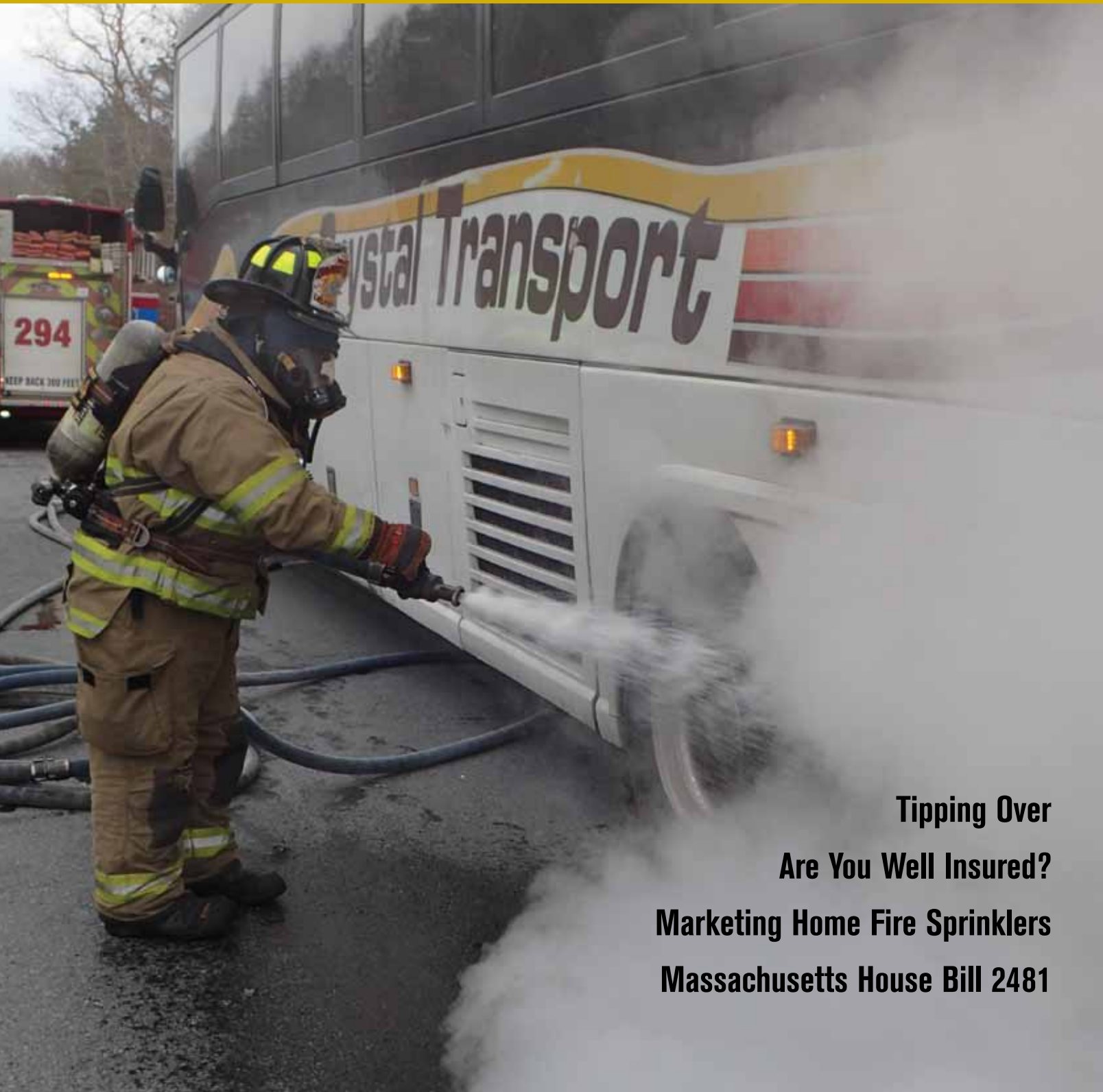


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# *Smoke Showin'*

The Official Publication of the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association



**Tipping Over**

**Are You Well Insured?**

**Marketing Home Fire Sprinklers**

**Massachusetts House Bill 2481**

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The editorial staff of *Smoke Showin'* is always looking for topics and articles about the industry. If you have any suggestions or would like to write an article, please contact Larry Holmberg at [editor@mcvfa.org](mailto:editor@mcvfa.org).

Cover photo courtesy of Chief Joe Maruca, West Barnstable

# 100<sup>th</sup> Issue of SMOKE SHOWIN'

**T**his issue of Smoke Showin' marks a milestone – it is the 100th issue. I wish I could say I remember issue one, but it was before my department and I became involved in the MCVFA. What I can recall is the quarterly newsletter that was printed at the Plymouth County House of Corrections and was shipped out from our Teaticket address.

In 2004, as president of the Association, I attended the Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY) annual convention where I met Lloyd Lathrop, who at the time was involved in FASNY's magazine. We talked about upgrading the newsletter to a magazine-style publication and after looking at the costs involved plus other pros and cons, the Executive Board made the decision to upgrade to the style you are looking at today.

I'm proud of what we have developed. It looks good and generally it reads well too. Our philosophy as we put the magazine together is to look forward and to keep our members and the public informed about the issues that affect the Massachusetts call and volunteer fire and EMS services. We've developed relationships with the Department of Fire Services and more recently with the Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts and they have become regular contributors. And while speaking of contributors, I cannot overlook the impact Chief Joe Maruca has had on this publication and on the fire service. Joe's articles are always well written but maybe more importantly, they are always interesting and informative. When other state fire associations ask to reprint an article, you know you have something good.

So where do we go from here? Well, that's somewhat up to you dear reader. We've talked about going to an all-electronic version and discontinuing the printed magazine, but we continue to reject the proposal. We once did a poll to see what the interest would be in a digital-only version and the result was an even split, one vote for digital and one vote for paper. We continue to believe that our members like the physical appeal of the magazine and unless we hear differently, we'll probably continue as we have.

I hope you have enjoyed reading *Smoke Showin'* over the years but we can always improve. I welcome your comments, suggestions, and criticisms so if you have something to say then send it along. Additionally, we always welcome article and photo submissions. I can't guarantee they'll be published but I will promise they'll be read and evaluated like every other article is. 🌸

**Larry Holmberg**  
*Editor, Smoke Showin'*

## Smoke Showin'

The Official Publication of the Massachusetts  
Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association



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MCVFA membership.





