of Prince William County for 40 years and to lead the Fire and Rescue System over the past three years," Keen said in a news release. "I am grateful for the amazing performance of all the members in our system and proud of the work we have done to improve our services to the Prince William community." Keen's last day in the office will be Aug. 31, 2022. The county executive and Board of County Supervisors will discuss the next steps regarding the transition in leadership and the future selection process for the Fire and Rescue System Chief position.

Abingdon appoints new fire chief

In early July, Tim Estes was appointed Fire Chief of Abingdon Fire Department. Prior to his appointment, he served as Assistant Chief. Tim holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Fire Service Administration from Columbia Southern University.

Congratulations Tim!

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The Fouts FOUR can help you control maintenance costs. Dispatch this multipurpose unit on calls that don't require your big rigs, reducing maintenance and wear-and-tear on large apparatus. This truck can also operate with a smaller crew and still be able to perform multiple tasks.

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41ST ANNUAL NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL WEEKEND OCTOBER 8 – 9, 2022

It is an honor for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) to announce that the 41st Annual National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend will be held in person on October 8-9, 2022, at the National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg, MD. Last year, and the beginning of 2022, has been an extraordinary time in our nation and worldwide with the global pandemic. With the ever-changing restrictions, the NFFF has been monitoring regularly on whether we would be able to hold a Memorial Service to ensure that the nation's fallen firefighters from 2021 and earlier would not be forgotten.

We are honored to continue the tradition of gathering in front of the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial this October to honor the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Constructed in 1981, the 7-foot stone monument features a sculpted Maltese Cross, the traditional symbol of the fire service. An engraved plaque on the monument bears a message from President Ronald W. Regan. At the base of the monument an eternal flame symbolizes the spirit of all firefighters – past, present and future. Plaques encircling the monument list the names of the men and women of the fire service who have died in service to their communities since 1981.

A brick Walk of Honor® winds through the beautiful campus, connecting the monument site to the historic National Fallen Firefighter Chapel.

NATIONAL REMEMBRANCE OF FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS MOVES TO MAY STARTING IN 2023

MEMORIAL WEEKEND 2022 WILL BE LAST ONE HELD IN OCTOBER



As we prepare for Memorial Weekend 2022 in October we're looking ahead to next year and the start of a new National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) tradition. 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."

This move does not impact this year's ceremony. The 2022 Memorial Weekend is still scheduled for October 8 and 9.

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 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.

NFPA ANNOUNCES 'FIRE WON'T WAIT. PLAN YOUR ESCAPE' AS THEME FOR FIRE PREVENTION WEEK, OCTOBER 9-15, 2022

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has announced "Fire Won't Wait. Plan Your Escape" as the theme for Fire Prevention Week, October 9-15, reinforcing the critical importance of developing a home escape plan with all members of the household and practicing it regularly. In addition, this October represents the 100th anniversary of Fire Prevention Week, the nation's longest-running public health observance on record. "This year's Fire Prevention Week campaign capitalizes on its milestone anniversary, celebrating all we've accomplished in reducing the public's risk to fire over the past hundred years," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of the NFPA Outreach and Advocacy division. "At the same time, the theme, 'Fire Won't Wait. Plan Your Escape,' addresses challenges that remain." According to NFPA data, home — the place people feel safest from fire — is actually where they are at greatest risk, with three-quarters (74 percent) of all U.S. fire deaths occurring in homes.

FIREFIGHTER FATALITIES IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2021

Firefighting is a dangerous profession, and a growing body of research and data show the contributions that job-related exposures have in chronic illnesses, such as cancer and heart disease, and in behavioral health issues that may end in suicide. These deaths and injuries are in addition to the incident-specific deaths and injuries that occur while on-duty. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recently undertook two large studies focused on firefighter cancer and concluded that firefighters face a 9 percent increase in cancer diagnoses, and a 14 percent increase in cancer-related deaths, compared to the general population in the U.S. NIOSH has also reported on the risk to firefighters of cardiovascular conditions. Firefighter suicides are tracked by the Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance.

