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SUMMER 2015 INSIDE

4

NVFC PROGRAMS

Information about NVFC's "Share the Load" and "Virtual Classroom" programs.



TOWN CHARTERS

This final installment in the series looks at custom toen charters in Massachusetts.



6

BILLS UPDATE

There are several bills in progress and you can check here to see where they stand.

12

EQUIPMENT GRANTS

Two depatrtments are awarded grants to purchase six sets of PPE.



10

BARGAIN

If you're not already a member, now's the time to join the NVFC...at a discount!

14

A CULTURE OF SAFETY

This is the theme for the 2015 International Fire/EMS Safety and Health week.



COLUMNS

5

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

6

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

16

TRAINING INFO

19

REGIONAL NEWS

To All Call/Combo/Volunteer Chiefs

If you received this issue of *Smoke Showin'* and your members did not, your department is either in arrears on its dues or is not a member of MCVFA.

Please contact the vice president serving your area or the MCVFA office to become a member in good standing.

www.mcvfa.org

www.mcvfatravel.com

Share the Load

First response activities place many physical demands on firefighters and EMS providers. But just as important is the impact that fighting fires and responding to emergencies has on the mental wellbeing of emergency personnel. Firefighters and EMS providers face the risk of many behavioral health



concerns such as anxiety, depression, burnout, post-traumatic stress disorder, and addiction, among others.

The NVFC's Share the Load™ program provides access to critical resources and information to help first responders and their families manage and overcome personal and work-related problems. It also offers tools to help departments proactively address behavioral health.

The program offers many resources, including the following:

- Fire/EMS Helpline: First responders and their families can call the Fire/ EMS Helpline at 1-888-731-FIRE (3473) any time day or night to seek help for a variety of behavioral health issues. These may include alcohol or drug addiction, depression, suicide prevention, stress or anxiety, critical incidents, PTSD, stress, relationship issues, work-related concerns, or psychological issues.
- Helpletter: This newsletter features articles from subject matter experts
 and fire service veterans who provide tips, tools, and resources to help
 first responders take a proactive approach in addressing many behavioral
 health issues.
- Outreach Materials: Posters and flyers are available to help departments
 promote the Fire/EMS Helpline and to remind responders to seek help if
 they are struggling.
- What to Expect A Guide for Family Members of Volunteer
 Firefighters: This guide for family members of volunteer firefighters
 provides an introduction to the basics of the volunteer firefighter life,
 guidance for keeping family relationships strong and being part of the fire
 department family, and tips and resources to help first responder families
 adjust to this lifestyle.
- Behavioral Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention Report: This
 guide explores various firefighter/EMT behavioral health concerns and
 identifies resources and best practices for mental wellness and suicide
 prevention in the fire and emergency services.
- Behavioral Health Training: The NVFC offers courses in its Virtual Classroom on preventing suicide in the fire and emergency services, balancing fire service duties with family life, and dealing with stress.
- Behavioral Health Resource Center: The NVFC has compiled a list of available resources to help firefighters, EMTs, and their family members seeking help for a behavioral health issue as well as departments looking to implement or enhance a behavioral health program.

Find all of these resources on the NVFC web site at www.nvfc.org/help.

On-Demand Training

The NVFC offers a series of self-paced, on-demand courses through its Virtual Classroom. Over 40 low-cost and free courses are available, each featuring downloadable course materials and supplemental resources, progress quizzes, and certificates of completion.

Courses cover a wide range of topics in categories including leadership, health and safety, recruitment and retention, emergency preparedness and prevention, public education and support programs, junior firefighter program management, and reputation management. New courses are periodically added.

Access the NVFC Virtual Classroom and review the course catalog at www.nvfc.org/classroom.

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Home delivery of $\mathit{Smoke\ Showin'}$ is one of the many benefits of MCVFA membership.



A Safety Culture Change

Cancer in the Fire Service was a frequent subject at the National Volunteer Fire Council's (NVFC) spring conference in Washington, D.C. in April.

s I listened, it got me thinking about how many fires I have been to over the years and what toxins I might have been exposed to. Then I thought, what did we have for a safety culture back then? Certainly, it was a lot less than it is today.

I believe it is very important that that we push for a change in our current thinking about safety and being safe. Let's look at the way we do things and how we can make changes to help prevent us from being exposed to some of the toxins we have taken for granted. We all want to go home at the end of the day to our loved ones and be healthy for years to come.

I learned many great little tips at the conference that I want to share and hopefully it will get you thinking toward a "safety culture change."

One, identify hazards in your community. Look at what businesses are in your community ex. hardware stores, fuel depots, chemical plants, warehouses, etc., and what might you be exposed to. I'm not speaking of a departmental preplan inspection; I am thinking of you, as an individual, are you aware of what's in your community and what you could be exposed to if you respond to that call. Just being aware of your surroundings, understanding what might burn and what your potential exposures are, is a step in the right direction.

Two, try keeping a diary or log of every call you go on. Similar to the fire department's incident report, but this would be for your benefit. The diary would just list date, location, type of call, what did you do on the call, and who was there. Nothing fancy but it will be a record of your fire service history and what you might have been exposed to over your career.

Three, wash your gear, especially the hood. In my day it was whoever had the dirtiest gear was the hardest worker. However, we now know that all that black contains toxic elements that are carcinogenic. You should be washing your gear after almost every fire or at least routinely. This can be a challenge because there are department that don't have suitable washing equipment and turnout gear doesn't fit well into the standard home washing machine. In speaking with a gear vendor recently, what he advocated for was to at least wash the hood because it has more skin contact and has a greater probability of transferring any hazardous material to you. You also need to work with the leadership and stress the needs and of the importance of this matter. Work with the Chief and the leadership of the department and come up with SOP (standard operating procedures) on how to best launder and maintain your gear. Get the support of the whole department and get them onboard.

