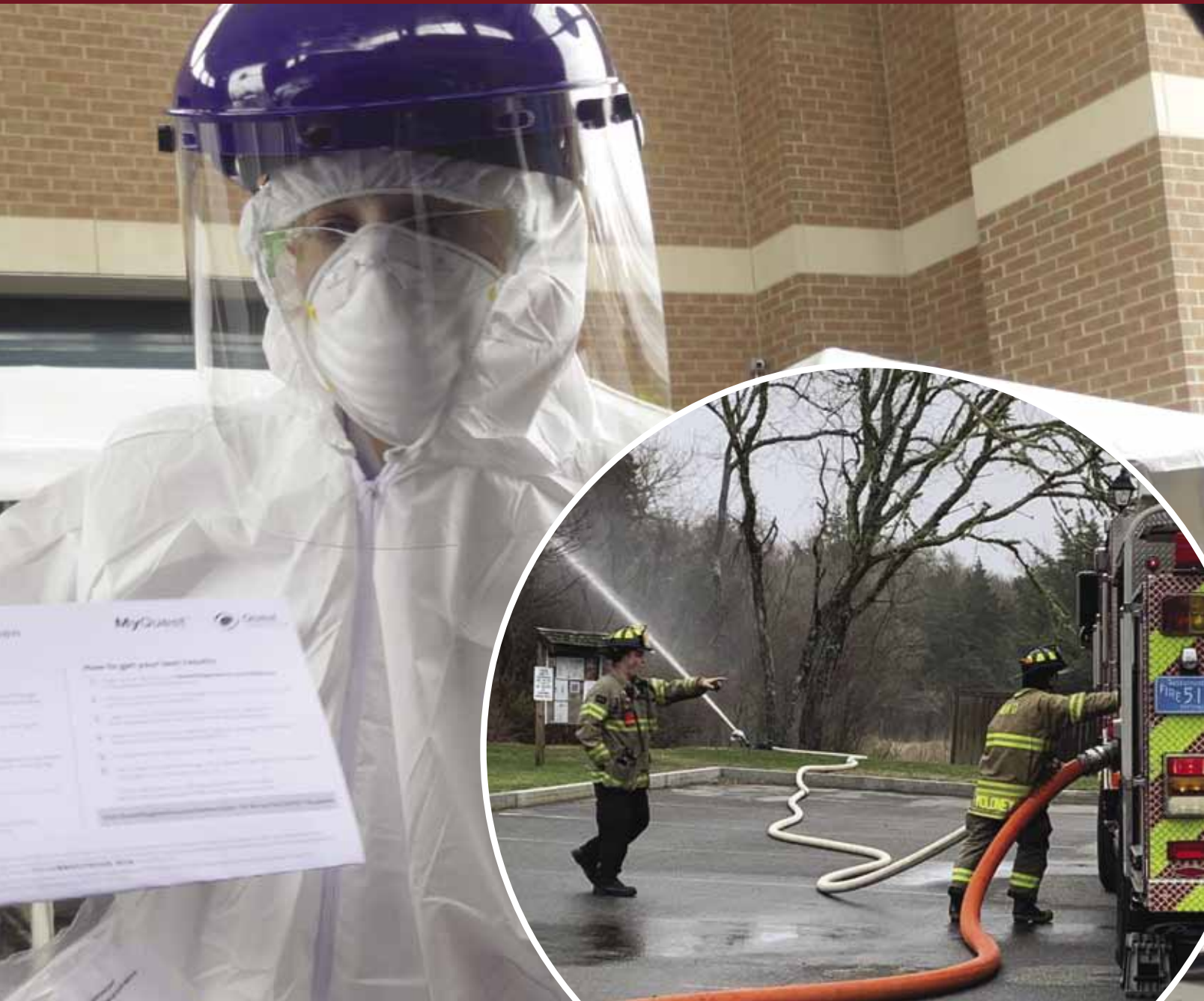


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Smoke Showin'

The Official Publication of the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association



A Sign of the Times – Testing & Social Distancing



photos courtesy of West Barnstable Fire Department

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The Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters' Association (MCVFA) is always working on a statewide level to improve legislation, funding, safety and training. We are the voice of the call/volunteer fire and EMS services in the Commonwealth.

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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.

Cover photos courtesy of DFS – Testing at the Big E; Joe Maruca

Spring/Summer 2020

recruitment

retention

replacement

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Interested in Being an MCVFA Officer?

Nominations Are Now Open.

The 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 – Incumbent Mark LaVallee resigned in March. This election is for a 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.

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

- Region 1 Vice President** Chris Hajder of Swansea is the incumbent, 2-year term
- Region 2 Vice President** Vacant, 2-year term
- Region 3 Vice President** Michael Goldstein of Sherborn is the incumbent, 2-year term
- Region 4 Coordinator** Vacant, 2-year term
- Region 5 Vice President** Frank Speth, III of New Ashford 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 August 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 or you may call Larry Holmberg at 413-296-4247. 🚒

Smoke Showin'

The Official Publication of the Massachusetts
Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association



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Published by
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The editorial deadline is the 18th of the month preceding each issue

Address all editorial content to:
Smoke Showin'
MCVFA, PO Box 1015, East Wareham, MA 02538

For address changes or MCVFA membership questions please call
1-800-551-FIRE

For advertising requests contact Susan Dyer
443-994-3350 or email susan@sdyerdesign.com

Smoke Showin' is published three times a year by the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association, PO Box 1015, East Wareham, MA 02538. Periodicals postage is paid at East Wareham, MA, and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send all address changes to:
MCVFA, PO Box 1015, East Wareham, MA 02538.

Smoke Showin' is the official journal of the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association, a non-profit organization, and carries news and announcements concerning the MCVFA. MCVFA members receive this magazine as part of their dues. The MCVFA is not responsible for contents or opinions other than Association activities. Entire contents are ©2020 the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association, all rights reserved and, as such, may not be reproduced in part or in whole without written permission of the publishers. The MCVFA reserves the right to print portions or all of any correspondence received by the editors without liability on its part and no such correspondence will be returned without prior agreement. Home delivery of *Smoke Showin'* is one of the many benefits of MCVFA membership.



President's Message

I would like to start off by saying our thoughts and prayers go out to anyone that has lost a love one or has taken ill from the coronavirus.

We have all experienced some form of disruption while dealing with this historical pandemic. We have all changed our way of living and have faced new challenges that we never imagined. Some of us had to deal with layoffs; others with childcare with early school closures and the resulting childcare issues. And of course the new fashion statement of wearing face masks and gloves when going out in public and waiting in line to go grocery shopping plus the many other challenges that are associated with the coronavirus.

There were those who were and are on the frontline dealing with the ill in hospitals and nursing homes. And then there were the physical, mental, and emotional toll firefighters, paramedics, and EMTs experienced in responding to and dealing with the aftereffects of each call, all in an effort to keep their community and their residents safe.

I THANK ALL OF YOU THAT STEPPED UP AND HELPED IN SOME WAY OR ANOTHER. This is what makes our communities strong.