NFPA's own work in this area focuses on the deaths and injuries of firefighters that are due to specific events while on-duty.

This report contains overall statistics from NFPA's study on on-duty firefighter fatalities in 2021. It includes patterns by type of duty at time of fatal injury, cause and nature of injury, age, type of incident and type of property involved in fires.

Download the report at: <https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/News-and-Research/Fire-statistics-and-reports/Emergency-responders/osFFF.pdf>



Report highlights

- There were 135 on-duty firefighter deaths in 2021. Sixty-five were due to COVID.
- Of the 70 non-COVID deaths:
 - Thirty-five were volunteer firefighters, 27 were career firefighters, seven were contractors to state and federal land management agencies, and one was a member of an industrial fire department.
 - The largest share of deaths occurred while firefighters were operating at fires or explosions (28 deaths).
 - Overexertion, stress, and medical issues accounted for more than half of the deaths (40 deaths), including 29 sudden cardiac deaths.
 - Sixteen firefighters died in vehicle-related incidents, including 10 firefighters who died in vehicle crashes and six who were struck by vehicles.





VFCA BOARD SELECTION TOUCHSTONES

Once again it's time to think about board seats and several committee positions that will come up for election and/or appointment in 2022. With that in mind, the board is announcing a call for candidates. Any VFCA member in good standing (i.e., one who is current on dues) is eligible to apply for a committee or board-level position or nominate a fellow VFCA member to serve the organization in this capacity. If possible, board members should have previous committee level work prior to being nominated for a Board position. The term of service is one year following the installation in February 2023.

Current board members may declare their candidacy as well, and each will go through the same review process as other candidates.

To help ensure that the most qualified candidates attain these positions, the executive officer's and board has developed the following list of criteria to guide the nominating committee in selecting the board slate. Those VFCA members wishing to serve on the board or a committee should review the following traits before declaring their candidacy.

Attributes & Characteristics

- Understands, and is committed to, the VFCA and its organizational strategies
- Has experience with other organizations
- Has demonstrated an ability in and commitment to teamwork
- Has demonstrated a willingness to make tough decisions
- Can focus on projects and tasks
- Possesses a broad understanding of current membership needs, the industries with whom we interact, and the customers we serve
- Has effective interpersonal and communications skills
- Demonstrates leadership skills
- Can commit to full participation on the board in terms of preparation, board meetings, and committee assignments
- Has a flexible schedule that allows for annual commitment of approximately 10-15 days for meetings and travel, plus research, e-mail communication, phone calls, and writing articles for Commonwealth Chief magazine, their division or other work as necessary
- Has the consistent e-mail and web access needed to support communication, board/committee work, and research
- Has the ability to bring one new sponsor to the VFCA annually

Knowledge & Understanding

- Demonstrates a knowledge of the goals and objectives of the organization
- Has specific experience necessary to the success of the organization at the time of the nomination
- Understands organizational structure and planning methods
- Knows the contemporary options for governing organizations
- Understands the contemporary issues facing VFCA

Diversity

- Brings diversity to the organization as it relates to such things as geography, experience in the VFCA, types of members, and the fire/rescue service environment
- Contributes fresh perspectives and new ideas
- Signals to current and potential members a commitment to openness and inclusiveness
- Attracts potential members who might be from traditionally underrepresented groups

The nominating committee (appointed by President John Prillaman) will review all candidate nominations, narrow the field, and interview finalists. The nominating committee members will have diverse backgrounds and come from all across Virginia. They will possess a wealth of experience as it relates to this task.

The committee will select a slate of individuals that will be presented to the Board of Directors for approval at the December 2022 meeting. At that point, Board members will have an opportunity to participate in the election process by accepting or rejecting the slate. An option will also exist to withhold acceptance of one or more candidates on the slate.

Successful candidates will take their positions on the board following the Installation of Officer's Ceremony in February 2023.

