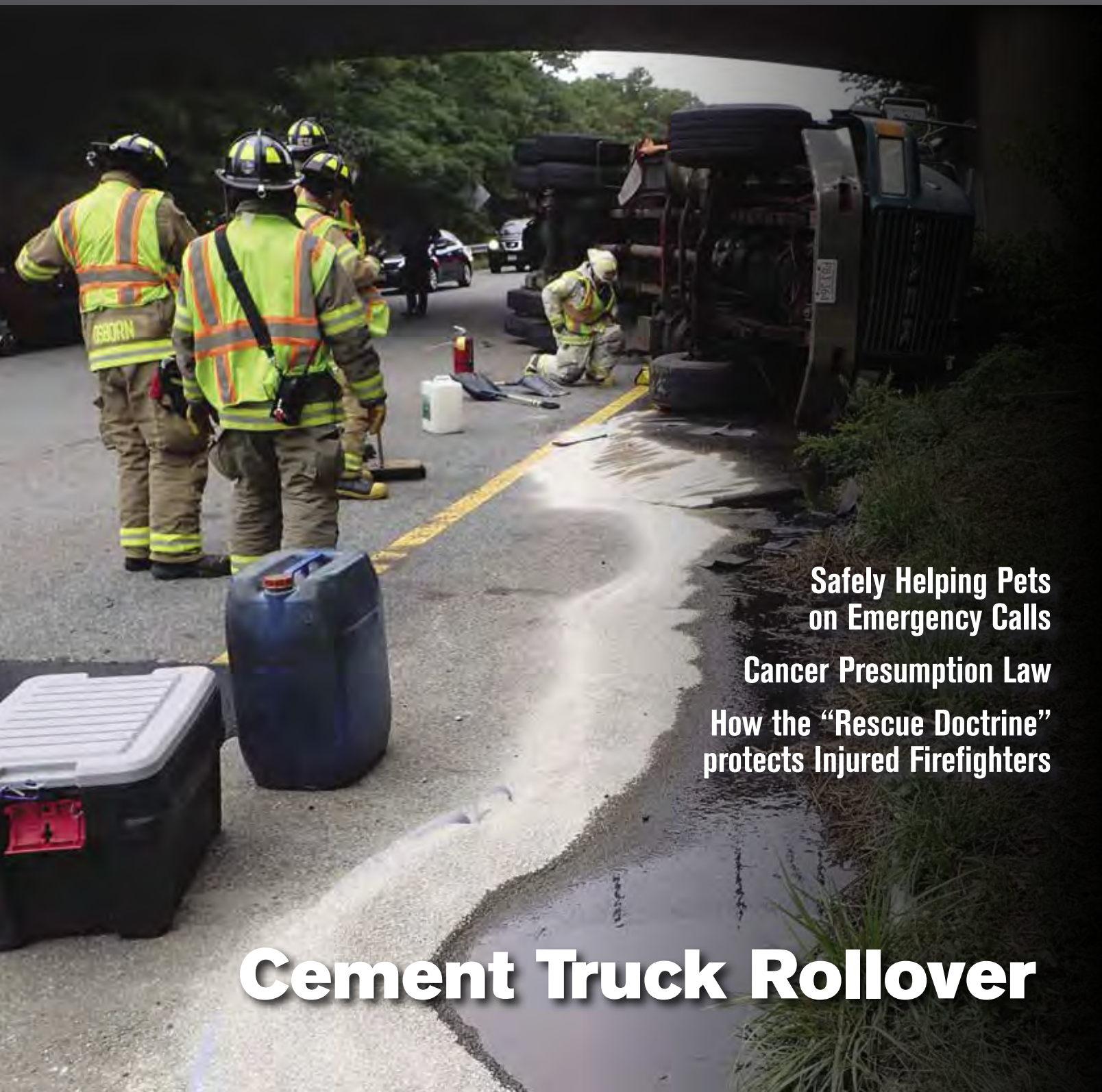


Call/Volunteers Serving Today to Protect Your Tomorrow

Smoke Showin'

The Official Publication of the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association



**Safely Helping Pets
on Emergency Calls**

Cancer Presumption Law

**How the “Rescue Doctrine”
protects Injured Firefighters**

Cement Truck Rollover



photos courtesy of West Barnstable Fire Department

The Benefits of Joining the MCVFA

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.

Don't miss out on this excellent opportunity for your department and join the MCVFA today at www.mcvfa.org.

Questions on membership, please contact
MCVFA President Tom Burnett at
mmmsb@comcast.net.