## President's Message

The prevention of cancer in firefighters has become a major goal of the Association as it has for the entire fire service. We just concluded our second annual Firefighter Cancer Survey. We want to thank all who took the time to participate in this critical survey. As it stands right now, Massachusetts does not have credible information on cancer where it pertains to call and volunteer firefighters. With your help, we will eventually establish a baseline to indicate where the call and volunteer firefighters stand when it comes to this disease.

I am hoping that you have read some of the many articles relating to cancer in the Fire Service. I ask that you continue to try and prevent your chances of getting cancer by wearing your SCBA, washing your entire PPE including your helmet, hood, gloves and boots and practicing other preventative measures. Along legislative lines, we continue to monitor all bills as they relate to the Fire Service. The Legislative Committee had recently submitted language to amend Chapter 41, section 111F (adding call, volunteer and other firefighters) and add section 111M (EMTs), to allow those injured the ability to be paid for being incapacitated due to an injury sustained in the performance of their duty.

In addition, a bill amending a current legislation (H.1388) in regards to death benefits for surviving spouses is moving along also. S.1536, the Tax Exemption bill, is also moving through the House side. We hope by the time you read this these bills will have moved closer to passage.

The Association is working to increase our membership. We currently represent approximately 3000 members and the Executive Board is striving to increase this number substantially. As we have mentioned before, the organization's strength is in its numbers.

Finally, we are currently working on our Annual State Meeting, which will be returning to the Hadley Farms Meeting House in Hadley in October. Please save Saturday, October 13, 2018 on your calendars. As in the past, our program will begin with the Firefighter Memorial followed by the State Meeting, lunch and 2 seminars. We certainly hope you will join us. More information will follow.

The MCVFA was once again able to be present at the FCAM Professional Development Conference Program held on February 27 through March 1. Our main goal was to promote the benefits of the Association. MCVFA Health and Wellness Coordinator Dominica D'Avella was on hand to raise awareness of the benefits of firefighter health and wellness programs to the chiefs and others in attendance.

As usual, the MCVFA was able to network with a number of chiefs, firefighters and vendors. The seminars presented by FCAM was once again top notch. If you have not attended this program, it comes highly recommended.

Lastly, we would be remiss if we did not mention the work that Chief Bill Dolan has done not only in promoting the Professional Development Conference but an outstanding job each year of setting it up. But, every good thing must come to an end and he is retiring this year. He definitely will be missed, but he has two capable people moving in to his former position - Chief Jack Parow will become the Secretary and Chief Kevin Robinson the Treasurer. We wish them all good luck. 🍀

**Kevin Connolly**  
MCVFA President

# *Thank you all...and be safe!*

# How did playing with Fire inside a Building cost a Firebug \$340,000 for an injured Firefighter's Knee?

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*by Attorneys Steven Ballin & Jared Ballin*



**B**efore we get to the story behind this case, let's review how Massachusetts law evolved to provide injured firefighters with rights to make claims for compensation against third parties who negligently cause their injuries.

Unlike Massachusetts, some states still follow the so-called "firefighter's rule" which prevents such claims. The justification in those states for the rule was that firefighters and police officers are paid to assume the risk of getting hurt.

The rule began to erode in 1973 when the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court declared an injured person's status on someone's property no longer determined whether a duty of care was owed to them by the property owner. That case involved an injured police officer who fell on ice at a home while serving a criminal summons. The Court declared that a landowner owes a duty of reasonable care to protect all lawful visitors from foreseeable harm. In 1974, the legislature abolished the defense of "assumption of the risk" which prevented recovery for injuries by persons who assumed the risk of getting hurt – a key justification for the "firefighter's rule" was now gone. After that change in the law, the new inquiry would be whether the assumption of the risk by the injured person was unreasonable in the circumstances and if so, it would constitute evidence of comparative negligence but would no longer be a bar to recovery.

Finally, in 2000 the Massachusetts Appeals Court was urged by a defendant to follow the "firefighter's rule" and throw out a lawsuit brought by an injured police officer. The defendant had been sued by a police officer who was injured while responding to a melee involving that defendant. After reviewing the law in other states and the evolving law in Massachusetts, the Court examined Chapter 41 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Chapter 41 grants municipal firefighters and police officers statutory injury on duty wage and medical expense benefits for injuries on duty which occur through no fault of their own. The legislature also made clear in the same law, the rights of these injured municipal firefighters and police officers to make claims against the third parties who caused their injuries. After this discussion, the Appeals Court declared "[T]he firefighter's rule has no continuing vitality in Massachusetts." *Hopkins v. Medeiros*, 48 Mass.App.Ct 600 (2000).

There are still firefighters who mistakenly believe they have no rights to make claims for much needed compensation against third parties who caused their injuries and that such claims are a waste of time. What follows is an example of a successful claim made by an injured firefighter

It is a snowy, Sunday night and 17-year-old James Flare is home alone with nothing to do. So, he heads down to the basement with a handful of road flares. He sets his iPhone up and records himself so he can entertain his friends later online. James lights one of the flares and aims it at some cardboard boxes he piled up under the stairs. The boxes ignite easily and James quickly loses control of the fire. Moments later, the fire climbs

up the stairs. James escapes from the basement and leaves his unit with his dog. The snow conditions are so challenging that eight fire departments respond to fight the fire. To make matters worse, one of the only two available fire hydrants in the area was frozen shut. One of the fire engines struggles to find enough traction to make it up the icy driveway. The firefighters struggle to keep their balance on the snow and ice. Some slip and fall on the street and driveway.

It takes nearly three hours to put out the fire and overhaul the buildings. By that time, all housing units had suffered smoke damage, Joseph's unit would have to be completely rebuilt, and everyone living in the other units were displaced. Adding insult to injury, one of the firefighters that fell on the ice fighting the fire suffered a torn ligament in her knee that required surgery.

We filed a lawsuit against James Flare on behalf of the injured firefighter. We argued that James Flare was liable for the firefighter's injury under what is known as the "rescue doctrine". Under this doctrine, someone like James Flare, who negligently creates an emergency that requires a rescue effort, is liable for the rescuer's injuries if the rescuer is hurt in the process. Rescuers like firefighters and police officers are not precluded from recovery simply because of the dangers inherent in their job. Here, James Flare's negligent choice to violate the fire safety rules in his home caused the emergency response that needlessly resulted in the firefighter's injury. We were able to settle this case with James Flare for \$340,000.