Will we ever see us going back to the way it was before January 2020? What will be the new normal look like? These are the questions that will challenge us. Will that EMS call be a routine dispatch, or will it require full PPE? Will you return to the firehouse and fill out exposure forms and decontaminate before going home? We just do not know what future will bring. We are going to have to rely on the guidance of the federal government and the guidelines put out by the CDC and DPH and follow them, so we can contain any flare-up without having to shut the state and country down again. Just be Safe and follow the rules.

On a different note, we sent out our membership renewal packets back in April so we would appreciate if you get them in by July 1, 2020. If you have not seen a notice from us, please reach out let us know and we will get one out you. If you know of a department that is not a member please tell them the benefits they are missing out on.

It is important that we here from call and volunteers firefighters and EMTs from all over the state so we can help get the benefits, resources, training, and legislation we need to protect Call and Volunteer Firefighters in Massachusetts.

If you are interested in helping out, there are many ways to get involved such as working on one of the many regional or state committees. We always want to hear other opinions and ideas to help make this organization a strong voice for Massachusetts Call and Volunteer Fire Service.

Finally, we are planning the 2020 Annual State Meeting and Seminars to be held at the Carver at Fire Headquarters (Saturday, October 17). Mark your calendars now! Also, if you have a suggestion for a seminar, please contact us! 📞

Tom Burnett
MCVFA President



AGE 65

and Call/Volunteer Firefighters

BY CHIEF JOE MARUCA

Lately I've noted an increase in calls and emails regarding the issue of call/volunteer firefighters being forced to "retire" at age 65, so I've looked at issue anew and here's what I think the legal answer is.

Unless a call/volunteer firefighter is a member of a Massachusetts public pension system, he or she is not legally required to retire at age 65. I believe that local policies or by-laws that require termination or retirement at age 65 violate state and federal age discrimination laws. You cannot legally assume someone is unfit for a job because of their age.

MGL Chapter 151B says that a public employer may not discharge or retire an employee simply because of his/her age. (There are certain exceptions that do not apply to call/volunteer firefighters.) There are four steps or questions in determining unlawful age discrimination and they are:

- 1** Is the employee 40 years of age or older, and
- 2** Is the employee qualified to perform the job functions required by the position, and
- 3** Did the employee suffer an adverse employment action (termination, demotion, reduction of hours or duties, forced retirement), and
- 4** Was the employee replaced by someone who is substantially younger OR is there other evidence (such as a town policy

saying you must retire) showing the termination occurred in circumstances that would raise a reasonable inference of unlawful age discrimination. A town bylaw, personnel policy, vote of the select board or the minutes of a meeting can be that reasonable inference of unlawful age discrimination.

If the town wishes to terminate or retire call/volunteer firefighters, the town is required to show that the firefighter is not qualified to perform the job. Age by itself is not a disqualifier. For instance, if the concern is physical ability to do the job of call/volunteer firefighter or EMT, the town would have to show that the call/volunteer firefighter or EMT is physically unfit to service. Providing periodic firefighter fitness for duty medical exams (NFPA 1582, for instance) to the department's staff is one way to accomplish this. Such an exam would be objective and not discriminatory. It would have to be administered in a non-discriminatory manner. This means that all firefighters would have to take it and any who failed, no matter their age, would be subject to the same termination or other employment action.

In other words if you use a medical exam to qualify fitness for duty, all firefighters have to take, and if a 66-year old firefighter passes the medical exam and a 44-year old firefighter fails it, the 66-year old remains on the force and the 44-year needs to get fit or leave the force.

Federal Law, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, provides similar protection for employees 40 and over.

Are volunteers employees? Maybe, it depends on what you really mean. If you are a call firefighter and you get paid an hourly rate, you are in fact a municipal employee and these laws apply. If you are a volunteer who gets paid a stipend, then they probably apply because the age discrimination law applies to persons who get “compensation”, and it doesn’t say how much compensation. Massachusetts tends to cast a wide net for inclusion as employees, and the payment of a stipend makes you an employee for most other purposes. Unpaid volunteers are out of luck on this one, because the age discrimination law only applies to persons who get compensation.

Additionally, GL Chapter 48 Section 42 requires that certain fire chiefs (“strong chiefs”) cannot dismiss call/volunteer firefighters except for cause and after a hearing. There is no statutory authority or case law that makes age 65 a cause for termination.

And while GL Chapter 48 Section 42A allows certain Boards of Selectmen to remove the fire chief and firefighters “at their pleasure”, removal for an unlawful reason, such as age, has never been allowed by case law as “at their pleasure”. Therefore, removal for turning 65 would not be lawful because it against public policy to terminate people because of their age.

Some Massachusetts officials and lawyers incorrectly cite a Massachusetts pension law, GL Chapter 32, as requiring call/volunteer firefighters to retire at age 65. This law does not apply to call/volunteer firefighters (but the age discrimination laws do). This law only applies to firefighters who are part of a Massachusetts municipal retirement system. It’s a clearly a pension law. It’s not a firefighter health and safety law. It’s not a municipal liability law.

G.L. Chapter 32 Section 1 defines the maximum age for firefighters as being 65. However, a careful reading of this law clearly indicates that it only applies to firefighters who are members of a retirement system. This is because the Chapter 32 Section 1 definition of “Maximum Age” uses the word “member” to define those persons or occupations that must retire at age 65. The term “member” is also defined in Chapter 32 Section 1 (immediately below “maximum age”) and means a member of any state, county or municipal contributory retirement system. Therefore, if you are not a member of a state, county or municipal contributory retirement system, the maximum age limit of G.L. Chapter 32 Section 1 does not apply to you.

The lesson for chiefs, town administrators and select boards is that they need to use non-discriminatory medical exams, skills tests, or performance standards to retire call/volunteer firefighters. Everybody takes the same exam or test and everyone who fails is treated the same no matter their age.

It’s OK to say that all call/volunteer firefighters must be able to annually demonstrate a specific set of skills such as donning an SCBA in sixty seconds, but the standard isn’t lawful unless you actually administer a skill to everyone, in the same manner, and then treat everyone the same. And, the best industry practices allow for anyone who fails time to retrain and test at least one more time.

If you think you’ve been terminated, demoted, or suffered some other kind of negative employment action because of your age (or sex, disability, genetics, pregnancy, or religion) you should file a complaint with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD). Make sure your complaint makes it clear you are not a member of a Massachusetts state, county or municipal contributory retirement system. 🚫

MCAD Boston Headquarters

617-994-6000

Online: mcad@mass.gov

To File A Discrimination Complaint:

www.mass.gov/how-to/how-to-file-a-complaint-of-discrimination



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Staffing the Volunteer Fire Department

It All Comes Down to the 3 R's

> > by Kevin D. Quinn



recruitment

retention

replacement

The volunteer fire department model has changed. If you, as a leader in the volunteer fire service, have not made changes in how you are maintaining and growing your fire department, then you have fallen behind.

We know the importance of maintaining membership to execute the mission of the volunteer fire department and adequately protect and serve our communities. Recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters has become a major focus for most departments as they see their ranks dwindling and find it more and more difficult to fill their rosters.