Benefits

- > Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance
- > Liberty Mutual Insurance
- > Anna Maria College Online Program
- > Scholarships
- > Subscription to *Smoke Showin' Magazine*
- > Training and Education
- > Health & Wellness
- > Recruitment and Retention Assistance
- > General Welfare
- > Legislative Advocacy



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2020

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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 photo courtesy of West Barnstable Fire Department

2020



Robert J. Hindley Memorial Scholarship

The Executive Board of the MCVFA is pleased to announce and congratulate this year's recipients of the Hindley Scholarship.

Region 1

Brandon Hadjer

Swansea Fire Department
Bristol Community College

Region 2

Mikayla Lawless

Groveland Fire Department
Endicott College

Region 3

Nicole Barakian

West Boylston Fire Department
Wentworth Institute of Technology

Region 4

Adrien Neveu

Goshen Fire Department
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Region 4

Ryan Moore

South Hadley Fire District 2
Annie Marie College

The Hindley Scholarship application period begins on January 1 and ends on May 1 of each year. We encourage everyone to apply.

Smoke Showin'

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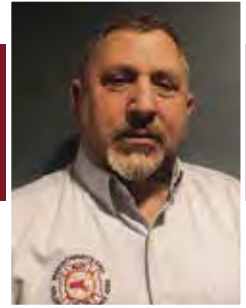
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President's Message

I would like to start by saying THANK YOU... to all of those Call /Volunteer Firefighters and first responders who are supporting their community's on a day in and day out bases with all the activities the Covid 19 has brought on all of us. I have heard so many stories of people working tirelessly to help their stations stay on top of the ever-changing guidelines and still maintaining their jobs and family's lives.

These have been uncharted waters and we seem to keep staying a head of the curve and I commend you all that have made that happen. We are still not out of the woods yet so we need to keep following the guidelines.

Wear your mask, practice social distancing, and wash your hands frequently.

COVID-19 has affected all of us in many ways and fire and EMS services are far from immune and in some ways, along with healthcare workers, have maybe taken the brunt of the impact – physical, mental, and emotional. After reading many articles of how mental health affects us in so many ways, I was surprised. One of the statements that I read really made me rethink on how I look at mental health:

“Workplace stress contributes to poor physical and mental outcomes. The damage stress causes to both physical and mental health is well documented. A 2015 meta-analysis of 228 studies, conducted by researchers from Stanford University and the Harvard Business school, found that common workplace stressors increase individuals' risk of self- rated poor health, self- rated mental illness, physician reported illnesses and even mortality. This suggests that less severe mental health concerns such as stress can trigger larger problems.”

This information concerns me for the fact that stress can affect a person's mental state that impacts their ability to make a good decision and recognize potential hazards. In the fire service these are two important things we need to do daily. So, if you are in a stressful situation at work or at home and you get a page for an emergency call, what is your state of mind? Are you capable of responding to the best of your training and ability. This is something to really think about on how much stress we

carry around and don't realize it. This is not even thinking of the physical effects, emotional effects or the behavioral effects.

I think what I am trying to say is, we need to take care of ourselves and take the time and relax. In this issue you will find a resource list of clinicians and counselors who may be able to help you, your family, or your friends through these stressful times

Annual MCVFA Membership Meeting Canceled

The MCVFA Executive Board has decided to postpone the Annual Membership Meeting that was scheduled for October 17, 2020 due to the pandemic conditions and in accordance with the Governor's Order regarding gatherings dated August 7, 2020.


It is the intent of the Executive Board intends to hold a membership meeting at a later date, probably by electronic means, to conduct necessary business and election of officers. Department delegates and alternates will be notified of the meeting by email and provided with the appropriate log-on information.

In accordance with the emergency legislation, Section 16 of Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020, the election of officers and business normally conducted at the MCVFA Annual Meeting is postponed and elected and appointed officers of the MCVFA will continue in their positions until an annual meeting and election can be held, and their successors are appointed or elected.

All of the 30th Anniversary Celebratory aspects of the now postponed annual meeting will be rescheduled to a date in April 2021 at the Carver Fire Department. 🚒

Tom Burnett
MCVFA President

Stay Safe, Stay Healthy.



Fire Code Enforcement

during the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges in keeping communities safe from fire and other emergencies. The State Fire Marshal has guidance for the fire service and communities on many areas related to pandemic response. You can find the complete guidance documents at www.mass.gov/lists/fsd-advisories.

Advisories include guidance on:

- storage and use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer and dispensers,
- temporary tents,

- school reconfiguration,
- and school emergency planning.