I stop and think back on how many times I walked around with a dirty hood around my neck well after the fire, not thinking of the elements being absorbed in to my skin. How about washing you face while in rehab? A little prevention can go a long way. Do you just throw your gear in the back seat of your vehicle and ride around with it, breathing in those toxic



Tom Burnett President

continues on page 22





Legislative Year in Full Swing

The Legislative Committee has been busy presenting testimony on several bills of interest to the membership.

eginning in May, the committee has appeared at several hearings to ask that legislation of interest to the MCVFA. These include S.1538 - An Act authorizing voluntary contributions to the Massachusetts Fire Fighters Academy Trust Fund and S.1537/H.2583 - An Act to provide volunteer firefighters with a local option real estate tax exemption. We are also in support of S.977 - An Act to prohibit disciplinary actions by employers on employees serving as volunteer emergency responders. The latest death benefits bill

(S.1353/H.2308) nor the Firefighter License Plate bill (H.3040) have not yet been assigned a hearing date.

There are several other bills of interest and we will post them on the Webpage and Legislative Facebook page at www.facebook.

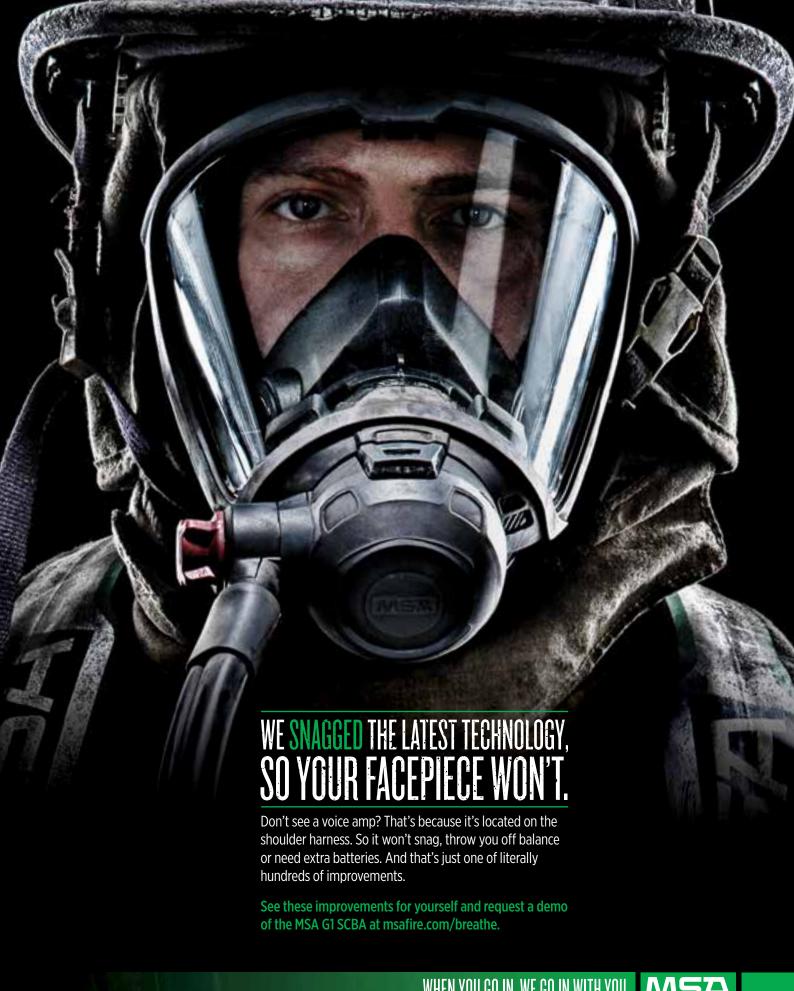
Kevin Connolly

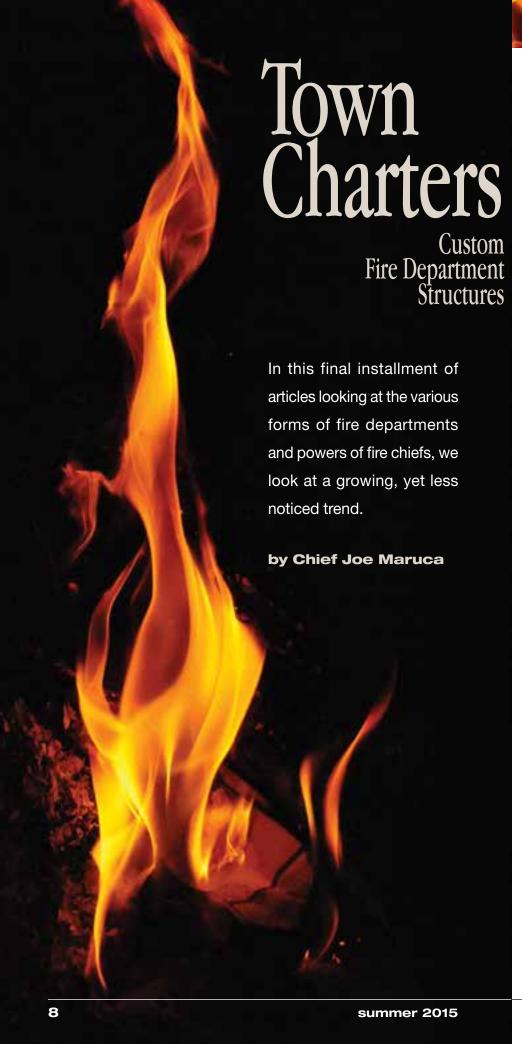
com/MCVFAlegis.
In addition, Region
4 hosted a Legislative

Legislative Committee Co-chair Northfield FD

Breakfast on May 17 in Hatfield. Thanks go out to Representatives Kulik and Whipps Lee, Senator Gobi, and Diana Szynal from Representative Kocot's office.