While a lot of people use these terms in conjunction when discussing staffing needs, retention and recruitment are in fact separate and unique areas that must be addressed in order to find success in building and maintaining our emergency response. It is also critical to understand that there is a third “R” in this process, and it is just as important as the other two. This additional factor is the replacement of an aging workforce of volunteer firefighters and leadership, as research clearly indicates the volunteer fire service is an aging population. The critical staffing challenges facing the volunteer service can thus be summed up as the “Recruitment, Retention, and Replacement of Volunteer Firefighters, Rescue Personnel, and EMS Providers.”

Statistically the research is clear that the American volunteer fire service is aging out. According to data by the National Fire Protection Association, a third of firefighters in communities under 2,500 are 50 and older, and another 21 percent are in their 40s. This means that in the next 10-20 years we risk losing half of the volunteer workforce in these communities as they retire from the service. The ages of firefighters in communities between 2,500-24,999 have also seen a considerable increase compared to a few decades ago. Couple that with the significant loss of younger members joining the volunteer fire service, and we have a crucial problem for volunteer fire departments and their communities.

So where are the answers? Obviously the many veteran volunteer firefighters (including myself) are going to continue to age. We also have to understand that the next generation of volunteers is not just going to knock on the doors of those many struggling firehouses. The fact is that traditional methods of recruiting new volunteers are not working, at least not to the extent they used to. Therefore, let us look to the future – a future filled with some of the brightest, multi-tasking, curious, go-getters the fire service has ever seen. Let us change our model of recruiting new members to keep up with the next generation instead of grounding ourselves in a past that no longer exists.

Ever since I can recall, and I am into my 45th year of the fire service, fire service leaders were not required to market their fire department. Volunteers sought us out, often due to family involvement with the department, and generally it took very little effort to fill our rosters. The reality now is quite different – generational firefighting families are getting fewer and we need to start engaging a new generation that may have no connection to the fire service. Today it is essential to not only sell your pride and the worthiness of your fire department, you must also sell to the community that you are a volunteer fire service and that you are seeking new quality candidates to join your ranks. These things are no longer common knowledge in the community, making marketing the key to success. You

continues on page 10

IS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREPARED?

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U.S. Department
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Safety Administration



must learn to tap into the social media outlets and capitalize on new ways to sell your department to prospective candidates. If you don't have the skill sets to use social media and other new forms of marketing to promote your department, then you must enlist someone who does. We are no longer your parent's (or grandparent's) volunteer fire department, and we need to move into the modern age if we are going to attract the next generation of volunteer firefighters.

Separating recruitment from retention is key. Today in the volunteer fire service there is a focus on recruitment. We spend all of our efforts trying to draw new candidates to join us. While it is true that we need to attract new members – especially that “next” generation – I contend that it is just as important (perhaps even more critical) to focus on the retention of our current members. With successful retention of your volunteer fire force, recruitment becomes less of an issue. You are no longer caught in the revolving door cycle of needing to constantly find new volunteers to fill the vacant spots left by capable, trained members who leave because they are unhappy with their volunteer experience. Good retention strategies also mean that when you do recruit new members, they are more likely to serve a longer, more productive tenure with your department. In addition, volunteers who are satisfied with their experience create a more positive perception of the department within the community, making it more enticing for people to join and stay with the organization.

How do you foster volunteer retention? First and foremost, it is imperative for fire service leaders to maintain a commitment to your volunteers. Keeping your finger on the pulse of your members is critical. Always keep the lines of communication open, and if there is a problem, work to find a solution. Reach out to any members that you see are fading away; a simple phone call, text, or email sends a simple message that you care.

Obviously, all of our fire departments lose members for various reasons. Some of these are beyond our control, such as the person moving to a career position within the fire service or leaving the area due to employment changes. Others leave for reasons that it is within our power to change. It is important that you gather the data as to why your volunteers leave. Conducting exit interviews with all volunteers who leave will help you understand why your members are moving on and identify any problem areas that you can fix to avoid losing more members in the future.

Fire department leaders must also be inclusive and aware of the differences individuals bring to the department. Our next generation of volunteer firefighters think differently, learn differently, and act differently than their predecessors. These are quality characteristics, for they are multi-taskers, efficient, and flexible. They do not want to waste their valuable time, but

they do want to train and learn. They want to be mentored and absorb knowledge from the more veteran firefighters. These younger members have a great sense of social responsibility, and they want to make a difference. They also want to gain responsibility and be involved. These are up and coming leaders within the fire department and succession planning is the key. Which brings us to the third R.

Looking toward the future of your fire department, you must assess the leadership characteristics of those that will replace you and nurture their progression in the department. In the past, many departments have chosen their officers based on popular vote rather than leadership skills and experience. Electing officers without having established job responsibilities and criteria is a very narrow approach to building a viable future for the volunteer fire department. It is in the best interest of the department to establish officer criteria, expectations, job descriptions, and minimum requirements for your leadership positions. This is a critical change, and a vital adjustment. Once you have these pieces in place, succession planning can be proactive and deliberate. Members will have a clear understanding of what is needed to attain these positions and can follow the necessary path to becoming a leader.

Changing your process for leadership replacement will allow your fire department to grow. Begin with identifying emerging leaders within your fire department. Identify your positions that need transition and set a time frame to move forward. Work with those emerging leaders and provide training and leadership development. Garner the support of all your members as you move to transition into a different fire department – a fire department that sustains the mission of the organization. Although it may be difficult to let go of the old ways in favor of a new, measured succession strategy, the outcome will be well worth the commitment. Knowing that your department will be able to continue protecting your community long after the current set of leaders is gone is fulfilling. Your willingness to pave the way for the future of your department is noble.

Yes, the volunteer fire service model has changed, and we need to adjust our process to be successful and maintain protection of our communities. It all comes down to the . With this as our focus and with a willingness to change, we will see our departments grow and our missions fulfilled to protect our communities. We have a duty to act, a duty to respond, and a duty to change! 🚒

Kevin D. Quinn joined the fire service in 1976. He is the Rhode Island director on the National Volunteer Fire Council and is past chair and currently 1st vice chair of the Council. He retired as a deputy chief of the Union Fire District in South Kingstown, RI, and has returned to where he began in the volunteer fire service – actively responding to fires and alarms with his original Station #3 of the Union Fire District.

The Massachusetts Fire Service and the COVID-19 Response

by Peter J. Ostroskey, State Fire Marshal



AS I write this, we are preparing for the expected April surge of the COVID-19 pandemic. When you read this, you will surely feel like April is ancient history because so much will have happened. Each of us will have lost someone to this virus, or know someone who has. Many of us will have worked with people who contracted the virus – some through their work and some from other exposures. This is a tough time for public safety officials. Many fire departments provide emergency medical services in their communities and all are on the frontlines of this pandemic.

But we have no cure. We have no vaccine. We have a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE). Our leaders work to “flatten the curve” to keep hospitals from being overwhelmed with the critically ill. In the past, we have used the hashtag #HelpUsHelpYou, usually to talk about shoveling out hydrants. Now we are using it to share messages about social distancing, staying home, and flattening the curve.