*Continued on page 8*

## UNITED to Face the Future



[www.fcam.org](http://www.fcam.org)



...continued from page 7

In 2014, 494,000 structure fires resulted in 2,860 deaths and over 13,000 injured. Each day 44 people in the U.S. are injured or killed in these structure fires.<sup>1</sup> James Flare chose to play with fire putting the community and responding firefighters in danger. For thirty years we've been proud to represent injured firefighters on cases where negligent conduct or reckless acts puts responding firefighters and all of us in danger.

Stories about claims like this one will hopefully cause a shift in the awareness and understanding Massachusetts firefighters have about their rights to make justifiable claims for badly needed compensation in connection with their injuries on duty. All other types of employees have long enjoyed these same rights to seek needed compensation for their injuries at work. Remember, when a firefighter is injured, their statutory injured-on-duty benefits providing for wages and medical expenses, do not provide compensation for the injured firefighter's pain and suffering, diminished future earning capacity or compensation for lost overtime and detail shifts. Nor do these statutory benefits provide full compensation for income from other employment which these injured firefighters depend to make a living. It is important injured firefighters consult with an attorney experienced in these cases and with the laws governing these cases to evaluate the prospects of making a successful claim to compensate the injured firefighter for all

their harms and losses. In Massachusetts, there is typically a three year statute of limitations which bars claims from being made more than three years after the injury occurred. Therefore it is important firefighters who may have claims for incidents which occurred during the past three years quickly consult with an experienced attorney. 🚒

*In order to protect the privacy of the injured firefighter and witnesses, all names have been changed. Any resemblance to names of real persons, past or present, is merely coincidental and not intended. The injured firefighter agreed to have this article published in order that public safety officers around the Commonwealth be better educated about their legal rights to compensation when injured.*

*Ballin & Associates, LLC specializes in representing injured firefighters and police officers and their families. For over 30 years, Ballin & Associates' attorneys have practiced in the field of personal injury law and successfully represented injured public safety officers in over 200 departments throughout Massachusetts. Cases are handled on a contingent fee basis meaning no legal fee is due unless and until money is successfully collected on the case. Consultations are free and confidential.*

*For more information, please call 508.543.3700 or email [SBallin@BallinLaw.com](mailto:SBallin@BallinLaw.com).*

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<sup>1</sup> National Fire Protection Association, Fires in the U.S. [www.nfpa.org/news-and-research/fire-statistics-and-reports/fire-statistics/fires-in-the-us](http://www.nfpa.org/news-and-research/fire-statistics-and-reports/fire-statistics/fires-in-the-us)

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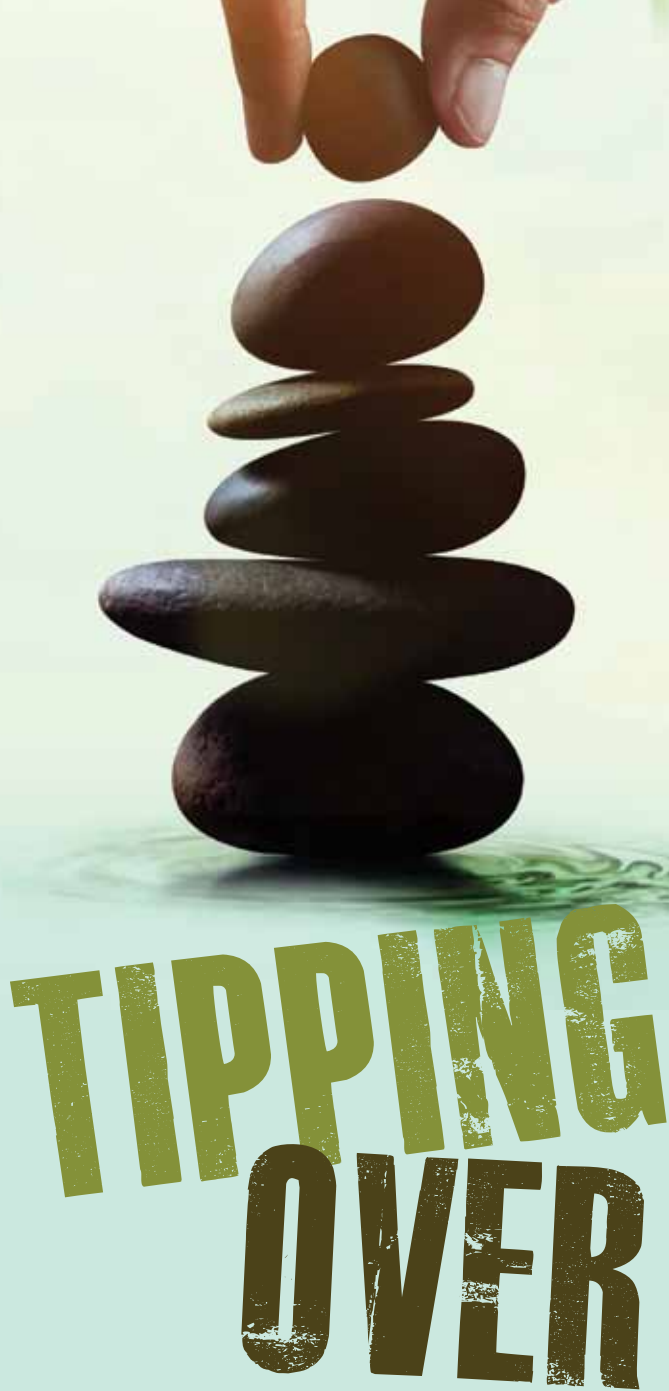
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# TIPPING OVER

by Chief Christopher W. Norris

**G**rowing up as a kid in the 1980's, I still reflect back to the movie "The Karate Kid", where Mr. Miyagi is teaching Daniel how to balance on the bow of the boat and maintain the best position possible to not get knocked over. In the movie, as Daniel becomes more proficient at achieving his balance, Mr. Miyagi begins to rock the boat, which eventually makes Daniel fall off into the water. The importance of maintaining balance for karate is reinforced to Daniel in this lesson, but is later understood by him in a holistic perspective for life.