MCVFA sponsored Bills			
Bill Description	Bill Number	Sponsor	Status
An Act relative to death benefits to surviving spouses of call and volunteer firefighters	H.2308 S.1353	Gentile Eldridge	Joint Public Service Committee
An Act to provide volunteer firefighters with a local option real estate tax exemption	H.2583 S.1537	Kulik Rodrigues	Joint Revenue Committee Hearing held on 05/12/2015
An Act providing for a distinctive registration plate for firefighters	H.3040	Mark	Joint Transportion Committee
An Act authorizing voluntary contributions to the Massachusetts Fire Fighters Academy Trust Fund	S.1537	Rodrigues	Joint Revenue Committee Hearing held on 05/05/2015
Other Bills of Interest			
For legislation to prohibit disciplinary actions by employers on employees serving as volunteer emergency responders	S.977	Gobi	Joint Labor and Workforce Development Committee Hearing held for 05/26/2015
An Act relative to SMART retirement plan fees	S.1351	Downing	Joint Public Service Committee
For legislation relative to the creation of the Commonwealth technical rescue regions and coordinating council	S.1298	Tarr	Joint Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee
An Act relative to enhanced fire protection in new one and two family dwellings	H.2089	Balser	Joint Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee
An Act relative to the retirement benefits of state police dispatchers	H.2353	Kocot	House Committee on Public Service
Relative to standards and qualifications for the position of fire chief or chief engineer in cities, towns, fire districts, or authorities	H.2186	Toomey	Joint Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee
For legislation to require a minimum of ten years experience for a fire fighter to become chief of a fire department.	H.2141	Hunt	Joint Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee
For legislation to provide fire chiefs with access to CORI information	S.950	Timilty	Joint Judiciary Committee
An Act relative to the recovery of emergency response costs	H.2148	Kulik	Joint Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee
Opposed			
An Act relative to distinctive registration plates for firefighters	H.3017	Howitt	Joint Transportion Committee





t is the custom organization and custom powers that come when a town creates its own unique form of fire department. This happens when a town enacts a town charter and the voters of the town and the state legislature approve the charter.

Towns are increasingly revising the entire organization of their town government though the charter process. For instance, in 2014, three towns, Dedham, Wrentham and Great Barrington adopted charters, and ten other communities amended existing charters.

In creating charters towns can, but aren't required to, create their own organizational structure for their fire department. This means that in towns with charters you must first look to the language in the charter to determine the organizational structure of the fire department, and to determine the powers of the fire chief. If the charter says nothing about the fire department or the fire chief, then it will generally mean that the pre-charter structure of the fire department and the pre-charter powers of the fire chief (Board of Engineers, Strong Chief or Weak Chief) is still in force.

It is typical for a charter to have language something like this, "All by-laws, rules, regulations and votes of town meeting in force on the effective date of this act, or any portion thereof, that are consistent with this act shall continue in full force and effect until amended or repealed" that is the way the charter preserves the prior fire department (and other departments) structure and powers unless they are specifically altered by the charter. This may sound like it preserves the prior approved Weak Chief or Strong Chief structure, but think about the following example.

A clause in an actual town charter says "The town administrator shall prepare for submission to the board of selectmen a table of organization establishing personnel requirements within town agencies....The table of organization shall become effective unless rejected by the board of selectmen

within 30 days following its submission. This says the town administrator decides the structure of all town departments and his version becomes official unless the selectmen reject it within 30 days. Does the language in the paragraph above (about laws staying in force until repealed) mean this doesn't apply to the fire department, or does this charter repeal Strong Chief, at least with regard to the structure of the fire department? It probably repeals Strong Chief at least in part.

If, however, the structure of the fire department and the powers of the fire chief are mentioned in the charter, the charter repeals the pre-charter organization and powers of the fire department, and replaces them with whatever the charter says. You must read the charter carefully.

Sometimes, even town officials don't realize that the charter repeals the precharter organization. I've seen two situations where the fire department, fire chief, selectmen, town manager and whole town continued to operate as if the precharter organization and powers were still in force after the charter was approved. It was only when it came time to appoint a new chief, and when it came to an unusual financial decision, that the change came to light. In both cases the town manager asserted his charter authority over the traditional authority of the fire chief.

Here's an example of a town charter that says the town administrator, not the selectmen, shall "appoint and, in appropriate circumstances, remove,, all department heads and employees....". Think about how this might affect a fire department that previously operated under the Strong Chief Law that gave this authority to the fire chief. Without specific language saving the fire chief's authority, the town administrator now has the power to hire and remove firefighters.

Another example from an actual town charter says the town administrator shall "administer personnel policies, practices, rules and regulations, compensation plans and related matters for all municipal employees, except school employees". Note the exception for school employees. Where's the exception for the "strong chief" to administer fire department

personnel policies? There is none. If the chief was a strong chief before this charter, he/she isn't one any more, and may not even know it.

Warning: my examples, while from actual charters, are simplified in scope a bit to fit in this magazine. You need to read the entire charter and not just look at one or two clauses to determine how the fire department's structure may or may not have been modified by the charter. You might find some clause saving the fire chief's power. You might find more or less authority under a heading about finance or town organization. Some charters make it easier by having headings for each town department, but many don't.

It is also possible for the charter to specifically preserve the pre-charter organization of the fire department in part, buy referencing the weak chief or strong chief statute, but modifying the organizational structure by adding or subtracting some powers.