The Baker-Polito administration has created medical facilities in the strangest of places – the DCU Center and the Boston Convention Center. These temporary facilities care for those discharged from ICUs but not ready to go home, and those who do not need critical care in the first place.

One of the things we need most, after PPE, is testing. When public safety people are exposed to COVID-19, they must be isolated from both their families at home and their families at work. Quarantine sidelines the police, firefighters, EMTs and paramedics we need right now. DFS has worked hard to help stand-up two testing sites for public safety personnel: one in

West Springfield at the Big E fairgrounds, and one at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough. These sites were expanded to include others working on the frontlines – grocery store and public transportation workers. Testing quickly means that those who test negative can return to work right away, and those who test positive can be quarantined, protecting themselves, their families, their co-workers and the public.

I am especially proud of the excellent work by DFS personnel across all divisions. Our team was instrumental in the planning and implementation of the testing sites, operation of a call center connecting first responders with testing services, assembling orders and delivering PPE from the MEMA warehouse operation and working tirelessly to address code and procedural matters necessary to deal with the unique conditions we have all been operating under. Our personnel transitioned to remote operations wherever possible beginning in mid-March and continued to provide all of our core functions supporting fire service needs extremely well. The Fire Academy made innumerable schedule changes and worked diligently to complete career recruit classes already in progress while enacting best practices to protect participants and DFS personnel from being impacted by the virus.

We know that testing on an even larger scale is key to reopening society and the Department of Fire Services. From where I sit today, I cannot imagine what things will be like in June. I hope that we will have weathered this storm personally, and as a fire service. If the pandemic is still raging or recurring, I know the Massachusetts fire service has the fortitude and the ingenuity to navigate it. 🚒

COVID-19, Change, and What “The Big One” Means Now

by Chief Joe Maruca

“See you at the big one.” It’s a phrase I’ve been using for about 43 years. I first picked it up in the late 1970’s when I was a call firefighter in Longmeadow. As we left the station after a drill or an automatic fire alarm, we’d say “See you at the big one,” as we left. I’ve been saying it ever since. But over the years I haven’t thought much about the phrase, until now.

I think it’s because of the COVID-19 crisis. Something about this crisis has caused me to think a lot about my four decades in the fire service and the changes I’ve experienced. Forty-three years ago, I was a “call man”—simply a firefighter. We went to brush fires, car fires, house fires (occasionally), automatic fire alarms, chimney fires, and all things fire. That’s all we did. For me, at the time, “the big one” was a house fire or big brush fire.

And in the 1970’s we still had a lot of fires. My first fire was big brush fire behind the Hu Ke Lau restaurant in Longmeadow. In fact, I was drafted to fight that fire. I had gone to the hardware store and fate drew me across the street to see what was going on. A firefighter handed me an Indian Can and told me to follow the hose until I got the firefighter at the end and he’d tell me what to do. When the fire was over, I was told to stop by the fire station to give them my name and address for the official record. I went home with a helmet, a long coat, hip boots, a flashlight, garden gloves, a map of town, and a home receiver. It was April 18, 1977 and I was a senior in high school.

Over the next week or so I went to another brush fire, I stretched hose up stairs to an attic fire, and I jumped on an engine heading to tanker truck accident on I-91. I was hooked. All around me fire was the thing. Two-family homes burned in Springfield and I learned about balloon-frame construction and how the roof burns off these buildings. Brush fires raged all over the east coast that spring and summer, and we ran ragged

chasing brush fires in Longmeadow. When Devil’s Night and Halloween came, we chased leaf-pile fires up and down the streets of town – almost a hundred each night. (I often came home from college on those weekends to be with friends from the fire department and go to calls.)

As a student at Boston University, I chased and observed fires across Boston and Cambridge. I saw a backdraft blow the front off a building in Roxbury. I saw how to ladder a building properly. I studied fire tactics and strategy from the curbside. I was mesmerized by the ballet of the long-since-retired hose wagons used by the Cambridge Fire Department. Firefighting became part of my DNA.

For those first nine or ten years, it really was all about fire and firefighting. But as the 1980’s wore on, the world changed. Hazmat became a bigger part of our mission, and then EMS. We added community education, community EMS, homeland security, and handling hostile events to our mission. I didn’t realize it, but the term “See you at the big one” had become nostalgic shorthand.

Today, I find myself leading a fire department that is really an EMS/Ambulance Department. It’s been three years since we had a working fire. I have come to realize that the “big one” is actually staring me in the face, every day, with every call, and in everything I do. Every time a member of our department responds to call, it’s a “Big One” in some way.

And then we find ourselves facing something like the COVID-19 Pandemic, which gives “the Big One” a new meaning altogether. COVID-19 has changed the call/volunteer fire service possibly forever, whether we like it or not. It has changed the way we train, the way we respond, the way we

organize (more on that later) and the expectations that others place upon us. The Pandemic will also change our fire service in ways we can't yet imagine or detect, but the seeds of those changes have already been planted.

The lesson: change is inevitable. If we in the call/volunteer fire service are going to stay relevant and valuable to our communities we need to accept change, plan for change, and change with the times.

It's OK to get nostalgic and hang on to an old comfortable phrase from the past. It's good to respect tradition and teach about the past and our experiences. I believe it's important for new firefighters to know how their department evolved and how it came to be what it is for them today and tomorrow. But we can't cling to the past. The past is past (sounds like something Yogi Berra would have said – anyone old enough to get this reference?). If we are going to stay active as call and volunteer firefighters or those who lead them, we need to get ready for that change now, before we even know what it is.

I've watched fire service friends fight against change. I've watched them hang on to the past and blaspheme every new change and every younger firefighter they encounter. In the end, most of them ended unhappy and Change always wins. If you don't accept change, change leaves you behind.

After 43 years, I've learned to expect change. I try to embrace it, even though I don't necessarily like it on an emotional level. Change is the path to success and happiness.

On a recent Thursday night, I started the first class for our new group of volunteer firefighters. I had to teach it over Zoom with each of the 10 newest members of the WBFD participating from home, and me speaking from an empty training room. And I realized that the COVID-19 Pandemic—the reason they were at home instead of being together at the station—is their first “Big One” on several levels. Forty-three years from today these new firefighters will talk about what it was like in 2020 and how they came into the fire service. They will think about the pandemic the way I think of the Hu Ke Lau Brush fire or the Farmington Road attic fire. And it's a safe bet that their fire service will look far different than it does now.

Current Changes: An Operational Perspective on COVID-19

“How do we train?” “Do we plan for more or fewer call/volunteers responding to calls?” “Can we get any routine fire department work done?” “How do we maintain social distancing in an ambulance or the cab of fire truck?” “Do the mutual aid companies have to cover our station from the parking lot or can they come inside?”

The COVID-19 Pandemic has left us all facing questions we never anticipated. But, from what I've seen, we in the call/volunteer fire service are doing pretty well.

Here are some thoughts and ideas that might help you and your department continue to manage your operations during the pandemic:

Training

Training has become difficult, but I suggest its one of the easier problems to solve, at least in the near term. Most, maybe all of our departments have suspended our full department meetings and drills. Too many firefighters, too close together, in one room and the whole department could end up in quarantine or worse, with COVID-19.