The Department of Fire Services (DFS) and the Division of Public Licensure (DPL) have guidance on storage and use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer and dispensers, temporary tents, and school reconfiguration in two joint advisories: one on outdoor dining (www.mass.gov/doc/joint-dfs-dpl-outdoor-dining-guidance/download) and one on school safety (www.mass.gov/doc/joint-dfs-dpl-guidance-on-safety-considerations-for-schools/download). These issues along

with guidance on school emergency planning were covered in another advisory, School Emergency Planning and COVID 19 (www.mass.gov/doc/school-emergency-planning-and-covid-19/download).

Alcohol-based Hand Sanitizer

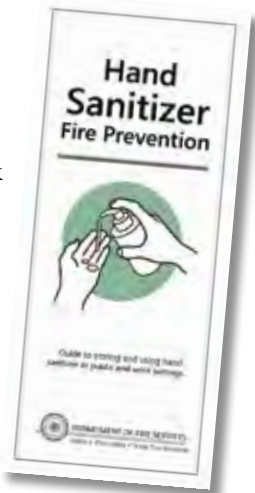
Many schools, businesses and workplaces are installing and using hand sanitizer in new ways. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations, effective alcohol-based hand sanitizer must be at least 70% alcohol. This classifies alcohol-based hand sanitizer as a Class IB or IC flammable liquid. The storage of flammable liquids is regulated by the building code and limited to 120 gallons in unsprinklered buildings and up to 420 gallons (in approved storage) in sprinklered buildings. Additional storage requirements are in the guidance documents and the Massachusetts State Building Code, 780 CMR.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensing units are regulated by the Comprehensive Fire Safety Code, 527 CMR 1.00: Sections 10.22 and 60.5.2. Dispensers are limited to a capacity of 41 oz. in corridors and 67 oz. in rooms. Dispensers must be at least 48 inches apart and 1 inch away from an ignition source in every direction. Dispensers may be installed directly over carpeted floors only in sprinklered areas of a building.

The Department of Fire Services (DFS) and the Division of Public Licensure (DPL) issued two joint advisories that address this topic among other issues: Outdoor Dining Guidance and Guidance on Safety Considerations for Schools

New Hand Sanitizer Fire Prevention Pamphlet

DFS has a new Hand Sanitizer Fire Prevention pamphlet about storing and using hand sanitizer in public and work settings. Fire departments can share the pamphlet in their communities. You can find the pamphlet at www.mass.gov/info/details/code-and-fire-prevention.



Temporary Tents

The State Building Code (780 CMR) regulates permitting and installation requirements for temporary tents (erected for less than 180 days). The code path directs users to the International Fire Code. Requirements include:

- Tent material must meet NFPA 701 fire resistance.
- Tents must be at least 20 feet from property lines and buildings.
- Tents cannot block egress from a building or the fire department vehicle access path.

- Smoking is prohibited in tents.
- Cooking and open flame devices are not permitted within 20 feet of a tent
- Fuel storage and the use of open-flame cooking devices is regulated by 527 CMR 1.00.

Read the full guidance document for all requirements at www.mass.gov/doc/joint-dfs-dpl-outdoor-dining-guidance/download.

School Reconfiguration

Many schools are reconfiguring their spaces to meet Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recommendations on student and teacher spacing. Schools must work with building officials to maintain code compliance during the reconfigurations. Requirements include:

- Egress must remain clear.
- Hallway movement can be one-way but must allow free movement in both directions in an emergency.
- Newly created classrooms that were previously used for other purposes (gymnasiums, cafeterias, etc.) must be evaluated to verify compliance with fire alarms, exit signs, and egress.