Many times, the life of a call/volunteer firefighter becomes a similar balancing act. The obligations and commitments of the men and women in the fire service can become overwhelming

at times. In addition to their responsibilities at their respective fire departments, they have other time constraints from their primary jobs, significant others, children, family, friends, hobbies, continuing education, religious activities, and military duties. The challenges and pressures for many firefighters to maintain this work/life balance can contribute to low morale, poor performance, emotional crises, or leaving the organization altogether.

Leaders in call/volunteer organizations need to understand and be cognizant of these outside influences, challenges, and time constraints placed upon their personnel. It's understood that recruitment and retention of personnel continues to be primary focus for many organizations. Providing an environment to help these firefighters succeed could help overcome some of these recruitment and retention challenges.

A high priority should be to establish, create, and maintain an organizational culture that recognizes the importance of family and the health and wellness of the individual. Department programs should provide the flexibility, versatility, and convenience to meet their organizational responsibilities but allow the time for other activities and interests. All members should be encouraged to stay engaged in these other outside interests and responsibilities. This makes them no less accountable for their organizational responsibilities; however it establishes an understanding of support and commitment from the department leadership.

Individuals still need to use caution and not overextend themselves by taking on too many tasks that they may not be able to complete. Doing less, but doing things really well can provide increased satisfaction and greater organizational value. It's important to embrace and nurture organizational teamwork that can enhance everyone's ability to balance all of life's challenges.

As individuals, we need to understand our own personal limitations and not exceed our capabilities. Determining your balance point so you don't tip over will be critical to your organizational success and individual health. Don't have any regrets wishing you spent more time with family, friends, or activities. Find the work/life balance that grounds you to your individual core values and will keep you from falling off the boat when it begins to rock. 🌀

*Fire Chief Christopher W. Norris has been a member of the Westhampton Fire Department since April 1994. He has served in numerous capacities in the organization up until his appointment to Fire Chief in January 2007. Chief Norris is the New England representative on the EFO section of the International Association of Fire Chiefs.*

# HEALTH & WELLNESS



BY DOMINICA D'AVELLA, CSCS, EP-C, PFT

**T**he physical demands of being a firefighter can vary significantly from call to call and department to department. This variability adds extra complexity to the process of physical preparation and ensuring that it is well matched to the demands of the job. As this column has discussed before, everyone needs to start from where they are and train basic physical fitness first; however, for firefighters that is not *enough*. Being physically prepared means being able to capably handle the average call with plenty left in the tank, but also having the capacity to handle the more strenuous calls without habitually going into redline territory from either a cardiovascular or musculoskeletal perspective.

Renowned Sport Scientist Dr. Tim Gabbett has talked about the potential of appropriate physical training to function as a 'vaccine' against injuries. I recently had the pleasure of meeting him and asking a few questions about how his work applies to not only a sport setting, but also an occupational setting like the fire service. Dr. Gabbett has published extensively on many topics, but of particular interest is his work on the training-injury prevention paradox and the acute: chronic workload ratio. Space doesn't allow a deep dive into these concepts here, so we will focus on a few key ideas. If you are interested in learning more about Dr. Gabbett's work and the organizations he has consulted with around the world, you can visit his website ([www.gabbettperformance.com.au](http://www.gabbettperformance.com.au)).



Here are a few of Dr. Gabbett's ideas that are highly relevant in the context of fire service physical training:

- Training, loads, injury, and performance are inter-linked
- By definition, preparing for the average demands, means under-preparation half of the time
- The athlete's role in training loads must be considered, and athletes must be accountable
- Your sport still needs to describe the correct training and performance metrics
- Training, and changing training, is not risk-free – Risk-benefit needs to be considered at all stages

So how can we apply these ideas to the fire service?

- To support safe and successful emergency response performance, department leaders and firefighters need to work together, with outside help as needed, to interpret existing fire service standards and create relevant internal ones to quantify the loads and training demands that need to be managed and outline a path to successful preparation.
- In the fire service, adequate preparation can be the difference between life and death; preparing for the average call is not enough to keep firefighters safe when the tones go off and the

incident is in no way average; train for the 'big ones' not the average call.

- Firefighters need to take pride and responsibility in their personal level of preparation, regardless of what is going on around them; do it for yourself, your family, your community, and the positive impact it will have on your brothers and sisters at the station.
- Department leaders need to create the conditions for success in physical preparation; this ties in directly with the first bullet point – for a standard to be met, it needs to be clearly articulated, 'SMART', and well-supported.
- Risk vs. benefit is something that should always be considered when making decisions about physical training. It is essential to know what the starting point is, what the short-term and long-term goals are, what the timeframe is to get from point 'a' to point 'b,' what methods will be used in the process, and why those methods are the most appropriate.

This is a BIG topic – let's keep the conversation going! If you would like to share your best practices or your department is interested in hosting a workshop on Firefighter Health & Wellness, please contact Dominica D'Avella, MCVFA Health & Wellness Coordinator, at [dominica.davella@gmail.com](mailto:dominica.davella@gmail.com). Stay safe! 🚒



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# ARE YOU WELL INSURED?

BY CHIEF JOE MARUCA

**R**ecently, some firefighters and chiefs told me they didn't know what kind of insurance coverage their town had for them. I even heard about a town that canceled the insurance on their trucks, to save money, without telling the fire chief and then wished they had it when one of their trucks was damaged.

You should know what your town's insurance covers and doesn't cover. The fact that firefighters don't seem to know this indicates a communication problem within the organization and municipality. This isn't necessarily someone's fault, it's just that people don't think about these things and there aren't systems in place to routinely provide this information. It's a common problem in small, under resourced organizations.

What do you do? The simple answer is to ask. Ask your town for a copy of the insurance policy that covers firefighter injuries, disabilities and death. It's a public document and anyone can get a copy. Then read it. Ok, yes, reading insurance policies is brutal. I hate reading them. I usually look for the

charts and graphs and bullet points in them to get some context and basic points. Then I ask an insurance agent to tell me what it really says.

In some towns you might discover there is no insurance. This is legally acceptable. The law doesn't require cities, towns and districts to carry insurance. They can self-insure by paying claims from their operating budget. They can hope that nobody gets hurt. If the town does have insurance, the law does require that they exhaust insurance coverage before paying claims from town funds.