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Online training options:

One ready resource is online training, or e-Learning. Start with the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy; it has eleven excellent online classes (see sidebar for some suggestions). At our station, we've assigned an online class every week in place of our normal Tuesday night drill. The MFA classes are up to date and relevant to most of our departments. I recommend you use them.

Next, check out UL's training website, UL FSRI Fire Safety Academy. In particular, I recommend that every call/volunteer firefighter should take the UL class titled, *The Science of Interior and Transitional Suppression Tactics in Single-Family Homes*. This is an excellent program that I would recommend even in good times. It is among the best classes I've experienced regarding fire behavior and best practices for fire attack in single-family homes.

Also, if you and your department are members of the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) then you have free access to the NVFC's online training catalog. (At \$18/year you should be a member of the NVFC.) The program called *Fireground Accountability* by Chief Jeff Cash is well worth taking.

Another excellent source of firefighter training online is National Grid. National Grid's first responder training website has two programs every call/volunteer firefighter should take, *Natural Gas Safety Training* and *Electricity Safety Training*. Our department takes these classes every three years to stay refreshed, and they count towards our annual 10 hours of Hazmat Training.

If your department uses VFIS for its insurance company, check out VFIS University online. It offers dozens of online training programs for fire departments, including the timely addition, "Coronavirus 104 – Transitioning to a Remote Workforce."

All of these websites are professional, free, and provide you with a certificate of completion. We assign the online classes, collect certificates, fill out a training roster, and then submit on drill pay sheet for a common date.

The challenge? Online gets boring. I've noted that I start to fidget if the program is too long or not as relevant as I hoped. I've been finding it harder and harder to locate online classes that are relevant or up-to-date, engaging, and good across all the various skill levels in our department.

As an alternative, I've had some success putting together a weekly playlist of YouTube Videos for the department members to watch on their own. For instance, there's a decent 21-minute video on how to use the Emergency Response Guide (ERG), and a bunch of 3-5-minute videos called "Truck Company

Tips" with some excellent points on how to better force a door or clear a window.

On the EMS side, there are no shortages of YouTube Videos on how to properly don and doff EMS PPE. Every hospital from Singapore to Zurich has such a video available for your use.

YouTube training doesn't come with a certificate. It's on the honor system. We send out the playlist and we keep a training roster that we add names when firefighters email that they've completed the videos.

My last suggestion for online training—and it's a strong suggestion—is for chiefs and officers in particular (but firefighters will also enjoy and learn from these). It is to watch any fire commanded by Battalion Chief David Decker of the Newark, Ohio Fire Department. Chief Decker is the master of incident command. He faces challenging fires while keeping his cool, giving clear instructions, and developing a winning incident action plan.

Before I close out this section, I do have a question to ask you: Has anyone tried a department meeting via ZOOM? We've haven't yet. With 50 members I'm not sure how effective we could be. We started teaching Firefighter I/II via Zoom to our ten new members, but I'm not sure this technique will get us far. It worked for orientation, and I can see how it will work for some of the strictly classroom topics. However, it's exhausting to use for long periods of time. I'll confess that it makes me feel seasick if I stay on too long.

In-person training options:

It is possible to continue hands-on fire training during the pandemic, as long as you keep it small. You can have firefighters in groups of two, three, or four come to the station and conduct an engine or truck company evolution in the parking lot. It's a way to combine apparatus and equipment checks with training. It keeps everyone sharp, and it's a great program with or without a pandemic.

We've had crews practice two-firefighter fire attack, forestry attack from a structural engine, and setting up and supplying the blitz gun with three firefighters, an engine and a tanker. These are all evolutions we could be called upon to perform during the pandemic, so it important we practice them. And, they can be performed with some social distancing, and with proper sanitizing of the trucks and equipment.

Refer to NFPA 1410: *Standard for Training for Emergency Scene Operations* for excellent guidance and suggestions on how to plan and implement these kinds of engine company drills. The MCVFA and NVFC both have model engine company drills you can use or modify for your department. Now, more than ever, is the time to start using them.

Driver/Operator training can also be done by two people. It's still a viable option under the social distancing guidelines.

Combining it with daily/weekly truck checks has worked well for us. Sanitizing the cab of the truck before and after isn't too difficult.

Organizing to Protect Responders

For emergency responses, we split our department into an active group and a reserve group. The active group is then split into daytime and four nighttime groups so we can spread out the responses and limit exposures. The reserve group is staying away except for complex or serious events (i.e. a building fire or a MCI). Our goal is to create a "firebreak" between the groups so that we don't end up with too many members ill or in quarantine at once. We currently have two members with confirmed cases, one member in quarantine, and 110 cases in town. We will shortly be swapping between our active group and our reserve group.

When we respond to a call, only the first arriving unit dismounts from the apparatus and checks out the call. The other trucks are staging on the street. This is particularly important for EMS. We are sending the ambulance with two firefighters to make patient contact and assess the situation, while two or more additional firefighters respond in a pickup truck and standby to assist only if needed.

We've also had to tackle the task of keeping our station and equipment sanitized. Like many departments, we've outgrown our building and we have a cluttered environment. This creates a lot of extra challenges in keeping the building clean. A lesson learned is that we need to declutter our station. And, it's clear that many fire stations don't have sufficient or appropriate decontamination spaces or clean EMS supply storage areas. For now, extra cleaning and decluttering works as a stopgap, but COVID-19 will change how we design and use fire stations.

What's to Come

That realization brings me to a look at the future. The COVID-19 Pandemic is a rapidly evolving situation. By the time you read this, the situation will have changed again and again. Until things calm down and "normalize," and we have chance to analyze what happened and write our after-action reports, it's hard to predict beyond today. We have nothing to compare the COVID-19 Pandemic to, so we have to invent solutions as the problems present themselves.

The "Big One" meant one thing to me when I started as a volunteer; it evolved as I took on more responsibilities; it is evolving again as we face this pandemic. We can only image how the pandemic and our community's experiences with it will affect our budgets, recruit and retention of volunteers, and community expectations of our departments. But I am sure of one thing: all of these aspects of the fire and rescue service will be different than they are now, and we will need to adjust and adapt to the changes in our post-pandemic communities. 🚒



Online/e-Learning for Call/Volunteer Firefighters

Selected Classes for Firefighters of All Experience Levels

MCVFA

- MCVFA Model Engine Company Training
<https://mcvfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/MCVFA-Model-Engine-Training.pdf>

Massachusetts Fire Academy (MFA)

Go to the DFS Learning Management System Catalog.
Introduction to Transitional Fire Attack

- Catalog # 452_v1
- Rehabilitation for the Fire Service
- Catalog # 458_v4
- Traffic Incident Management
- Catalog # 461_v4
- Fire Services Air Management
- Catalog # 459_v1

UL FSRI Fire Safety Academy

<https://training.ulfirefightersafety.org>

- The Science of Interior and Transitional Suppression Tactics in Single-Family Homes
- Evidence Based Approaches to Reduce Exposure Risks

National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)

NVFC Virtual Classroom

www.nvfc.org/access-the-nvfc-virtual-classroom/

- Fireground Accountability: Daring Not to be a Statistic
- Becoming a Company Officer
- Incident Safety Officer Series

National Grid

<https://firstresponder.ngridsafety.com/>

- Natural Gas Safety Training
- Electrical Safety Training

Fire Department Responses to Home Heating Oil Spills in Massachusetts

by Lieutenant Ray Reimold, Marion, MA Fire Department



Home heating oil is a common fuel source for heating systems throughout the Northeast. Heating oil may release from aboveground storage tanks (ASTs), underground storage tanks (USTs), fuel lines, heating systems, and/or fill ports. Fire department personnel are often the first responders to releases of heating oil. Releases of heating oil occur sporadically; therefore, firefighters may be unsure of the role they play in the response and notification procedure. Planning, training, and knowing your department's roles and the roles of other agencies will help you succeed when you have such an event. *This article is meant to be a VERY brief overview of the fire department's role in response to home heating oil spills in Massachusetts.*

What is Home Heating Oil?