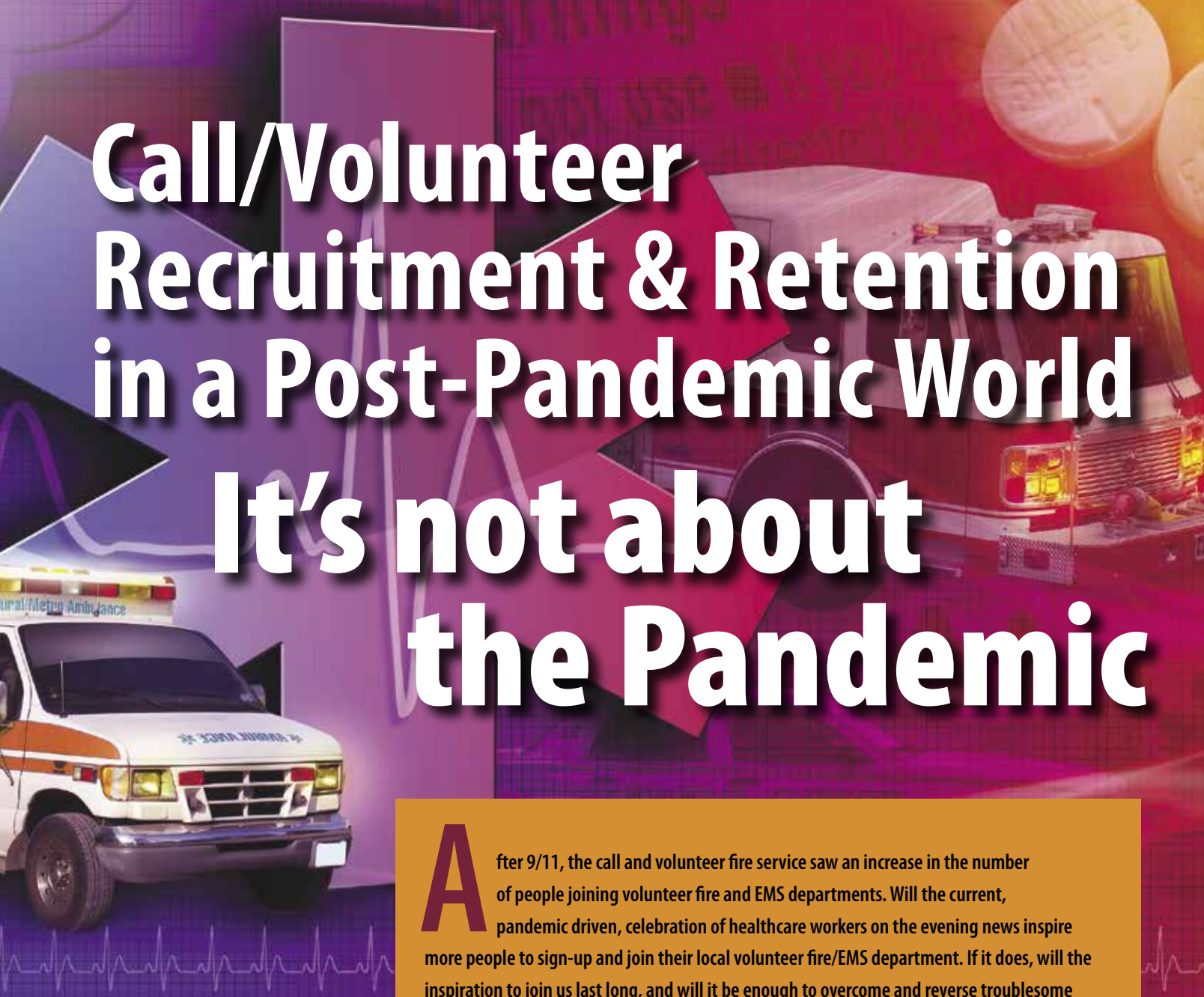
Read the full guidance document for all requirements at: www.mass.gov/doc/joint-dfs-dpl-guidance-on-safety-considerations-for-schools/download.

School Emergency Planning and Fire Drills

Schools have many options for when and how students and staff return buildings in this pandemic. Fire drills must be a consideration. Local fire departments should consult with school administrators on scheduling and planning fire drills. Students may attend school in pods or smaller groups. But fire drill scheduling must include every student. Fire drill requirements have not changed. Read the full guidance document at www.mass.gov/doc/school-emergency-planning-and-covid-19/download.



DFS also offers a School Fire Prevention pamphlet that will help in emergency planning efforts. Visit the Fire Prevention in Schools (www.mass.gov/service-details/fire-prevention-in-schools) webpage before annual School Multi-Hazard and EMS Plan meetings with school and police officials. 🔥



Call/Volunteer Recruitment & Retention in a Post-Pandemic World It's not about the Pandemic

By Chief Joe Maruca

After 9/11, the call and volunteer fire service saw an increase in the number of people joining volunteer fire and EMS departments. Will the current, pandemic driven, celebration of healthcare workers on the evening news inspire more people to sign-up and join their local volunteer fire/EMS department. If it does, will the inspiration to join us last long, and will it be enough to overcome and reverse troublesome trends of the last few years?

EMS is a difficult business and it's particularly difficult for volunteer or mostly volunteer departments. From a regulatory and financial standpoint, running a fire department that provides ambulance service or a volunteer community ambulance service is more complex than a fire department alone. Fire departments that do both appear to struggle much more with staffing and turnouts than fire departments that limit their operations to traditional firefighting. EMS is busier and more demanding.