Over time, as more and more towns adopt charters, it is possible that there will be no more standard forms of fire departments. Instead, each town will have its own format.

This means that fire chiefs and firefighters need to be involved in your town charter process. If your town has created a charter committee you need to meet with it and find out what they are thinking about the structure of the fire department. If you have charter you need to read it and see what, if anything, it says about the fire department. And if you have concerns about what you read, be prepared to address the issues the next time the charter comes up for review.

State law requires that town charters be formally reviewed every five years.

If you are working with your town to create or revise a charter I recommend that you try to incorporate as much of the so-called "strong chief" language in your charter as you can. While a lot of selectmen and town administrators don't want to give up the control of the "weak chief" system, the reality is that when asked if they really want to be the ones dealing with reviewing and approving details like department policies and procedures, or holding disciplinary meeting over what are minor internal issues, they really don't want the

continues on page 15





MCVFA Members Get Added Benefits

Join the NVFC For Just \$15

MCVFA members receive a special discount on membership to the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC). Be part of the national organization that represents the volunteer fire and emergency services and get added benefits for only \$15 per year, which is half off the regular cost of NVFC membership.

To take advantage of this special offer, go to www.nvfc.org/BeYourBest to download the membership form or join online. Use discount code MCVFA-NVFC. Current NVFC members will receive renewal notices starting in June.

The NVFC is the national voice of the volunteer fire, emergency medical, and rescue services. The organization advocates for volunteers on Capitol Hill and in federal agencies, represents the volunteer on national workgroups and committees, provides critical programs, resources, and training to help volunteer fire and EMS departments thrive, and focuses on key issues such as health and safety and recruitment and retention. EMS personnel can also join the NVFC's EMS/Rescue Section for free as part of their membership.

NVFC members get a variety of benefits – all of which you can utilize by taking advantage of this special discount offer.

- Stay informed with NVFC newsletters and alerts.
- Protect your loved ones with a \$10,000 AD&D policy, eligibility for home and auto insurance, and access to a federal credit union.
- Expand your knowledge with on-demand training, education discounts and scholarships, and NVFC resource guides and manuals.



- Access resources such as sample documents, membersonly giveaway programs, and more.
- Utilize programs such as the Heart-Healthy Firefighter Program, Share the Load support program, National Junior Firefighter Program, Fire Corps, and the Wildland Fire Assessment Program.
- Enjoy discounts on gear, equipment, grant-writing services, industry trade shows and publications, fire department background checks, travel, shopping, and more.

Learn more about the NVFC and all the ways the organization is working for you at www.nvfc.org.









Call Our Confidential Fire/EMS Helpline at:

1-888-731-FIRE (3473)



IF YOU SEE NO WAY OUT THEN JUST REACH OUT

MAKE THE CALL TO MAKE THINGS BETTER

Talk to someone you love. Talk to a friend or colleague.
Or, talk to counselors trained and experienced in
the firefighter and EMT culture by calling the national
Fire/EMS Helpline: 1-888-731-FIRE (3473).

Find resources to Share the Load at www.nvfc.org/help.

PERSISTENT SADNESS • SUICIDAL THOUGHTS • SUBSTANCE ABUSE • WORK/LIFE STRESSES

MCVFA Awards **Equipment** Grants to Two Western Massachusetts

The MCVFA awarded the Buckland Fire **Department and the Williamsburg Fire Department grants to purchase six sets** of personal protective equipment (PPE) consisting of turnout coat, pants, helmet,

boots, gloves, and hood. Each grant was

valued at \$10,250.

he funds for this grant award were made possible by a donation to the MCVFA by the Massachusetts Charitable Fire Society. The Massachusetts Charitable Fire Society was founded in Boston in 1792 and is one of America's oldest philanthropic organizations. Its goals are the relief for victims of fire and the promotion of new and better methods of firefighting.

Each set of PPE typically costs a volunteer fire department about \$2,000 to \$2,500. The PPE purchased by this grant program was greatly discounted by the vendor, Firematic Supply, and the manufacturer, Globe Manufacturing.





According to national standards and manufacturer recommendations, PPE has a life span of 10 years regardless of condition and/or use. PPE also needs to fit firefighters properly and have no rips or tears to provide proper protection. PPE that is less than 10 years old but that is heavily stained with soot, flammables and other hazardous materials is a health hazard to the firefighter who wears it. Without compliant gear, firefighters cannot safely participate in firefighting operations, and they are not allowed to participate in state or federally sponsored training.

The PPE for many fire departments, especially small call and volunteer departments, are more than ten years old. At the time of their applications in November, there was only one (1) compliant set of gear between the Buckland and Williamsburg Fire Departments. Since then, the District and Town have taken steps to purchase additional gear.

The MCVFA would like to thank all the departments that participated in the program, the Massachusetts Charitable Fire Society who made the program possible, Firematic Supply Company and Globe Manufacturing for supporting the principle that all firefighters should have the latest in personal protection, and especially to Peter Cavalieri of Firematic who worked with us from beginning to end to make everything come together.



ORG. 19¹⁶ Supporting Those Who Serve

NVFC, IAFC Encourage Departments to

Create a Culture of Safety

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) have announced the theme for the 2015 International Fire/EMS Safety and Health Week: Creating a Culture of Safety.



ire and EMS departments are encouraged to suspend all non-emergency activity during the week of June 14-20 and allow all shifts and personnel to focus on safety and health training and education. An entire week is provided to ensure each shift and duty crew can spend at least one day focusing on these critical issues. SafetyAndHealthWeek.org provides resources to help departments implement the week locally, including planning materials such as a customizable press release, activity ideas, and promotional materials.