Home heating oil is also referred to as number 2 oil, #2 oil, fuel oil, or number 2 home heating oil. In colder climates, the heating oil stored in outside ASTs (like at mobile home parks) is called kerosene or K1, which is less viscous than #2 oil and does not gel when it gets cold. For this article, I will refer to it all as heating oil. Heating oil has very similar properties to diesel fuel, but the major difference is heating oil has a red dye added to it. The red dye is added to show that no state or federal road taxes have been paid on the fuel, so heating oil is

typically less expensive than diesel fuel. Off-road equipment, like tractors and backhoes, sometimes use heating oil in place of diesel fuel. The red dye can help us visually identify heating oil, as it shows up on white oil absorbent pads. Heating oil is less dense than water, so new releases typically float on top of water. This property helps us locate it when it is released and helps us clean it up by knowing where it will be.

Heating oil is typically stored in either ASTs or USTs, which can leak as a result of corrosion, delivery line leak, overfill, and/or improper repair and maintenance.

Training & Planning:

Fire and EMS personnel typically undergo basic trainings for oil and hazardous material (hazmat) response. Hazardous Material Awareness Level is taught to new fire recruits and EMTs to help them understand some of the fundamentals on how to deal with oil and chemical releases. The Massachusetts Fire Academy offers many courses in hazmat, including Hazmat Awareness, Hazmat Operations, and Hazmat Technician. It is very important for your department to train for hazmat responses as part of your regularly scheduled drills. Fire departments should stock and maintain materials to safely perform preliminary response to control fuel oil spills (i.e., four-gas meter, granular absorbents, absorbent pads, sand bags, magnetic tank patches, and a foldable containment pan).

Emergency Response:

Time is of the essence when fire departments respond to heating oil spills. You may be dispatched to a home at which the owner sees an oil spill in their basement or smells oil in their house. It is not uncommon for a neighbor to see or smell

release of fuel oil that occurs outside. When you arrive on scene, do a proper scene size up like you would at any other emergency call. As always, life safety is paramount. Then come up with an action plan. Notify appropriate agencies immediately, and when possible, take defensive actions to stop and minimize the spill as discussed further in this article. Remember SAFETY FIRST. Never do more than you are trained or qualified to do.

Notification:

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) is the agency that regulates releases of oil in Massachusetts. It is the responsibility of the Potentially Responsible Party (PRP), which may be the property owner, person who caused the spill, owner of the tank, or all of them, to notify the MassDEP WITHIN 2 HOURS of a release of more than 10-gallons of heating fuel, and/or an oil release that creates a sheen on a surface water. Fire departments are in a great position to facilitate communication between the required agencies, and can assist the PRP with notification to the MassDEP. Contact information for the 24-Hour MassDEP Notification Hotline is as follows:

MassDEP Notification Hotline: (888) 304-1133

The dispatcher at the MassDEP Emergency Response Hotline will typically request preliminary information, and ask for the contact information for the chief officer who is on-scene that can speak with a MassDEP emergency responder. The MassDEP hotline dispatcher may patch you over to the MassDEP emergency responder, or let you know to expect a phone call back in a short period of time. The MassDEP dispatcher and/or the MassDEP emergency responder may ask the following questions at the time of notification:

- Release address;
- Property owner contact information (name, address, phone number);
- The entity notifying the MassDEP's contact information (name, address, phone number);
- Date/time of the release;
- Estimated volume of the release;
- Description of areas impacted; and
- Description of emergency response activities.

It is important to provide information that MassDEP Emergency Response personnel may ask accurately, because information provided at the time of notification may

become public record. If you do not know the answer to every question at the time of notification, it is alright!

MassDEP Emergency Response personnel are there to help you. They will assist you through the process, and can assist in getting the proper resources to be mobilized to the site. If you are unable to determine how much heating oil spilled, reach out to MassDEP Emergency Response and they will help advise you.

The local Health Department and Conservation Commission should also be notified of releases.

Emergency Response Monitoring & Preliminary Control Measures:

SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT when responding to a release of heating oil. Never exceed your level of training, and isolate the release area to ensure that only trained personnel are allowed in the area. Qualified fire department personnel should monitor the air in the home and/or around the release area for combustible gases. If deemed appropriate, the heating system should be turned off until a determination can be made that conditions are safe. If oil odors are present in the occupied portions of the home, the Health Department should be notified to assist with evaluating whether the home is safe for

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occupancy. Fire department personnel can also implement preliminary control measures, which can include the following:

- Place a temporary magnetic patch under a leaking AST;
- Request that the PRP has their oil delivery company removed the oil remaining in the tank;
- Turn off sump pumps if necessary;
- Deploy granular absorbents, absorbent pads, absorbent booms, sand bag dikes, and/or temporary containment pan to control the migration of the released oil;
- Move personal items away from release area; and do not track oil through the house. If in a basement, use the bulkhead and avoid tracking oil on carpet.

Do not be fooled by oil spills that look small! Investigate to the best of your ability to determine if the released oil may have quickly migrated down into underlying soil or surface waters through holes/cracks in the basement floor or a sub-floor drain line/sump pump (preferential migration pathways). Walk around the area to see if nearby storm drains, streams, lakes, or wetlands could be impacted. When you are unsure, ask resources that specialize in heating oil releases. Work with local resources, such as the DPW, highway department, and conservation commission to identify drainage and preferential migration pathways. An understanding of preferential migration pathways will assist in the placement of preliminary control measures.

Once the spill is stopped and the heating oil is contained, additional response actions and waste disposal are the requirement of the PRP, including hiring a cleanup contractor and a Licensed Site Professional (LSP). Fire and EMS are not cleanup contractors. Never bring oily waste (like absorbent pads soaked in heating oil) back to the station. Name the place on a fire truck that is labeled oil/hazardous waste storage? THERE IS NOT ONE.

What if the volume of released oil is less than 10-gallons?

Even if a spill is small, it still needs to be cleaned up and the waste disposed properly.