All interested parties should contact the VFCA Executive Director, Chris Eudailey no later than November 1, 2022. You may reach him by phone at (540) 809-9397 or executivedirector@vfca.us



Robert E. White Memorial Scholarship

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation offers annual scholarships for continuing education. The scholarship program was established in 2002 in memory of Mr. Robert E. White, a citizen of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The objective of the scholarship program is to assist individuals desiring to further their academic education through a variety of opportunities such as college classes, National Fire Academy classes, Virginia Fire Chiefs Association events (such as the Virginia Fire & Rescue Conference), certificate programs, trade schools and other fire and EMS classes or conferences. Individual scholarship awards may range from \$250 to \$2,500 and can be utilized for any direct expenses such as registration, tuition, books, meals, lodging or transportation.

Eligibility Criteria

- Active fire/EMS service personnel in Virginia (Volunteer or Career).
- Spouses or dependents of active fire/EMS service personnel in Virginia (Volunteer or Career).
- VFCA Membership (individual and/or Chief) is required for consideration.
- Applicants must be pursuing a degree that will benefit Public Safety field.
- Provide proof of enrollment with scholarship application.
- Non-profit organizations (such as fire departments, etc...) are eligible to apply.
- Programs/Degrees eligible for consideration include the following: VFRC, VFOA, VA Fire Chiefs Academy, and trade schools, Associate, Bachelor and Master Degree Programs.

Selection Criteria

- Complete scholarship application and submit by annual deadline. (December 1st)
- Written Statement – Please attach your statement to application and it should include your background, educational goals, why you believe this educational opportunity will be useful to you and why you are applying for financial assistance. **Failure to complete this portion of the process and fully address the items listed will result in your application being disqualified.** For organizational applications, please include a description of the organization, how the educational program will benefit the organization and why financial assistance is necessary. These statements will serve as a criterion for the selection and should be typewritten using 12 point aerial font, double spaced and no more than three pages in length. **Failure to complete this portion of the process and fully address the items listed will result in your application being disqualified.**

Application Information

- Applications will be accepted between September 1 and December 1 annually.
- Successful applicants will be notified by January 1 of awards.
- Scholarship awardees will be invited to Annual VFR Conference to be recognized and presented their scholarship. **Attendance is not mandatory.**
- Awards may vary in amounts up to \$2500.

HOW TO APPLY:

Visit www.vfca.us for application information.

The application period is September 1st — December 1st each year. Successful applicants will be notified by January 1st. Verification of attendance will be required.



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Glenn A. Gaines

Leadership Legacy Award

In 2015, the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association established the Glenn A. Gaines Leadership Legacy Award. This award is designed to recognize an individual on an annual basis who exemplifies the ability, character and dedication to excellence and displays leadership attributes portrayed by Fire Chief Glenn A. Gaines.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Any current career or volunteer firefighter up to and including a chief officer within the Commonwealth of Virginia is eligible to compete for this award.

Nomination Criteria: Nominate individuals for their significant achievements or contributions to the fire service in the following areas:

- Accomplishments (in mentoring and professional development)
- Initiative (including helping others beyond their own agency through mentoring and professional development, including advocacy)
- Technical Competence (including serving as an instructor)
- Demonstrated leadership and mentoring ability
- The inclusive dates for the Glenn A. Gaines Leadership Legacy Award are January 1st through December 15th of each calendar year.

Selection Process: Nominate individuals for their significant achievements or contributions to the fire service in the following areas:

- The VFCA President and Board of Directors will serve as the selection committee and will make their decision by January 31st.
- The VFCA President will review and tally the results and announce the winner during the annual Virginia Fire Rescue Conference that is held each February in Virginia Beach, VA. The individual selected should be in attendance at the conference.

HOW TO APPLY:

Visit www.vfca.us for application information. Uploaded documents should not exceed 750 words. Nomination packages that do not meet requirements will be rejected.

The application period is September 1st — December 1st each year.