Creating a Culture of Safety

Emergency response is a dangerous job. According to the National Fire Protection Association, 97 firefighters died in the line of duty in 2013 and 65,880 were injured. Studies have shown that firefighters are at increased risk of heart disease, cancer, and behavioral health issues such as PTSD.

Creating a Culture of Safety emphasizes both the need to change attitudes and behaviors to foster an environment that embraces safety and the need to proactively reduce risk. The entire fire and emergency service community can work together to eliminate preventable tragedy and minimize the immediate and long-term risks of emergency response.

The theme draws attention to three areas critical for creating a safety culture: the community, the department, and the individual.

• Community: The best fire is one that never happens. Creating a culture of safety within the community where codes are enforced, fire sprinklers are utilized, and risks are reduced—will lead to fewer fires and fewer calls for fire response. This in turn reduces risk to firefighters and EMTs from vehicle crashes during response, exposure to toxins that can cause cancer and other illnesses, and dangerous working conditions resulting from large fires.

- •Department: Creating a culture of safety within the department is critical to protecting personnel. Changing the department culture starts with leadership. Policies and procedures that advance safety must be implemented and enforced, safe and healthy practices should be accepted by and expected of personnel, and safety should be a critical component of all training and all fireground and vehicle operations.
- Individual: Personal accountability is a key component of keeping firefighters and emergency responders safe. Each individual must take responsibility for following SOPs and SOGs, prioritizing safety and health, and









lessening their own risks. This includes proper use and maintenance of PPE to prevent exposure and reduce cancer risks, managing heart health through fitness and nutrition, and seeking help if experiencing behavioral health issues.

"Creating a culture of safety will result in fewer fatalities, injuries, and illnesses, resulting in a stronger, more resilient fire and emergency service," said NVFC Chairman Philip C. Stittleburg. "I strongly encourage all fire and emergency service departments and personnel to use the 2015 Safety and Health Week to focus on what they can do to make health and safety a priority at the community, department, and individual levels. Together, we can achieve

culture change and reduce the risks our responders face."

"Creating a culture of safety in our departments and communities is the first step to effectively protecting life and property," said G. Keith Bryant, IAFC President and Chairman of the Board.

"I encourage chiefs, chief officers, and everyone in the fire and emergency service to fully embrace and participate this year in International Fire/EMS Safety and Health Week."

For more information and resources for Safety and Health Week, visit SafetyAndHealthWeek.org. Departments are encouraged to submit links to additional resources, articles, and SOPs that can help other departments. Upload these resources using the form on the site's Event Planning page.

About International Fire/EMS Safety and Health Week

Safety and Health Week is a collaborative program embraced by more than 20

national and international fire and emergency service organizations, with sponsorship provided by the National Volunteer Fire Council and International Association of Fire Chiefs. The event is coordinated by the NVFC Health, Safety, and Training Committee and the IAFC's Safety, Health and Survival Section.

About the National Volunteer Fire Council The NVFC is the leading nonprofit membership association representing the interests of the volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services. The NVFC serves as the voice of the volunteer in the national arena and provides invaluable resources, programs, training, and advocacy for first responders across the nation.

About the International Association of Fire Chiefs

The IAFC represents the leadership of firefighters and emergency responders worldwide. IAFC members are the world's leading experts in firefighting, emergency medical services, terrorism response, hazardous materials spills, natural disasters, search and rescue, and public safety legislation. Since 1873, the IAFC has provided a forum for its members to exchange ideas, develop professionally, and uncover the latest products and services available to first responders.



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The official MCVFA and MCVFA Legislative Facebook pages are your place to get news and information concerning the Massachusetts Call Volunteer Firefighters' Association

www.facebook.com/MCVFAff

www.facebook.com/MCVFAlegis

And make even more connections by following us on Twitter



Town Charters

continued from page 9

control. It's all about how you ask them. When you ask the selectmen if they want the power of weak chief they'll say "yes", but if instead you ask them if they want to write the policies and procedures for the fire department and then review them annually, they'll say "no", not realizing it the same question.

Over the past months I've tried to give you an overview of the ways a town can organize its fire department under state law. There's the Board of Engineers, Weak Chief, Strong Chief and the custom approach that town charters allow for. Its complex and there are lots of gray areas, and there are not a lot of hard and fast rules.

Massachusetts Firefighting Academy to Add UL/NIST Studies and Transitional Attack Classes

Changes in the furnishings and contents of virtually all buildings have altered the nature of fire behavior. With few exceptions, all furnishings and contents within any building in our modern society are constructed with plastics and other synthetics that tend to burn faster with higher heat release rates.

by George D. Kramlinger Director, Massachusetts Firefighting Academy **Consequently, the time required** for flashover—the transition from the growth stage to the fully developed stage where everything in a compartment ignites simultaneously—has significantly decreased and may often coincide with or be accelerated by the activities of the first due companies. Routine but necessary activities such as forcing entry, hose line advancement through an open door, search and rescue, and ventilation using traditional techniques may actually put firefighters in greater peril. Several National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) firefighter fatality investigation reports combined with fire dynamics computer modeling from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) make this point abundantly clear. Two firefighter fatalities at 3146 Cherry Road in Washington D.C., May 1999; three firefighter fatalities in Keokuk IA, December 1999; one firefighter fatality at 30 Dowling Circle in Baltimore County, MD, January 2011; and one firefighter fatality on West 50th Place in Chicago, IL, November 2012 are just four examples of how the modern fire ground is conspiring to kill firefighters.



Tactics pioneered two generations ago by Chief Lloyd Layman, reinforced by the heavy fire duty of the time, and continuously passed on through an era of decreasing fire activity may not always be relevant on the modern fire ground. New and innovative tactics that improve the survivability of firefighters and victims alike may be appropriate - but where is the proof?