According to the MCVFA's data, fifty-four percent (54%) of the call/volunteer and small combination departments in Massachusetts provide ambulance service to their towns. Another forty-four (44%) provide formal or official EMS first response, and only about three percent (3%) of all the departments have no formal role in EMS, providing for traditional fire suppression alone. EMS is a big part of our world.

For instance, my fire department, in a town of 3200 people, provides ambulance service. In a typical year, we will respond to about 630 emergency calls and 400 of them will be for EMS, people calling for an ambulance. Only about four percent (4%) of our calls, or about twenty-five (25) calls, are for fires. We can only imagine what we would do with all the extra time on our hands is all we had to do was go to fires. Now, I'm exaggerating to make a point. For us, and lots of departments like us, EMS dominates.

We almost all need call/volunteer members who are ready, willing, and able to staff an ambulance daily and some times twice or three times a day. The demand for the ambulance is what requires many departments to hire full-time or per-diem staff for daytimes. The high volume of ambulance calls and the demands of providing EMS is leading to burnout among our staffs.. Most people can't drop what they are doing daily or three times a day to staff an ambulance, and those that do start to suffer from burnout. Burnout, in-turn, leads to difficulties recruiting and retaining volunteers.

In a report "*The 2020 EMS Trend Report*" produced by Fitch & Associates and the National EMS Management Association, a number of problematic trends in EMS have been tracked over the past five years. These trends are industry wide, but are applicable to our call/volunteer EMS world. The report surveys 3000 EMS providers from all types of services. The 2020 report data was collected before the COVID-19 pandemic and doesn't reflect the problems and anxieties created by it.

The most troubling data from the 2020 report is the number of EMS providers who would not recommend that their child go into EMS jumped from twelve percent (12%) in 2018 to thirty-nine (39%) in 2020 (pre-pandemic). Burnout, and many of its siblings such as violence against EMS providers, poor support by elected officials and medical directors, a lack of an clear promotional path, lack of recognition and professional respect (including from other providers), and a feeling that leadership doesn't care about you.

Burnout is at the top of the list of problems for all EMS providers, both paid and volunteer. For instance, only twenty-four percent (24%) of those surveyed said they had no symptoms of burnout. Another twenty-five (25%) said they have one or more symptoms of burnout such as physical, emotional, or mental exhaustion, and ten percent (10%) reported having constant burnout. The good news, if you can call it that, is that thirty-nine percent (39%) said they "have less energy and more stress than I once had, but don't feel burned out". Does this data mean we are all on the path to burnout? This isn't a great image to project when we are trying to get people to volunteer and join our departments. This can't help with recruitment and retention.

Making matters worse, how do you recruit volunteers when forty-five percent (45%) of the respondents to the 2020 survey feel that their department or its leadership was not concerned with their safety, and sixty-eight percent (68%) felt that their department or leadership was not taking any steps to protect their mental health? And remember, the survey results are pre-pandemic and don't reflect the problems with getting EMS PPE for providers or all of the conflicting "guidance" from above this past spring. Is our message "join the volunteer ambulance squad, help your neighbors, but don't expect anyone to help you?"

And, our seemingly constant friends, sexual harassment and bullying, are still hanging on in our departments. The report's trending data indicates that both of these problems have not declined. Twenty percent (20%) of respondents indicated bullying as a problem and fourteen percent (14%) identified sexual harassment as a problem. We need to end this. There is no reason for the EMS industry to have such a problem. What's the point of recruiting and training new providers, if we are just going to let them be driven out by bullies? We're killing ourselves.

If call/volunteer firefighters, EMTs and paramedics are going to continue to serve almost half the communities in Massachusetts, all of us need to talk about and reverse the trends outlined in the *2020 EMS Trend Report*. And, if you are the leader of fire or EMS department, a town administrator, or a selectman, you need to look hard for and acknowledge problems.

I know many of you are thinking these kinds of problems don't happen here. We are small and family oriented. We are good community. And, while these sentiments may be true, even the best of organizations suffer from the kinds of problems outlined in this report. In fact, one of the reports more interesting findings is that seventy percent (70%) of EMS medical directors described themselves as being engaged with the field providers they oversee, but only twenty-one (21%) of field providers reported having an EMS director they felt was engaging with them.

Can you hear the discussion?

EMT: "My EMS director doesn't engage with us".

EMS Director: "Yes, I do! I'm very engaged with my providers. I did XYZ last year."