Why do we care if the spill is cleaned up properly? Oil vapors in the air may make people sick, especially young children, elderly, and those with underlying medical conditions. Heating oil can migrate into the ground, and contaminate drinking water wells and drinking water supplies. You are not doing someone a favor in the long run to not have the release cleaned up properly.



Closing:

Thank you for taking the time to read this article. Fortunately, releases of heating oil are relatively sporadic, and it's not uncommon to get "rusty" with the emergency response procedure. Our role in the response to oil spills is important, and always a surprise! Please remember to maintain preliminary control supplies in an easy to access location, and continue with training to inform those on your department how to safely and effectively respond to a release of heating oil. 🌸

Additional information regarding the process for heating oil spill cleanup requirements may be found here:

MassDEP's Fact Sheet for Managing Spills of Oil and Hazardous Materials:

www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/08/xm/spillmgm.pdf

MassDEP Guide for Site Cleanup for Homeowners:

www.mass.gov/guides/site-cleanup-for-homeowners

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Photographer

BY IRA HOFFMAN



I have been the official photographer for some central Massachusetts fire departments for many years. A breakdown of photos taken over the past 20 years includes:

- Emergencies (fire, MVAs, collapse, hazmat)
- Developing firefighter skills (training, drills, site plans)
- Ceremonial (graduations, promotions)
- Dealing with the public (public education, public relations, firefighter recruitment)
- Department social functions

Unfortunately, I've also taken photos of funerals, and supplied photos of the deceased for wakes and later on presented to family members.

Does your department have someone who not only takes pictures of fires and MVAs, but also documents everything that your department does? Some large departments may do this, but think of the benefits of having a readily available library of photos that document all aspects of your department.

Some of the many uses of a fire department photo library are:

- Photos of emergencies may be used in press releases and/or social media outlets.
- Photos of emergency operations can be used in critique sessions and discussed – what went right, what went wrong, how operations can be improved.
- Photos of department members taken in the past can be shown at their retirement parties or memorials
- Photos of department activities – emergency operations, training and drills, etc. - can be used in town reports, presentations to town officials, presentations at town meeting.

Visualize a poster used in a firefighter recruit campaign. The center of the poster has a picture of a department member in uniform. It is surrounded by pictures of the same firefighter with his or her family, in turnout gear at recruit training, at a drill, operating at a fire.

At the top of the poster: "Jack Davis – family member, member of the community, firefighter". At the bottom of the poster: "Want to help your community? Consider joining your fire department. It's a major commitment of your time, training that never ends, and something that you will always love."

I'm sure you can think of other situations where there is a readily available photo library, without having to rely on other agencies, the news media, or the chance that someone took pictures on their cell phone (in the belief that a cell phone is a viable substitute for a digital camera).

We recently presented a seminar to town residents on the topic of fire survival. As the chief gave his opening remarks, pictures of fires in our town were displayed. It's one thing to speak about an abstract topic, but more meaningful when photos are also shown. "A picture is worth a thousand words".

Chances are your department has a box of black and white photos of fires, firefighters, and department functions. Is there someone alive today who can identify the scenes or the personnel? My suggestion is to create digital images of those photos. And, most importantly, document each photo: who, what, where, when. Don't wait too long!

Future articles on this topic will discuss:

- How do you get a department photographer?
- How do they fit in the chain of command?
- What equipment and procedures are used for emergency photography operations?
- How are photos archived?
- How does emergency photography differ from posed photography (hint: you may only get one chance to shoot each photo). 📸

About the author: Ira Hoffman has almost 60 years of fire service experience. He has been a Public Information Officer and/or Department Photographer, and is currently serving with two departments. He has written articles about home fire sprinklers for 'Smoke Showin'. His photos have appeared in WNYF (official publication of the New York City Fire Department). He is currently writing a book dealing with fire survival.

REGION 1

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

Vice President Christopher J. Hajder, Swansea

First and foremost, I hope that you are all healthy and a little less stressed as you read this issue. I would first like to express my sincere thanks to each and every member of Region 1 who put it all on the line every day, serving your community during those truly unprecedented times. Call and volunteers DO make a difference.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention and thank Ken Jordan for his service as past Region 1 Vice President. I look forward to taking the baton from Ken and running a strong MCVFA a stronger organization. With the Region 1 meeting being canceled in March due to Covid-19, I look forward to scheduling another soon. I have missed socializing and cutting it up with my brothers and sisters in the fire service for sure. The fundraisers, the hands-on training will hopefully be back soon. When and if new events come to light, I will make every effort to forward it to the membership as soon as I can. Be safe, be healthy and be kind to one another out there! 🌸

REGION 2

Covering the counties of Essex, Middlesex

Coordinator Lisa Evans, Groveland

The West Newbury Fire Department is currently using Google Classroom to offer a way of continuing training and expanding on our Fire and Life Safety knowledge during this time of social distancing. We have an extensive list of where we have obtained continuing education materials, including resources from NVFC, UL and Lexipol.

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) Virtual Classroom is an online learning center featuring 60 on-demand courses covering a wide range of fire and emergency service topics. Several of these courses are eligible for CEUs and Massachusetts Chief Credentialing

Credits. www.nvfc.org/access-the-nvfc-virtual-classroom/

UL offers the Fire Safety Academy as an approach to better understanding fire science. UL Firefighter Safety Research Institute is dedicated to increasing firefighter knowledge to reduce injuries and deaths in the fire service and in the communities they serve.

I recently had an ah-ha moment about the scientific principal known as Thornton's Rule after viewing the presentations by UL. Thornton's Rule states that the heat released per unit of oxygen consumed was fairly constant for the complete combustion of a large number of organic gases and liquids. In general terms, Thornton's Rule means no matter how much fire load you have available in a room, if you do not feed the fire with a source of oxygen, the load will not burn as quickly as with a room with an oxygen source. Hence the fire campaign "Close the door before you doze." See UL FSRI Fire Safety Academy at <https://training.ulfirefightersafety.org>. 🌸

REGION 3

Covering the counties of Worcester, Middlesex, Norfolk

Vice President Michael Goldstein, Sherborn

Covid-19: Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Call/Vol Class 083 "cancelled indefinitely"

The Massachusetts Firefighting Academy (MFA) Call/Volunteer Class 083 had its first full day on Sunday, March 1, 2020. It was almost entirely made up with members from MCVFA Region 3 area fire departments including Ashby, Athol, Barre, Bolton, Dover, Groton, Harvard, Hopedale, Leicester, Oxford, Princeton, Sherborn, Southborough, Southbridge, Stow, Tyngsborough, Upton, and Weston (there was one other member of the class from Carlisle, which is just outside Region 3). Classes continued, including donning and doffing PPE and SCBA, SCBA inspection, hose deployment and bed loading, fire behavior and fire control, etc. Class members were checked off on hose rolls, and on Sunday, March 15 took their first exam, practiced hose handling and nozzle theory, and had their

first live burn in the burn building using SBCA. However, shortly after class on Sunday, March 15th just before 8 pm, members of the MFA Call/Volunteer Class 083 were informed that "Based on direction from the State Fire Marshal, all call/volunteer training is immediately being cancelled indefinitely." While the online quizzes continued for a while, it was eventually made clear on March 26th that classes were not going to resume and that MFA Call/Vol Class 083 is "suspended indefinitely". This the first time in the history of the Massachusetts Fire Academy that a class has been "cancelled indefinitely".