In 2010, Underwriters Laboratories (UL) embarked upon a project to compile scientific data regarding the impact of ventilation – whether intentional or unintentional – on fire dynamics given synthetic furnishing and contents as well as conditions that are likely to be encountered with energy efficient and modern, open construction. The first set of live-fire experiments were conducted in two houses built within UL's large hanger like research facility in Northbrook, IL. The second set of experiments occurred in partnership with NIST and the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) at an abandoned military housing area on Governor's Island near the southern tip of Manhattan. The Governor's Island evolutions created scenarios with legacy construction and synthetic furnishings using traditional and revised tactics. Each fire in the experiment was fully instrumented with video and temperature data streams from multiple points within the structures.

The data reduction from the entire experiment produced three findings that are contrary to a number of closely held fire service beliefs. The first finding from the experiments is that water applied by means of an exterior attack does not push the fire. The second finding is that applying water directly into the fire compartment as soon as possible (generally from the exterior) results in the most effective means of suppressing the fire as well as improving victim survivability. This finding is contrary to the popularly held believe that exterior water application will scald any potential victim with steam but consistent with the notion that a properly placed hose stream will do more to enhance life safety and mitigate the incident than any other single action. The third finding is the importance of understanding the flow path – the movement of low temperature, low pressure air to the fire and the movement of high temperature, high pressure gasses away from the fire. The traditional practice of increasing ventilation to a ventilation-limited building fire by forcing entry, advancing hose lines through an open door, as well as creating horizontal and vertical opening actually accelerates fire growth and shortens the time to flashover.

The UL/NIST studies proved the effectiveness and practicality of the transitional attack. The transitional attack – also referred to as "hitting it hard from the yard" – is a means to cool the fire compartment from the exterior in order to prevent flashover and thereby improve survivability for both victims and firefighters prior to "transitioning" to an interior attack. The transitional attack combined with the concept of controlling the flow path has resulted in the SLICE-RS acronym – commonly referred to as "slicers" – for use by the first due company officer to help decide if a transitional attack is appropriate. The breakdown of the acronym is; S – size-up; L – locate the fire; I – identify and control the flow path; C – cool the compartment from the exterior; E – extinguish the fire (generally using traditional interior firefighting tactics);

with R- rescue and S – salvage being tasks of opportunity that are accomplished as needed. In simplistic terms, the approach to first-due is the same as it ever was with the exception that doors found open on the 360 are initially closed to control the flow path and water is applied from the exterior into the fire compartment if the fire has auto vented to cool the space and delay flashover. More importantly, Lloyd Layman's RECEO-VS acronym (R - rescue; E – exposure; C – confinement; E – extinguishment; with V – ventilation and S – salvage as tasks of opportunity) – remains applicable for the incident commander.

The discussion above relating to the UL/NIST studies, transitional attack, and use of SLICE-RS barely scratches the surface relating to the body of knowledge surrounding these concepts. Consequently, the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy (MFA) has a responsibility to educate and train the Massachusetts fire service in regards to this body of knowledge which is often referred to as the "New Fire Science". To this end, the MFA will offer a three tiered approach to the education and training associated with the tactical changes driven by the scientific analysis of the UL/NIST studies. The first tier of training will be an approximately 3-hour classroom Impact-like program delivered by an MFA instructor, available for download by a training officer, or taken on-line that will introduce students to the UL/NIST fire dynamics study and new tactics. The second tier of training will be a daylong seminar that expands on the first tier with guided, interactive discussion and includes a number of case studies involving firefighter fatalities that reinforce the concept of flow path and suggest the incorporation of new tactics. The third training tier will include a classroom review of tactics followed by a number of practical evolutions in the burn building using a transitional attack while students rotate through interior positions using a thermal imaging camera to observe first hand that fire can't be pushed from an exterior stream. In this education and training framework, Tier 1 is a pre-requisite for Tier 2 and Tier 2 is a prerequisite for Tier 3.

The Call/Volunteer Firefighter Recruit program instructors under the direction and instruction of Program Coordinator Christopher Norris conducted a very successful instructor improvement day on April 18, 2015 using a morning of guided discussion followed by an afternoon of practical evolutions focusing on the UL/NIST studies, transitional attack, and SLICE-RS. This instructor improvement day laid the foundation for the MFA's approach to "The New Fire Science" and demonstrated to many veterans of the Massachusetts fire service the importance of exploring this combination of cutting edge knowledge and tactics.

Look for the Mass Fire Academy to roll out this education and training related to UL/NIST studies and transitional attack early in the fall of 2016.

send your training-related articles to **Larry Holmberg**

PO Box 176 • Chesterfield, MA 01012 • editor@mcvfa.org

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- And more!









I want to congratulate the Call/Volunteer Firefighters who successful completed the Call/Volunteer Recruit Training Program conducted by the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy. They graduated on June 10, 2015 in a ceremony held at the Kuss Middle School in Fall River MA. This class started in January and several departments sent recruits through this training program. The departments included Swansea, Mattapoisett, West Barnstable, Acushnet, Fairhaven, Freetown, and Westport. The graduates completed 320 hours of hands-on and classroom training and are now certified Firefighter I/II. I wish all the new certified firefighters good luck and best wishes as they begin their career in the fire service.

On June 7, 2015, I was again invited to the Fall River Fire Museum Fire Truck Show. We brought the Bullex Fire Extinguisher Trainer and, as in the past, it was a hit with the parents and children. Check out the MCVFA and the Region's Facebook pages for pictures of this day. This training prop is a tool available to all member departments. If you have questions or wish to request the trainer for an event at your department, please contact the Training Committee at training@mcvfa.org or your regional vice president.