And then, "No you're not" – "Yes I am" – "No you're not" – "Yes, I am", and so on and so on.

continues on page 10

...continued from page 9

Change the title EMS director to chief, selectman, or town administrator. The problem is the same. We at the top (myself included) can fall into believing that all the work we are doing is engaging with those we lead, and while our work is important, meaningful, and sometimes overwhelming, it isn't necessarily engaging our members and addressing their needs.

After 15 years as chief, I know I have my blind spots. I know I have to work at engaging with my firefighter and EMTs. I have to accept that if my officers or my staff are telling me I'm missing something, that's me who's missing something, not them.

And for the combination departments, I'll add a personal observation that I think is relevant to this discussion. The *2020 EMS Trend Report* discusses how field providers (EMTs and Medics) feel a lack of recognition and professional respect from other healthcare workers (especially noted by dispatchers). I think we in the combination fire department work have to be continually vigilant to this issue between our career and call/volunteer members. (There is some national data that indicates that small combination fire departments are the fastest growing segment of the fire/EMS industry, and that this growth is driven by the need to provide ambulance service. We need to make the combination system work better.)

The friction and lack of respect between call/volunteer and career members is a two-way problem. In most cases, both sides are equally refusing to give the proper recognition and professional respect to the other. While we all have role to play in changing this, we chiefs have the greatest role and need to set a proper example. We can't ignore this problem, we can't chalk it up to unsolvable personality issues (and occasionally it really is, or starts as, just two people who can't get along — but don't let it spread). We need to treat all members of our department professionally and make it clear to our staff that this is what we expect of everyone.


We in the volunteer fire and EMS service tend to treat recruitment and retention issues on a broad national scale.

We look at it as a need for better marketing or something that can be fixed with a training weekend or two for senior officers. There is a place for this, and the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association (MCVFA) and National Volunteer Fire Council (NFVC) are leaders in this area — great resources for marketing info, marketing programs, and recruitment training. But, if call/volunteer members of your department are unhappy, all the marketing and recruitment techniques won't help you. People won't join an unhappy organization.

Why does one fire department have thirty (30) volunteers and the one next-door struggle to hang on to a dozen volunteers? You've seen this. One reason is how the volunteers feel about being members of each department. When you see this, I think you'll see that part of the reason is that the department with thirty (30) volunteers is addressing these kinds of issues, and the other isn't. Yes, demographics, budgets, and other factors can't be ignored as contributing factors, but they don't tell the whole story.

Think back to some of the topics that this article started with. Who's going to join a department where twenty percent of the staff reports bullying? Nobody wants to get burned-out or feel unsafe. These are local issues. Local residents hear what your members, and former members, are saying, even if you don't or don't want to. You need to deal with provider fatigue and burnout. You need to get rid of the bullies and harassers. No one else can do this for you and your department. Is it easy — no. But it has to be done, or you'll find your department going the way of the Do-Do Bird.

Whether or not the pandemic inspires people to join your call/volunteer force, what really matters to the future of the volunteer fire service is that your department needs to address the trends of the *2020 EMS Trend Report*.

You can read a full copy of the *2020 EMS Trend Report* at https://mcvfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020_EMS_Trend_Report.pdf. 

And Coming Early Next Year...

...a way to win cash for yourself while helping to fund MCVFA programs. The Association will be running cash calendar contest during February 2021. Keep an eye out for details in future emails, *Smoke Showin'*, and on the website.

Any questions, call Kevin Hempstead, Region 5 Regional Coordinator and Raffle Chairman, 413-329-3634.



www.mcvfa.org



MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE BILL H.2027

This bill, sponsored by Rep. Ruth Balser, is currently in the House Ways and Means committee. If passed it would offer cities and towns the local option of requiring home fire sprinklers in new one and two family dwellings.

Think about the wonderful opportunity that this offers the fire service. A city or town considering adopting this bill will have meetings to discuss it. Some attendees may be in favor of sprinklers, some opposed, some who have never thought about sprinklers, but want to learn more. The point is that you have people in a room. You will be presenting information about home fire sprinklers, but can also talk about other fire prevention, fire safety and fire survival topics, including smoke alarms and the family escape plan.