Here are some questions to ask:

- 1** If a call/volunteer firefighter is injured in the line of duty, what is the limit of coverage? This means, what is the maximum amount of money the policy will pay before the town has to start paying the bills out of pocket.
- 2** If a call/volunteer firefighter is injured in the line of duty is there a deductible before the policy starts paying the claim?



- 3** Are there limits on the types of injuries or illnesses that are covered?
- 4** If a call/volunteer firefighter has a short-term disability that won't allow them to work as a firefighter, how much does the policy pay them and for how long?
- 5** If a call/volunteer firefighter has a short-term disability that won't allow them to work at their regular job (or continue to attend college) how much does the policy pay them and for how long?

I suggest these five questions as a starting point, even though there are plenty more you can ask, because these five questions represent the vast majority of issues that have come to my attention over the past twenty years.

Even though state law (Chapter 41, Section 100) requires that cities, towns and districts pay 100% of the medical bills for any firefighter injured in the line of duty, problems still tend to arise regarding deductibles, and especially when the town hits the coverage limit. It's not unheard of for towns to stop paying the medical bills when they hit the coverage limit and tell the firefighter "it isn't covered anymore". Legally, they have to pay medical bills even if it's beyond their coverage limit, but sometimes this is poorly understood.

Therefore, by exploring the deductibles and coverage limits in advance of an injury, the chance for misunderstandings is greatly reduced, and the town might decide they need to increase their coverage.

This is also a good time to learn about what is and is not covered by your town's insurance policy. Simply because the insurance company doesn't cover a particular illness or injury doesn't mean the town isn't responsible for the medical bills if the injury was a result of a line of duty event. It is state law, (Chapter 41, Section 100) that determines the town's liability for line of duty injuries, not the insurance policy.

The other area that has generated a lot of issues of the years involves short-term disabilities. Typically, these arise when a call/volunteer firefighter suffers a sprain and is out of work for two to six weeks recovering. Occasionally, a more serious injury puts someone out of work for months. State law isn't as clear and as helpful for short-term disability payments as it is for the medical bills. Here, you'll be reliant upon your town's insurance policy, and its terms and limits.

While GL Chapter 41, Section 111F provides that firefighters (and Section 111M for EMS staff) continue to get paid their salary when they are out of work due to a line of duty injury, this provision isn't particularly helpful if you are an unpaid volunteer or get paid \$11/hour as a call firefighter. As a volunteer, you'll get nothing, except what your town's insurance policy pays you.

As a call (or part-time/per diem) firefighter you are entitled to get paid what you would typically have gotten paid if you

were not disabled. For call firefighters this means looking at what you got paid last year and dividing it by twelve to get your monthly pay rate, and then paying you that monthly amount while you are out of work. If you were paid \$2000 as a call firefighter last year, your monthly short-term disability payment will be \$166.67 per month this year. The town will have to pay you this amount until you can return to work as a firefighter or you are permanently retired as a firefighter. (See GL Chapter 32 Sections 85H and 85H ½ for the law on permanently retiring a call/volunteer firefighter.)

Note, that the benefit the law provides for short-term disabilities of call/volunteer firefighters has nothing to do with their ability to work at their regular (typically private sector) job.

Short-term disability for volunteer and call firefighters is a weakness here in Massachusetts. That is why the MCVFA has filed legislation (H.4169) to require a minimum amount of short-term disability to be paid to call and volunteer firefighters that is based upon the entry level wage for all occupations in Massachusetts, currently \$25,810 per year.

So don't wait for someone to get hurt. Do some research now and find out what your town's insurance policies cover and don't cover, and then start a conversation about whether this coverage is adequate or not. 🚒

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**188 Central St, Hudson, MA**

# Interested in Being an MCVFA Officer?

Nominations Are Now Open.

**T**he Association Bylaws created the Elections Committee to oversee the entire elections process. Every April, the Elections Committee must notify the membership of positions whose term of office will conclude on December 31.

## **Positions to be decided at the Annual State Meeting in October are:**

### **Treasurer of the Association**

Larry Holmberg of Chesterfield is the incumbent.

#### **Eligibility:**

1. Any Active Member of this Association who has been an active member in good standing for three (3) consecutive years is eligible to hold this office.
2. A candidate must be a B-1, B-3, B-4, B-5, B-6, or B-7 member.

## **Positions to be decided at Regional meetings held by September 20 are:**

**Region 1 Vice President** Ken Jordan of Wareham is the incumbent. 2-year term

**Region 2 Vice President** Chris Bosch of Groveland is the incumbent, 2-year term.

**Region 3 Vice President** Vacant, 2-year term

**Region 4 Coordinator** Vacant, 2-year term

**Region 5 Vice President** Paul Vallone of Clarksburg is the incumbent. 2-year term

#### **Eligibility:**

1. Any Active Member of this Association who has been an active member in good standing for three (3) consecutive years is eligible to hold this office.
2. A candidate must be a B-1, B-3, B-4, B-5, B-6, or B-7 member.

This announcement opens the nomination process. Anyone interested in being a candidate for any of these positions, including incumbents, should express their intentions to the MCVFA Office by July 1.

The Elections Committee will then review all potential candidates to determine their eligibility and submit a slate of qualified candidates to the Delegates and Alternates by August 15. 🗳️

*If you have any questions about the election process or the duties of the various positions, please contact the Elections Committee at [elections@mcvfa.org](mailto:elections@mcvfa.org) or you may call Tom Burnett at 617.719.1289.*

## **From the State Treasurer**

The position of State Treasurer is up for election this year and I will not be a candidate for reelection. I have been the State Treasurer since 2011, a member of the Executive Board since 2002, and an active member in the MCVFA since 1995 and it is time for me to step down and let someone else help lead the MCVFA.

I tried to retire two years ago but the proverbial train came through and I agreed to serve another term with the proviso that an active search take place to find my successor. Well, I'm still the Treasurer so I want to give ample notice to the membership and to allow time for candidates to step forward.

I want to thank everyone for the support over the years and look forward to a dynamic Association in the years to come.