July 1 marked the first deadline for membership renewals. If you have not received your department's renewal package, please contact me immediately. If you have not sent in your membership renewal, please do so as soon as possible. Remember, email addresses are important to include as we use them as our primary source of communication. We do not sell or distribute your email address outside of the MCVFA. If you have questions about the membership renewal process, please contact the membership committee at membership@mcvfa.org or you regional vice president.

Please visit and like the new Region 1 Facebook Page, the link is https://www.facebook.com/pages/MCVFA-Region-1/580941745375250. This page is in addition to the Official MCVFA Facebook page; here I will post regional announcements, upcoming events throughout the region, regional meeting dates and anything essential to the region or fire service. Please take a moment to visit and like both MCVFA Facebook pages. Here is the link to the Official MCVFA Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/MCVFAff?ref=bookmarks.

These are just some of the ways the MCVFA uses to communicate with its members other ways are via email, USPS and phone.

In closing, I would like to thank those of you that came out to our Annual Chiefs Night in Plympton. Once again, the Plympton Firefighters Association did an outstanding job hosting and organizing this evening. I would also like to thank Chief Fire Warden David Celino for attending and presenting. The presentation was both informative and interesting on the number of brush/grass fires and the acreage burnt each year in Massachusetts

If you have any questions or comments about MCVFA State/Region 1 business, please feel free to contact me. My email address is vpregion1@mcvfa. org and my phone number is (508) 509-3531. You may also contact your Regional Coordinator, Tom Rose, at reg1cor@mcvfa.org.



I know fire prevention is a taboo subject with firefighters; no fires means no running into burning buildings... everything a firefighter lives for, but this is a subject that should be talked about.

There were 58 civilian deaths reported in 2014 and 21 civilian deaths through May 13, 2015. Data was from US news media reports. I recently took the Massachusetts Public Fire and Safety Education Program and find myself wanting to spread the word about fire safety. I feel as firefighters that we have an obligation to pass along our knowledge to the public. Recently I have found myself getting phone calls from friends and family asking questions about smoke and CO alarm requirements. In addition, as a Fire Prevention Officer, I find myself going into homes and businesses that are not properly equipped with fire safety requirements. Let's help prevent civilian deaths by getting your departments involved in a Fire Safety program and let's get the public educated to prevent further deaths.

It's that time of year again when annual MCVFA Membership dues are required. Please make sure your departments are on-board and maybe mention the MCVFA to other departments in your area that do not belong. Communication is still on the top of the list for improvements, so please contact me if there is anything MCVFA can do for your department. Our FaceBook page has been a big success. Please feel free to share your own department photos of incidents or trainings; you can also share any events that your department is holding.

A special Thank You to Tyngsboro Fire Department for hosting the second Region 3 meeting of 2015. The



next meeting will be scheduled for the end of August or beginning of September, dates and locations to be determined. Any department interested in hosting a Region3 meeting please let me know.

Please remember to let us help you!



I want to start this issue with belated congratulations to Lt. Robin Merritt on her promotion with the Williamsburg F.D. She is the first woman to become an officer in the Department. Good luck to her in her new position.

Speaking of Williamsburg, both that department and Buckland were each awarded six full sets of PPE through a grant from the MCVFA made possible by a donation from the Massachusetts Charitable Fire Society, one of America's oldest philanthropic organizations. Congratulations to both departments!

MCVFA was present again at the Annual Tri-State Public Safety Day held at Greenfield Community College held on May 16. Once again, it was nice to see some of the local members one doesn't always see!

The region had their Legislative Breakfast on May 17 in Hatfield. Several local legislators attended this informal gathering. This type of laid-back meeting allows local firefighters and legislators to gather and discuss legislative issues concerning the Fire Service. Thanks for all who attended and a special thanks to MCVFA Past President Greg DiBrindisi (and his helper) for his assistance in putting the finishing touches on a very good breakfast.

Our July meeting will be held in Russell on Wednesday, July 15, with the September meeting tentatively scheduled for Colrain.

If there is anything that you would like to see the Association or the region do in regards to training, etc., let me know what your ideas are. We cannot function without your help or your attendance. The September meeting will be for regional elections and I hope we have good attendance for this meeting. I cannot mention it enough that any dues paying member may attend a regional meeting. Delegates and Alternates: Attending these meetings is part of your job.



Clarksburg Brush Fire Contained on Third Day

by Tammy Daniels (iberkshires.com) permission to reprint countersy iberkshires.com)



More than 50 firefighters from around the region spent a third tough day finally containing a blaze that has burned an estimated 300 acres in the Clarksburg State Forest.

The brush fire had torched 189 acres on Thursday but crews had left the forest in the late afternoon believing it was contained and nearly out.



Clarksburg Fire Chief Kyle "Chip" Chesbro, who had coordinated efforts on Thursday, said the Department of Conservation and Recreation had planned on going in on Friday morning and ensuring it was extinguished.

"This morning at 6 o'clock I get another call that it had grown, that we needed to get people started up there," the soot-covered chief said on Friday after spending the day in the woods.

The fire had rekindled by early Thursday evening; numerous photos on Facebook showed a ring of smoldering orange high on the ridgeline.



Firefighters had to make their way up through rough terrain, including through Pine Cobble on the west end, to about a 2,000-foot elevation.

The hardest part has been accessibility, Chesbro said. "If you can drive a fire truck in, a Class A fire truck, you can put a lot of water out here. These brush trucks have water but the terrain up there is so bad, accessibility is just horrendous," he said. "When you get to the scene, working the scene, there's all brambles, and trees down and the incline and stuff like that you're trying to work on and the footing ... It's just not a good situation."