If the bill passes, and your town is thinking of adopting it, here are some possible talking points:

- ① In recent years a number of communities have seen homes built with home fire sprinklers: North Andover, Hopkinton, West Bridgewater, Berlin, Holliston and Groton.
- ② It's not only about sprinklers being installed, they do their job:
 - Westboro, 7/27/20 - Sprinklers in a multi-family home held off flames until fire crews arrived.
 - Oak Bluffs, 7/21/20 - Sprinklers helped extinguish a grease fire in an apartment.
 - Falmouth, 7/17/20 - A hotel fire was doused by a sprinkler system.
 - Worcester, 7/16/20 - A burning couch in a hi-rise activated a sprinkler which contained the fire.
- ③ Home fire sprinklers work exactly the same way as sprinklers in commercial buildings but rather than saving property, they are designed to save lives. An activated sprinkler sprays a little water on a small fire, slowing down

the spread of the fire, giving occupants additional time to get to safety.

- ④ Commercial buildings where people usually don't sleep have fire sprinklers, but homes where people do sleep rarely have them. And homes are where most fire deaths occur – where people feel safest.

The end result is that all attendees will learn something that one day may save their life, whether they end up voting to adopt House Bill H.2027, or not.

If you support House Bill H.2027 please contact:

- Mass. House Ways and Means Committee (State House, 24 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02133)
- Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo (19th Suffolk), Robert.DeLeo@mahouse.gov
- Ways and Means Chair: Rep. Aaron Michlewitz (3rd Suffolk), Aaron.M.Michlewitz@mahouse.gov
- Ways and Means Vice Chair: Rep. Denise Garlick (13th Norfolk), Denise.Garlick@mahouse.gov
- Ways and Means Assistant Vice Chair, Rep. Elizabeth Malia (11th Suffolk), Liz.Malia@mahouse.gov
- Ways and Means Ranking Minority Rep. Todd Smola (1st Hampden), Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov
- Your legislators: to find them visit: <https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator>
- Your town government: mayor, board of selectmen
- Your local newspaper
- Your department: fire chief, training officer, fire prevention officer, public information officer

Please support passage of House Bill H.2027 and pass this along to anyone concerned about fire safety. 🚒

Chili COOK-OFF



VIRTUAL!

Let's do a virtual Firehouse Chili Cook-Off. It's real simple. Send us your fire company's favor chili recipe. Send it now to MCVFAchilicontest@gmail.com. Then a firehouse that has agreed to be judges will make and test recipes, and announce a winner or two. We'll publish the winning recipes and maybe publish the best or all the entries.

JOE'S Chili

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. lean ground beef
- 1 lb. chorizo sausage (casing removed and broken up)
- 28 oz. can of salt-free crushed tomatoes
- 1 large sweet onion – chopped
- 4 minced garlic cloves
- 2 16 oz. cans of cannellini beans (drained)
- ½ cup of chili powder
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. black pepper
- Vegetable oil to coat bottom of kettle

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large cast iron kettle, heat the oil over medium-high heat and sauté the onions and garlic for about 5 minutes, or until tender.
2. Add the ground beef and chorizo, and brown for about 8 minutes, or until no pink remains. Drain off the excess liquid.
3. Dump in the remaining ingredients, mix well.
4. Reduce the heat to low. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

KEVIN'S CROCKPOT Chili

INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs. chopped meat (85% lean)
- 1 large onion
- olive oil
- 2 cans 15 oz. kidney beans (drained)
- 2 cans 14 oz. fire roasted diced tomatoes
- 1 can 14 oz. tomato sauce
- 2 Tbps. chili powder
- 1-2 tsp. red pepper flakes
- 1 pkg. shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 8 oz. container sour cream

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large skillet over medium heat add olive oil and then sauté the onion in it for about 3-4 minutes.
2. Add the ground beef, and cook for about 6-7 minutes until no longer pink and the onions are soft. Break the meat with a wooden spoon.
3. Drain the fat and add the beef mixture to a large (5 Quart) slow cooker.
4. Add the rest of the ingredients and stir well. Cover with lid and cook on Low heat for 6-7 hours or for 4 hours on High.
5. Serve warm with desired toppings and cornbread.

BON APPETIT

NVFC Releases New Research Report on

Volunteer Fire Service Retention



photos courtesy of National Volunteer Fire Council

Retention has long been a challenge for many volunteer and combination fire and EMS departments, yet little research has been done on the subject. Thanks to support from a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant, the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) has conducted a study to identify institutional drivers that cause volunteers to leave; the differing perceptions between leadership, current volunteers, and former volunteers; and what can be done to positively impact retention.

The research was conducted in three phases over the course of several months in 2019 and 2020. The first phase included interviews with current and former volunteers as well as department leadership. This was followed by a synthesis session and feedback from the NVFC's SAFER work group, which consists of representative from several national fire and emergency service organizations. The final phase was a quantitative survey of over 1,000 current and former volunteers as well as current department leadership.