*Larry Holmberg*



# Thank You for your Support

**A**fter some serious thought, I have decided not to be a candidate for reelection as Region 5 Vice President.

I remember it like it was yesterday, it was a cold December, Friday night back in 2000 and I was attending a regional meeting at the Hinsdale Fire Department with my former Delegate Tom Therrien. President Mike McCullough was hosting the meeting and was looking for someone to step up to fill the regional vice-president position that was empty for a while. During the meeting I told my delegate, I might run for that spot. I was very nervous to speak up. My friend Ray Bolduc from Hinsdale Fire Department came up to me after the meeting and told me that I would make

a good VP and I should go and talk to the president. You could say Ray Bolduc twisted my arm to go for that position. The rest is history!

I want to thank everyone in my region that supported me during my 18 years and especially to those who let me hold my meetings at their stations. I am the longest serving Regional VP in MCVFA history! And one thing this position did teach me was how to overcome my fear of talking in front of a crowd. Again, thank you for your support and it was a great honor to serve!

*Paul Vallone*

## MCVFA Merchandise



### Gray T-shirt

Gildan, 99% cotton/1% poly  
Front maltese cross in black  
Back MCVFA in red/orange  
(S - XL) \$13.00 + postage  
(2X - 3X) \$15.00 + postage



### Navy Blue T-shirt

Gildan, 100% cotton, pre-shrunk  
Front maltese cross in white  
(M - XL) \$10.00 + postage  
(2X - 3X) \$12.00 + postage  
Back MCVFA in white  
(M - XL) \$13.00 + postage Not Shown  
(2X - 3X) \$15.00 + postage Not Shown



### Pink T-shirt

Gildan, 99% cotton/1% poly  
Front white maltese cross  
Back white MCVFA  
(YL - 3X) \$15 + postage  
*Portion of sale will go to the  
Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition*



### MCVFA Coffee Mug

16 oz. cream color ceramic mug  
with green maltese cross  
\$8.00 + postage



MCVFA merchandise also has men's and ladies golf shirts, baseball caps with MCVFA logo, sweatshirts, decals, pins, patches, helmet stickers, portfolios and novelty banks. We are currently working to get this on the website. To order items or for more information, please contact [merchandise@mcvfa.org](mailto:merchandise@mcvfa.org).



# Marketing Home Fire Sprinklers

by Ira Hoffman



(Much of the material referenced in this article may be found by visiting [www.Fire-Police-EMS.Com](http://www.Fire-Police-EMS.Com), then choosing “Home Sprinklers” on the bottom of the page.)

Every firefighter can be an ambassador or advocate for home fire sprinklers. People ask firefighters for expert advice all the time. Here are some tools to help you educate the public about fire survival.

On October 24, 2017, Good Morning America discussed home fire sprinklers. In the reporter’s words: “*Home sprinklers save lives, period*”. The fire service knows this all too well. But the reality is that every day new homes are built without the life-saving potential of home fire sprinklers.

There’s no question that it’s challenging to convince the public that home fire sprinklers, along with smoke alarms and a family

escape plan, offer the best chance of surviving a fire. It doesn’t help when the general public is discouraged from installing home fire sprinklers when they hear incorrect and misleading information.

The general public probably doesn’t think about home fire sprinklers. They probably don’t even know that home fire sprinklers are available. Why is this? Fire sprinklers are rarely mentioned on TV or cable, there are very few public service announcements about home fire sprinklers, and it is not a topic of conversation in social situations. Probably the single biggest reason is that the public usually doesn’t think about bad things happening, or feel that if something bad happens, they’ll be



able to fix the problem. When they are awakened by the sound of their smoke alarms and the smell of smoke it's too late to start analyzing or to start thinking about home fire sprinklers.

We can think of this from a business perspective. How do we convince a buyer (the general public) to purchase a product (home fire sprinklers)? These days there are many methods: newspapers, magazines, TV, cable, the internet (especially YouTube). Perhaps the most effective way is a live presentation. This allows for questions and answers, and when the discussion is about home fire sprinklers there will be many questions.

We take for granted life-saving devices such as pacemakers and implanted defibrillators that automatically function, without human operation. We are bombarded with ads for cars with the latest life-saving features, including front-end collision avoidance. Every day many crashes never take place because of this feature, and that's part of the problem of marketing home fire sprinklers. When a car has front-end collision avoidance the crash never takes place – you won't hear about it on the news or read about it in the newspaper.

The same is true of fire sprinklers, whether in the home or in a commercial establishment. The fire that is minimized or extinguished by sprinklers is not likely to make news. But the structure that doesn't have fire sprinklers probably will. Fires start, then spread and become big fires – these make the news.

Let's look at some methods to market home fire sprinklers.

**Literature:** NFPA (www.FireSprinklerInitiative.org) and the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (www.homefiresprinkler.org) have produced down-loadable literature to promote smoke alarms, family escape plans and home fire sprinklers:

- Smoke Alarms at Home
- Escape Planning
- How to make a Home Fire Escape Plan
- Home Fire Sprinklers
- Make a Convincing Case for Home Fire Sprinklers
- Sprinkler Myths and Facts

**Videos:** Good Morning America has had segments dealing with:

- Top tips that could save your life during a devastating house fire

- The challenges of newer homes with open floor plans and synthetic materials
- Smoke alarms being unable to wake up sleeping children during an emergency
- Potential fire extinguisher dangers
- Home fire sprinklers

**Side-by-side demonstrations:** The best way to show how effective sprinklers are is a side-by-side demonstration. In an outdoor setting two rooms are set on fire, one with sprinklers and one without. The viewers see how sprinklers are automatically activated by the heat of the fire, and how the fire in the sprinklered room is quickly extinguished, while the fire in the unsprinklered room quickly spreads. Viewers, even at a safe distance, can feel the heat. They can only imagine how hot it would be if they were in a house on fire. After the fire is extinguished, the viewers see first-hand the destruction in the unsprinklered room.

Since it is not always possible to have an actual side-by-side demonstration, there are many side-by-side videos available. One of the best was produced by the St. Paul Minnesota Fire Department. That department has also produced two emotional public service announcements – “home fire sprinklers protect those who can't protect themselves” – pets and a baby.

*Continued on page 18*

## Additional Member Benefits at No Cost!

Through a partnership with American Income Life Insurance Company, additional benefits are being provided to all members and retirees of MCVFA.