Questions: ceudailey@vfca.us



COULD YOUR DEPARTMENT BENEFIT FROM A STATEWIDE AWARD AND \$500? NOMINATIONS FOR BEST PRACTICES IN FIRE SERVICE HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARDS

Health, safety and wellness within fire departments are top priorities throughout the Commonwealth and across the nation. In Virginia, most departments have developed extensive policies, practices and/or procedures to address this important issue and to ensure the health, safety and wellness of their members. We all know that before we can care for the public, we must ensure that our personnel are trained, equipped, conditioned and capable of effectively performing the functions for which the public expects from us. This means having fit personnel who know how to operate safely and who practice safety, health and wellness 24/7. It means departments having those necessary guidelines, policies, procedures and/or practices in place so that our members know what is expected and it means ensuring that these expectations are followed from an individual perspective, from a crew/team/company/ unit/ station/shift perspective and from an overall departmental perspective. There are many excellent examples/models of health and safety practices that have been implemented by departments of all kinds (volunteer, combination and career) in the Commonwealth. Why not have your department nominated and recognized as an award-winning agency that is committed to the health, safety and wellness of the overall department and, in particular, its members.

Each year, the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association – Health and Safety Committee coordinates a “Best Practices in Health and Safety” awards program through the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation. This program seeks to recognize programs from volunteer, combination and career fire departments in the Commonwealth of Virginia annually during the VFCA Virginia Fire Rescue Conference in February. Three awards are given, one in each category (volunteer department, combination department and career department). Winning departments receive a \$500 contribution from the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation. Wouldn't it be nice for your department to receive \$500 to support its operations in some way? Probably more importantly, this would be a fantastic message to send to your members that their organization has been recognized for programs that show your commitment to health, safety and wellness.

Nominations are currently being accepted in each of the three categories (volunteer, combination and career) between now and December 1. This year the VFCA/VFCF is utilizing an on-line submittal process which is available on the VFCA web site at www.vfca.us and by selecting the tab titled “VFCF Health and Safety Awards Submission.” It is desired that nominations be submitted on-line, however for those unable to do so a form has been included with this publication. All nominations/ submittals (electronic and printed/mailed) must be received on or before December 1, 2022. Programs/ practices etc. implemented within the current and two prior years (2022, 2021 and 2020) will be considered.

Recognition for the latest awards will occur at the 2023 VFCA Virginia Fire Rescue Conference in February at the Virginia Beach Convention Center.

VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS FOUNDATION BEST PRACTICES IN FIRE SERVICE HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARD NOMINATIONS

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association and the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation is pleased to announce the annual “Virginia Fire Chiefs Best Practices in Fire Service Health and Safety Awards.” The VFCA and the VFCF are committed to fostering health and safety within the various fire departments throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. This award program was created to further recognize the health and safety efforts of Virginia fire departments. The awards are intended to acknowledge creative, comprehensive and/or significant accomplishments and programs that provide for the health, safety and welfare of our fire service members. Each year the VFCA/VFCF will honor formally established fire departments within the Commonwealth of Virginia, in each of the following three categories: volunteer fire department, career fire department and combination fire department. The Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation Best Practices in Fire Service Health and Safety Awards recipients will be announced and honored at the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association's--Virginia Fire Rescue Conference in February 2023. Award winning departments will be presented with an award and the VFCF will make a \$500 contribution to each winning department. Information about this program is available on the VFCA website at www.vfca.us

Nomination Information

Nominations (electronic or by mail) for the upcoming “Virginia Fire Chiefs Best Practices in Fire Service Health and Safety Award” program must be received on or before December 1, 2022:

On-line electronic submittal of nominations is preferred and the appropriate information can be found on the VFCA web site at www.vfca.us and by selecting the tab titled “VFCF Health and Safety Award Submissions.”

For those departments unable to submit an on-line nomination the attached form can be used and mailed to:

Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 699
Blackstone, Virginia 23824

Questions may be referred to Chris Eudailey, VFCA Executive Director, email executivedirector@vfca.us

Criteria

Any fire department within the Commonwealth of Virginia that has established creative, comprehensive and/or significant accomplishments/programs that provide for the health, safety and welfare of their members. Program must be in place/ operational at time of nomination and must have been implemented within the last three years.