Indian Pump water packs were brought in by allterrain vehicles and crews used shovels, chainsaws and leafblowers to clear the dry underbrush for digging breaks.

The fire began early Wednesday afternoon when a cook fire at the Sherman Brook primitive camping area went out of control. The campsite is nearly 2 miles in on the Appalachian Trail from Massachusetts Avenue.

The forest is in the far western end of Clarksburg, bounded by North Adams, Williamstown and Pownal. It's separated from Clarksburg State Park (Mauserts) by about 3 miles.



The blaze extended in a ring around the camping area and, on Thursday evening, "slopped over" the fire break that had been made to contain it. The secondary fire pushed westward up toward the top of The Dome, just north of Pine Cobble.

"They set it up with the left flank and a right flank with The Dome in the middle ... the heaviest fire was really on the right flank toward Clarksburg," North Adams Fire Director Stephen Meranti said. "They did a really good job of knocking it down. "Again, it was really difficult to get to ... the access today was a little easier because they could get ATVs closer to the fire."

Meranti could only recall a fire of this size back in the 1970s, not far from the state forest.



Fire crews were planning on going in again on Saturday morning to check for hotspots and DCR will have people on site to monitor the area for the next few days.

No one was injured, though there were some scrapes, bruises and blisters, and no homes or private property were ever in any danger.

On Thursday, a National Guard Black Hawk helicopter spent hours ferrying 500 gallons of water at a time from Mount Williams Reservoir to dump on the fire's perimeter.

A state police helicopter aided in aerial observations on Friday and several local pilots took Meranti to survey operations over the past few days.

The mobile command center was set up on Pattison Road to allow for clearer communications and staging was at the Blackinton Mill on Ashton Avenue.

DCR's Chief Fire Warden David Celino was at the command center along with other state and local fire officials.

About a dozen departments have been working the blaze, including Williamstown and Adams departments and forest wardens, Clarksburg, Dalton, Florida, Hinsdale, Lanesborough, New Ashford, Richmond, Windsor, and Pownal and Stamford, Vt., DCR forest wardens and the state forest fire control.

North Adams Fire Department provided backup coverage; other services were provided by the Berkshire County Fire Chiefs, North Adams Ambulance Service, Pittsfield Fire Department, National Guard, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency and the Northern Berkshire Emergency Planning Committee.

Meranti said the community has been very supportive,

continues on next page



with people dropping off food and water.

"One guy stopped by and dropped off pizza," he said. "I don't even know who it was."

Both he and Chesbro stressed their appreciation of the volunteers and others who had put so much effort in over the past few days.

"The town of Clarksburg and the Clarksburg Fire Company would really want to thank all the departments who are working here, all the organizations, DCR, MEMA, everybody involved," Chesbro said. "It's a lot, a lot of work.

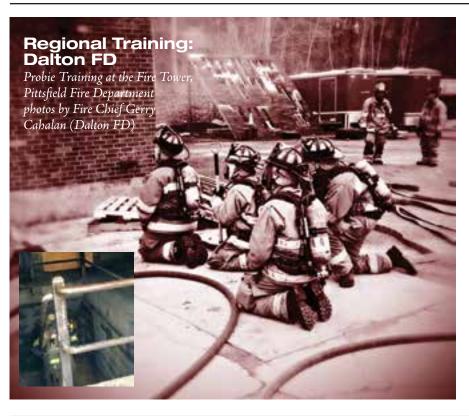
"These guys are taking time out of their day, we really appreciated it."

Savoy Tanker 3

Photo courtesy Savoy Volunteer Fire Department The Savoy Volunteer Fire Department operates a \$212,000.00, 2015 Midwest Fire Tanker built on



Freightliner M2 106 chassis, 350HP Cummins ISL diesel engine, Allison 3000EVS transmission, NFPA Enhanced Stability Control, On-Spot chains, Darley 500gpm pump with pump and roll capability, NFPA 2430gal T Style poly tank, 10" Newton rear dump chute, Hanney compartment mounted 150' electric hose reel, Whelen lighting/siren/air horn systems.







President's Message

continued from page 5

elements. Maybe put it in a sealed plastic tub.

I hear the term Occupational Cancer Deaths and I think this is a term we can prevent. We only need to think of more ways to protect ourselves from these elements. A Safety Culture Change

I leave you with these three things you can do with your department.

1. Get management to put policies in place on

how to best to maintain your gear.

- 2. Get Command staff to enforce the policies; put the gear out of service until complete.
- 3. Get a Safety Culture in your Department. Always Be Safe, Think Safety

To learn more on this subject and others, go to mcvfa. org or NVFC.org.

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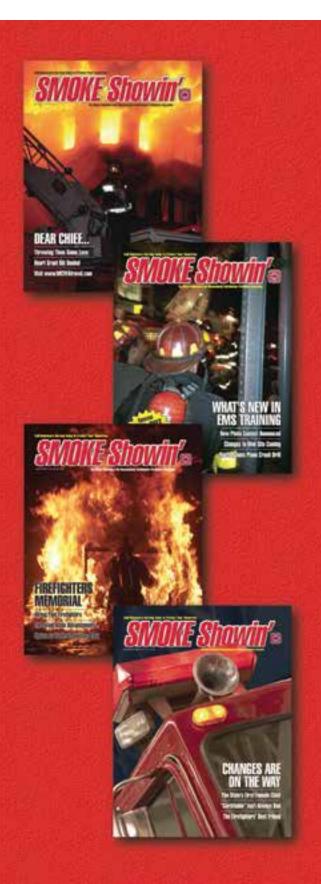
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