Many thanks to the members of Class 083 for giving their time, and thanks to the MFA instructors for their time in providing the training.

Region 3 Meeting

On March 11, 2020, MCVFA Region 3 had a meeting in Upton, generously hosted by the Upton Fire and EMS Department and the Upton Fire and EMS Association which provided a wonderful meal. This meeting was hosted in Upton almost a year to the day from the last time they hosted (last time it was March 12, 2019); we thank Upton for regularly being such a gracious (and regular) host! Thank you to all the members and participants, and a special shout out of thanks to the non-firefighter or EMS "civilian" auxiliary members of Upton Fire and EMS Association who went out of their way to prepare such a nice dinner!

Delegates and members from Upton, Millbury, Sherborn, Swansea, and Whitman were in attendance, with about 15-20 people in the room, including Upton Chief Mark DiFronzo and Upton Assistant Chief Michael Marchand, and many firefighters, EMS, and auxiliary personnel. The meeting was an opportunity to get together and hear from the top leadership of MCVFA.

After VP Region 3 Michael Goldstein opened the meeting, MCVFA Region 3 Coordinator Seth Grill (Upton Fire) led those in attendance in the Pledge to the Flag. Next, there was a moment of silence to remember Membership Coordinator Michael

Bird, a founding member of MCVFA and its first President, who was in attendance at the MCVFA Region 3 meeting in Upton a year ago but tragically passed away in the fall. We next heard from MCVFA President Tom Burnett of Whitman, and got a legislative update from Secretary (and former MCVFA President) Kevin Connolly. Kevin Connolly reviewed notable legislation in the Massachusetts State House that will affect call and volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel and reviewed the MCVFA legislative and other efforts. Both Tom and Kevin also reviewed the benefits of MCVFA and answered questions. There was a lot of discussion, including about the possibility of town real estate tax deductions for Call/Vol firefighters and EMS personnel. We were also fortunate to have Chris Hajder (Swansea Fire), the new MCVFA VP for Region 1, in attendance and he also answered questions.

We are looking forward to holding another Region 3 meeting soon. We very much need to hear from some of you to find another location in which to hold our next meeting – please e-mail me at vpregion3@mcvfa.org.

In happy news, MCVFA Region 3 would like to congratulate MCVFA Region 3 Coordinator Seth Grill (Upton Fire) and his wife on the birth of their son, Austin Jake! Congratulations on your first child!

Finally, please pass along any news, new apparatus, pictures, or details of special events or actual fires you would like to share to vpregion3@mcvfa.org so I can feature YOUR department or association in the next *Smoke Showin'*. 🚒



MCVFA President Thomas Burnett addresses the MCVFA Region 3 meeting on the second floor of Upton Fire.

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...continued from page 21

REGION 4

Covering the counties of Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire
Vice President Kevin Connolly, Northfield

It is with heavy hearts that the Colrain Fire Department announces the passing of Firefighter Barry D. Sullivan, aka “the Soda Man”, after a long-fought battle with cancer. He was a member of the Colrain Fire Department for over 30 years and was known for being Engine 3’s tanker operator and for his knowledge with portable pumps. Barry answered the call day or night, regardless of the weather. He was a mentor to junior firefighters as well as new firefighters that joined the department and loved helping fellow firefighters sharpen their skills. He continued to help the Colrain Firefighters’ Association with events, including boot drives, even after he became ill.



Taking pieces of what people wrote about Barry, I would like to add that he was an exceptional person. Barry was a devoted husband, father, grandfather and outstanding member of the Colrain Fire Department. I have been with Barry on hundreds of calls and enjoyed every moment with him. Barry was very mechanically inclined and could fix most anything. Barry also recruited new members, several of which are still active on the department today. Barry worked for Hardigg Industries (now Pelican) for 35 years and loved working in the tool crib. He also assisted with the Truck Committee when the department purchased several pieces of apparatus, including Engine 3. Barry would come to the fire department every Saturday to fill the soda machine, ultimately giving him the nickname “the Soda Man”. Barry touched many lives and will be deeply missed. He

leaves behind his wife Terri, his two daughters Kelly and Katie, two grandchildren Brooke and Lucas Charest, his parents, and his brother Terry and his sister Mary as well as several nieces and nephews along with his extended family at the Colrain Fire Department. 🚒

Rest in Peace Barry. We will take it from here.
David Adams, Colrain Firefighter

REGION 5

Covering the county of Berkshire
Vice President Frank Speth, III, New Ashford

Williamstown Training

On February 24, the Williamstown Fire Department joined by Florida and the Pownal, VT Fire Departments conducted training at the Old Williams Inn practicing firefighter down drills and proper bail out procedures with the firefighters properly secured with safety harnesses and tethered with safety ropes.



The Williamstown Fire Department has graciously allowed the surrounding departments train at the Old Williams Inn over this winter. I would like to thank Williams College and the Williamstown Fire Department for their generosity in hosting these trainings.

Stockbridge House Fire

On April 17, the Stockbridge Fire Department had responded to a report of a structure fire on Cherry Hill Rd.



The Stockbridge Fire Department requested mutual aid from multiple departments including: Egremont, Lee, Lenox, Great Barrington, Richmond, Monterey, West Stockbridge, Tyringham and Cannan, NY Fire Departments. Also, Hinsdale Fire was requested with their Rehab Unit and Berkshire County Fire Car 1 was on the scene.

Membership Renewals

Lately I have been approached by some departments within our Region with questions about membership renewal and benefits.

MCVFA membership offers many benefits to our members including:

- Accidental Death & Dismemberment insurance policies that total \$14,000 for an accidental death to \$24,000 for a line of duty death.
- Discounts with Liberty Mutual Insurance
- The online program with Anna Maria College
- Educational Scholarships
- *Smoke Showin'* magazine, and

- Legislative Advocacy are among the benefits offered.

The MCVFA Membership dues support the mission of the MCVFA to support and advance the Massachusetts call and volunteer fire and EMS services and individual firefighters and EMTs.

The Regional VP and Coordinator are advocates for members and act as conduits of information between the individual member or department and the Executive Board. Member feedback and involvement are critical for Association growth and development. If you have concerns or ideas to improve any aspect of the Association, from the member renewal process to program delivery, to programs or opportunities that you want to see improved or offered, please reach out to the Kevin Hempstead, the Regional Coordinator, or me.

In closing, the MCVFA is only as strong as its membership and their support and involvement. Please take the time now to complete the renewal process. Thank you for your continued support. 🚒

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 or 1-800-551-FIRE (3473).

Like the MCVFA on Facebook

Check out the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association (MCVFA) on Facebook and LIKE our page.

The MCVFA Facebook page is a great source of training opportunities, up-to-date fire/ems methods, and political and regulatory changes that affect your department.

The MCVFA Facebook is also a great place to see what other fire departments, like yours, are up to. You can see their emergency calls, drills, and events. You'll get excellent ideas from see what others are doing.



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