Eligibility

Must be a formally established fire department within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

One award will be presented in each of the following categories:

- Volunteer Fire Department
- Career Fire Department
- Combination Fire Department

Selection Process

Once all packages are received, an award Selection Committee will review the nomination packages and forward their recommendation to the VFCA President and Executive Director.

Awards Presentation

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation Best Practices in Fire Service Health and Safety Awards recipients will be announced and honored at the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association's--Virginia Fire Rescue Conference in February 2023. Recipients will receive the award and a \$500 contribution to the department.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

The following five items must be addressed in a number-by-number format:

- 1) Brief Abstract of Accomplishment/Program: Brief executive summary the accomplishment/program.
- 2) Brief Description of Fire Department Nominated: Provide a brief overview of the nominated fire department.
- 3) Description of Accomplishment/Program: Describe the accomplishment/program being nominated, including its objectives and clientele being served.
- 4) The Results/Success of the Program: Provide a description of the results and success of the accomplishment/program in meetings its objectives (provide examples and measurements where possible).
- 5) Worthiness of Award: Provide brief justification for why this accomplishment/program should receive this award.



VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS FOUNDATION BEST PRACTICES IN FIRE SERVICE HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARDS



APPLICATION/NOMINATION FORM

Name of Fire Department _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____ Email _____

Fire Chief _____

Check One Volunteer Career Combination

Nomination Submitted By: _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____ Email _____

Accomplishment/Program Information

Accomplishment/Program Title:

Implementation Year _____

Supporting documentation must be attached to this application/nomination form.

Copy form as needed

2022 MEMORIAL SERVICE TO BE HELD

The 2022 Annual VFCA Memorial Service for those we have lost during 2022 will be held once again during the 2023 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference held in Virginia Beach on February 22, 2023. If your department has lost a member during 2022, you are asked to pass that information on to us. On-line electronic submittal of nominations is preferred and the appropriate information can be found on the VFCA web site at www.vfca.us. For those departments unable to submit an on-line nomination, the attached form can be used and mailed to:

Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 699
Blackstone, Virginia 23824

Questions may be referred to Chris Eudailey, VFCA Executive Director, email executivedirector@vfca.us

MEMORIAL INFORMATION SHEET

Name of Deceased: _____

Fire Department Name: _____

Date of Death: _____

Cause of Death (if available): _____

Fire Department Contact Person: _____

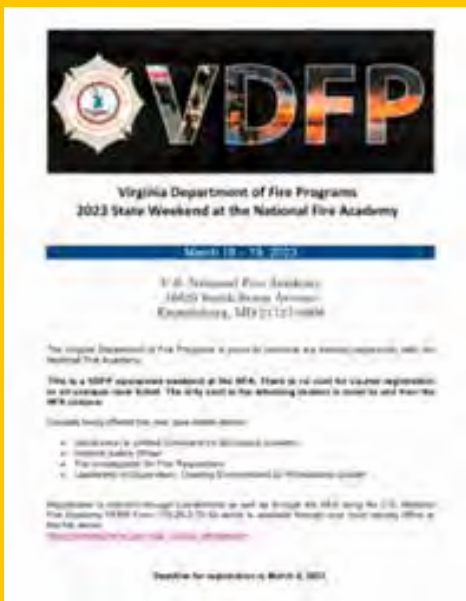
Fire Department Address: _____

Fire Department Telephone Number: _____

Submitted By: _____

Telephone Number: _____

VIRGINIA STATE WEEKEND AT THE NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY



The Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) in partnership with the National Fire Academy (NFA) will be holding deliveries of NFA programs at our on campus weekend, **March 18-19, 2023.**

This is a VDFP sponsored weekend at the NFA. There is no cost for course registration or on-campus meal ticket. The only cost to the attending student is travel to and from the NFA campus. For additional information go to: <https://files.constantcontact.com/d8db3757601/11a488d6-29e6-462e-aa06-51645ff995e5.pdf>

Courses being offered this year:

- Introduction to Unified Command for All-Hazard Incidents
- Incident Safety Officer
- Fire investigation for First Responders
- Leadership in Supervision: Creating Environments for Professional Growth

Registration is required through Cornerstone as well as through the NFA using the U.S. National Fire Academy FEMA Form 119-25-2-75-5a which is available through your local training office.