### BENEFITS INCLUDE

- A \$4,000 Group Accidental Death & Dismemberment Benefit
- Health Services Discount Card
- Child Safe Kit

Learn more at [www.aillife.com/benefits/sg822](http://www.aillife.com/benefits/sg822)

[www.aillife.com](http://www.aillife.com)

Protecting Working Families

**AMERICAN INCOME LIFE**  
insurance company



**Robin Andrade**  
Public Relations  
508.951.0353  
[robinailpr@gmail.com](mailto:robinailpr@gmail.com)

An AIL representative will contact members who return the reply card to arrange a convenient time to deliver their benefits and review other supplemental insurance benefits that may be available.

...continued from page 17

**Time-line video:** the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition has recently produced a video that shows the speed of today's home fires and the effect fire sprinklers have on a fire. It has excellent graphics, sound, and is only one minute long!

**Fire Sprinklers in Action:** As they have been doing for over 100 years, every day fire sprinklers save property and lives. To see the latest saves visit [www.sprinklersaves.com](http://www.sprinklersaves.com)

**Personal Accounts:** John Norman, FDNY Deputy Assistant Chief (retired), has produced a video explaining why he has home fire sprinklers in his home, and his families' homes. This video is available for viewing on [www.Fire-Police-EMS.Com](http://www.Fire-Police-EMS.Com). Do you know other firefighters who have installed home fire sprinklers in their home? Please contact the author.

**Massachusetts House Bill 2481:** If passed it would offer an opportunity to educate the public about home fire sprinklers, smoke alarms and family escape plans. Please support passage of this bill. (See page 19, in this issue of *Smoke Showin'* for more about House Bill 2481.)

**Slogans:** Slogans have long been used to express the importance and core idea of a product or service. This is true for home fire sprinklers. Here are a few examples:

- Commercial fire sprinklers save property, home fire sprinklers save lives
- Home fire sprinklers: life insurance that actually insures lives
- Home fire sprinklers: helps protect your family when you aren't able to
- Home fire sprinklers: one house at a time, saving one life at a time

Can you think of others?

**Public Seminar:** Probably the best method to educate the public, and town officials, is a live presentation. There are ample


materials available, as previously discussed, and if a live side-by-side can be done, so much the better! The goal is to present information so that everyone attending can take home a fire survival tip, or two.

#### Suggested talking points:

- The reality of fire: Fires kill (about 50 people die each year in Massachusetts); Fires start, fires spread, fires go out; The home fire sprinkler closest to the fire automatically activates and sprays water on the fire giving additional time for occupants to get to safety
- The keys to survival: smoke alarms, family escape plan, home fire sprinklers
- The results of fire: Fires cause injury and death to people and pets (especially cats); Fires destroy things that can't be replaced, like the family bible; Think about firefighters who can't save trapped victims - how it affects their lives

#### What else can you do:

- Impress upon your Chief and Public Information Officer that every press release, whether discussing a fire in a commercial building or someone's home, can include a statement regarding fire sprinklers: "the building had fire sprinklers which slowed the spread of the fire, allowed the occupants to safely leave the building, and minimized the damage", or "the building did not have fire sprinklers, and as a result there was significant fire damage (and injuries and loss of life)."
- Discuss the facts about home fire sprinklers in your conversations with the general public
- Remember to always include a discussion of the other keys to survival - smoke alarms and the family escape plan

One final thought - wouldn't you rather have your children and your grandchildren sleep in a home with home fire sprinklers, rather than one without them? 

*About the author: Ira Hoffman is a 55+ year veteran of the fire service and owner of FSP Books and Videos. He may be reached at [ira@Fire-Police-EMS.Com](mailto:ira@Fire-Police-EMS.Com).*

Correction to images from article Home Fire Sprinkle Myths, pg 18, *Smoke Showin'*, Winter 2018.

#### MYTH - Sprinklers are unattractive and will ruin the aesthetics of the home.

Yes, commercial sprinklers are unattractive:



But home fire sprinklers look like this. They are available in virtually any color or design.

visible portion →



## Get Social



Join your fellow firefighters on Facebook! [www.facebook.com/MCVFAff](http://www.facebook.com/MCVFAff) or [www.facebook.com/MCVFAlegis](http://www.facebook.com/MCVFAlegis)  
And make even more connections by following us on Twitter. [www.twitter.com/MCVFA](http://www.twitter.com/MCVFA)

# Massachusetts House Bill 2481



**T**his bill, written by Representative Ruth B. Balser, is currently in the House Ways and Means committee. If passed it would offer cities and towns the local option of requiring home fire sprinklers in new one- and two-family houses.

Think about the wonderful opportunity that this offers the fire service. Every city and town in Massachusetts can present to the general public and town officials a program that shows that home fire sprinklers save lives. It's also an opportunity to reinforce other important lifesaving elements: functioning smoke and CO alarms, a family escape plan, among others.

Just the discussion of House bill 2481 will save lives, whether the town votes for it, or not.

If you support House Bill 2481 please contact:

- **your** department: fire chief, training officer, fire prevention officer, public information officer

- Mass. House Ways and Means Committee (State House, 24 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02133)
- Chair: Representative Jeffrey Sanchez (15th Suffolk) [Jeffrey.sanchez@mahouse.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.sanchez@mahouse.gov)
- Vice-Chair: Representative Stephen Kulik (1st Franklin) [Stephen.Kulik@mahouse.gov](mailto:Stephen.Kulik@mahouse.gov)
- **your** town government: mayor, board of selectmen
- **your** legislators: to find them visit: <https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator>
- **your** local newspaper

Please support passage of House Bill 2481 and pass information along to anyone who believes in home fire sprinklers or cares about fire safety. 🚒



**MASSACHUSETTS CALL/VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION**

# 2018 Annual Meeting



**Saturday, October 13, 2018  
Hadley Farms Meeting**

**Notice of Annual Meeting of the members of the MASSACHUSETTS CALL/VOLUNTEER  
FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION**

Pursuant to the By-laws of the MASSACHUSETTS CALL/VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION, the Annual Meeting of its members will be held on Saturday, October 13, 2018, at the Hadley Farms Meeting House, 41 Russell Street (MA Route 9) Hadley, MA 01035. The Annual Meeting will commence at 9:00 AM. and continue, as directed by the Chair, if necessary, until the meeting is closed, to consider and take action on the matters of the election of the MCVFA Treasurer and the transaction of such business as may be properly brought before the meeting or any adjournments thereof.