VIRGINIA TASK FORCE 2 SENT TO KENTUCKY, ASSISTS IN SEARCH AND RESCUE EFFORTS

The recent Kentucky disaster was the nation's deadliest non-tropical flash flood since 1977 according to The Weather Channel.

Search and rescue efforts are continuing after catastrophic flood waters battered parts of Kentucky. In late July, members of the Virginia Task Force 2 were on the ground in Kentucky, working to help in the relief efforts. Eight members of the Virginia Task Force 2 left Hampton Roads and drove through the night for over 10 hours to bring equipment and supplies to Kentucky. Dozens of people in Kentucky have died and many homes and buildings were destroyed by flood waters. Rob Darling, a Virginia Beach Fire Department Battalion Chief, has been with the Virginia Task Force 2 for 15 years and said he's responded to several natural disasters. Darling said this time, they drove communication equipment to the command staff who are working to organize the search and rescue efforts.



Shelly Jamison, the Blue Incident Support Team PIO for FEMA said: "I will tell you that your teams from Virginia are some of the most highly respected in the FEMA system. They are extremely experienced and skilled, they come with great equipment and are literally revered by the system."

Over the years, Virginia Task Force 2 has responded to all kinds of tragedies and natural disasters. Most recently the team went to Surfside, Florida after a high-rise building collapsed; they've also gone to Puerto Rico several times, and responded to Haiti after the earthquake.

According to the Virginia Task Force 2 website: The National Urban Search and Rescue System was established under the authority of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 1989. It is a framework for structuring local emergency service personnel into integrated disaster response task forces. Virginia Task Force 2 is a specialized rescue organization comprised of highly trained Firefighters, Technical Rescue Technicians, EMS Personnel, Canine Handlers, Engineers and Physicians from various cities and departments located throughout the region; such as Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, James City County, Henrico County, Navy Regional, Newport News, Norfolk, Hampton, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Williamsburg and York County.



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NIOSH SAFETY NOTIFICATIONS FOR RESPIRATOR EQUIPMENT



User notices issued for 3M Scott SCBA Air-Pak models and AirBoss Defense Group FlexAir powered air-purifying respirators.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL) has posted 2 user notices that may impact certain respirators used by fire and emergency medical services providers.

3M Scott SCBA (Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus) Air-Pak models

The NPPTL issued a May 2022 notice PDF for 3M Scott SCBA Air-Pak models manufactured between Nov. 1, 2019 and April 12, 2022. 3M Scott has received reports on the Air-Pak X3, Air-Pak X3 Pro and X3-21 Pro models referencing the primary and/or secondary reducing valves missing certain high pressure air filters. If filters are missing from the reducer, the potential exists that the user could experience a leak at the reducer seat retainer.

This notice details the models impacted and actions you should take to

ensure your SCBA contain the proper filters.

AirBoss Defense Group (ADG) FlexAir powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs)

The NPPTL issued a June 2022 notice PDF for ADG FlexAir PAPRs. From April to July 2020, ADG supplied FlexAir PAPRs to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for pandemic response. To meet the scale and pace of this requirement, the ADG contract with FEMA did not require the equipment to have NIOSH certification. In preparation for the end of the COVID Public Health Emergency, any remaining units supplied for use in occupational settings under this contract should either be retrofitted for continued use as a NIOSH-approved respirator or taken out of service.

This notice includes instructions on how to identify units matching these criteria and who to contact for more information on what to do.

SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE IS NOW ACCESSIBLE ANYWHERE ANYTIME BY DIALING OR TEXTING 988



Mental health is important among all individuals and especially first responders as they handle tough situations daily. As of July 16, The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline has rebranded as 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. This new, three digit number will still connect you via call, text or chat with trained counselors across the United States. If you are interested in learning more visit www.988lifeline.org

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Henrico Fire EMS- Horton 603F

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