Eligible members in good standing as per Art.2, sec D with full dues paid prior to September 1, 2018 are able to vote.



## REGION 1

Covering the counties of Barnstable, Bristol, Dukes, Middlesex, Nantucket, Norfolk, Plymouth

**Vice President Ken Jordan, Wareham**

Region 1 hosted Traffic Incident Management System (TIMS) training with a pancake breakfast at the Onset Fire station on March 11, 2018. This course is being offered to all first responder organizations and tow truck operators across the Commonwealth to educate people on how to safely conduct operations at a highway or street incident e.g. a motor vehicle accident.

Region 1 will partner with the Plympton Firemen's Association to have Chiefs Night in April. This is always a well-attended event and this year they are planning some special entertainment. Watch for details in the coming weeks.

Thank you to those delegates and alternates who sent their rosters and dues in. The Membership Committee reports there are still a few Region 1 departments that need to get them in. Dues are vital to MCVFA so please help if you are still outstanding.

If any departments get new apparatus or have interesting pictures from training, special events or actual fires you would like share, pass them along to me with a short narrative and we will include it in the next issue of *Smoke Showin'*. Feel free to contact me at [ken.jordan59@gmail.com](mailto:ken.jordan59@gmail.com). 🚒

## REGION 2

Covering the counties of Essex, Middlesex

**Vice President Chris Bosch, Groveland**

by Lisa Evans, Regional Coordinator

Massachusetts Fire Academy (MFA) Class 068 trained in various different structure fire scenarios at Stow, MA and locally the class was held at the West Newbury Fire Department. Upon completion of the Call/Volunteer Recruit Firefighter Training program students will have graduated having completed 240 hours of training on nights and weekends

The threats faced by firefighters in the modern day are far more complex and unforgiving than in the past. It is this type of training that allows for firefighters to safely do their jobs and protect the public. Congratulations Class 068! Stay Safe and Healthy!

If you are interested in attending the MFA, see your chief and the MFA web site at [www.mass.gov/massachusetts-firefighting-academy-mfa](http://www.mass.gov/massachusetts-firefighting-academy-mfa) for more information on training classes and schedules.

The West Newbury Fire Department hosted a MFA Maze Trailer training opportunity where local area fire departments were invited to participate in this beneficial training. West Newbury Fire Department required each of its firefighters to attend the training as part of their



*Members of the West Newbury, Merrimac, Groveland, and Dover, MA, Fire Departments.*

*continues on page 22*

yearly SCBA recertification process. The participants from West Newbury Fire Department were grateful for the opportunity to train in their new MSA SCBA's in such a realistic, yet controlled atmosphere.

Chief Ralph Spencer, of the Merrimac Fire Department, is planning his retirement for this year, with 47 years of service. I have known Chief Spencer, my whole life and always enjoy the bear hug I receive each and every time I see him, and the inevitable questioning about how the family is, and where is my better half. I would like to wish Chief Ralph Spencer, of the Merrimac Fire Department, all the best. 🚒

## REGION 5

Covering the counties of Berkshire

**Vice President Paul Vallone, Clarksburg**

Vehicle Auto Extrication Class from 1/24/18

*Photos by the Savoy Fire Rescue*



## Rural Water Supply

*Photos by the Lee Fire and Rescue*

Our work is never done. Rural water supply is something a little less common for us. Today members worked on a few scenarios becoming more familiar with our new Engine/Tanker operating in tight spaces.



## Cheshire Fire Department's First Responders Training

*Photos by the Cheshire Fire Department*







## Cheshire Fire Department's Cold Water Class

Photo by Fire Chief Tom Francesconi

Considering the weather we are experienced in December, we thought it was a good idea to brush up on our ice water rescue skills for tonight's drill. Members practiced using cold-water rescue suits, the Rescue Alive Sled, water rope, throw bags as well as the hose inflation device. All are options we can deploy to save someone that has fallen through the ice.



## Thank You to our Sponsors



## Has your Information changed?

If your address or email has changed please let us know. To update your information, contact the Membership Secretary at [kibird@verizon.net](mailto:kibird@verizon.net) or 1-800-FIRELINE.

## Advertising Opportunity

A new section has been created for advertising in *Smoke Showin'*. The new section marketplace directory will feature business card size ads which will appear in the back of the magazine. This will be a great opportunity to promote a company or service to your fellow firefighters.

Pricing is for placing an ad in one issue \$65, place an ad for 2 issues \$120, and place an ad for 3 issues \$170 or the best deal is place an ad for 4 issues at \$200. Price is the same for B&W or a color ad.

## Marketplace Directory

Highlighting Members Services or Companies to Fellow Firefighters

To place an ad or questions, please contact Susan Dyer at 443-994-3350 or [susan@sdyerdesign.com](mailto:susan@sdyerdesign.com).



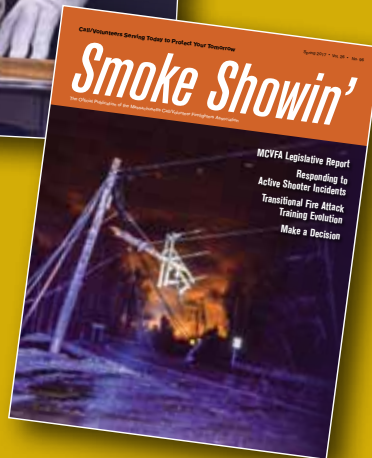


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PO Box 124  
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[www.mcvfa.org](http://www.mcvfa.org)

# Advertise with *Smoke Showin'* to Reach Firefighters & EMS Leadership throughout Massachusetts



If you would like to reach thousands of decision-makers throughout Massachusetts, you need to advertise in *Smoke Showin'*.



With a readership of approximately 10,000\*, advertising your product or service in *Smoke Showin'* is the best way to reach firefighters and emergency service leadership throughout Massachusetts.



\*approximate pass-on rate: 2.5 readers per copy

For more details, contact Susan Dyer at 443-994-3350 or email [susan@sdyerdesign.com](mailto:susan@sdyerdesign.com).  
[www.mcvfa.org](http://www.mcvfa.org)