"We know that many volunteer fire departments struggle with retaining volunteers, but much of our knowledge about why volunteers leave is based on anecdotal evidence," said NVFC deputy chief executive Sarah Lee, who oversees the organization's SAFER grant. "With this research, we now have data to back up the hypotheses. We also have a better idea of what areas to focus on to help departments overcome the challenges and improve their retention rates."

Some of the key findings from the quantitative research include the following:

- There is a disconnect between why former volunteers say they left a fire department versus what current leadership thinks are the reasons why volunteers leave.
- Current volunteers who have considered leaving but did not said their main reason for staying was their desire to give back to the community and help people.
- When asked what could have a positive impact on volunteer retention, both current and former volunteers cited mentorship programs, giving out awards/honors to members when they reach service milestones, conducting stay interviews with volunteers who have lapsed attendance, and conducting exit interviews when a volunteer

leaves the department among their top choices.

- The majority of department leadership (74%) said their department either had a general sense of retention but no specific way of measuring it or no clear definition of retention at all.

The NVFC will use the data from this research to develop tools and resources designed to help departments better understand and meet the retention challenges they face. Download the NVFC *Volunteer Research Retention Report*. Find additional recruitment and retention resources on the NVFC's web site.

The research was conducted as part of the NVFC's Make Me A Firefighter campaign, a SAFER-funded program that helps volunteer and combination fire departments recruit and retain volunteers. The campaign includes a department portal filled with free tools and resources to help departments increase their staffing and a public site where prospective volunteers can find a local fire service opportunity. 🚒

About the NVFC

The National Volunteer Fire Council (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 critical resources, programs, education, and advocacy for first responders across the nation. Learn more at www.nvfc.org




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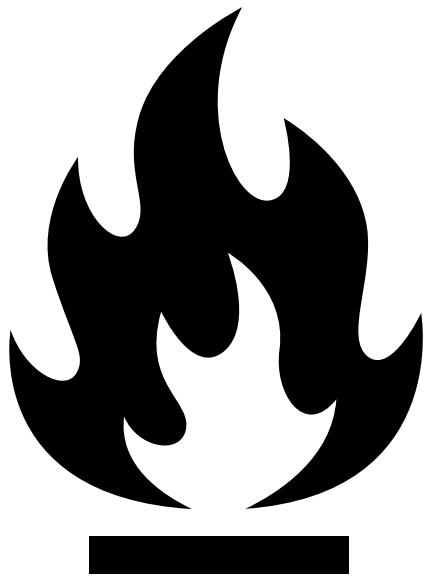
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SAFETY TIPS

FOR THOSE WITH EMPLOYEES



Safely handling flammable and combustible liquids



Fire prevention is especially important where flammable and combustible liquids are used. Make sure your employees understand how to identify, handle, and store flammable and combustible liquids.

Flammable liquids ignite easily and burn quickly, and have flashpoints below 100° F. Examples include gasoline, acetone, or methanol.

The flash point is the temperature at which a liquid produces enough vapors to be ignited. More than any other factor, flash point determines the flammability hazard of a liquid; the lower the flash point, the more flammable the material. Flammable liquids are known as “Class I” liquids.

There are three classes of flammable liquids:

- Class IA liquids have flashpoints below 73° F and boiling points below 100° F.
- Class IB liquids have flashpoints below 73° F and boiling points at or above 100° F.
- Class IC liquids have flashpoints at or above 73° F and below 100° F.

A combustible liquid has a flash point at or above 100° F up to 200° F. Examples include diesel fuel and motor oil. Combustible liquids are divided into three classes:

- Class II liquids have flashpoints at or above 100° F and below 140° F.

- Class IIIA liquids have flashpoints at or above 140° F and below 200° F.
- Class IIIB liquids have flashpoints at or above 200° F.

Use and Storage

Do not use flammable and combustible liquids where there are any open flames, sparks, or other sources of ignition (smoking, welding, etc.).

To avoid dangerous sparks caused by static electricity, containers of flammable liquids must be properly grounded and bonded while dispensing the liquid.

Storage must be in approved containers (drums, safety cans, etc.). Containers must be closed when not in use. The regulation at 1910.106 describes permissible storage containers by size and material (glass, plastic, metal, etc.) for various categories of liquids.

OSHA has special requirements for lighting and other electrical wiring used in flammable liquid storage rooms. Containers may also be kept in approved storage cabinets. OSHA sets limits on how much flammable or combustible liquid can be stored in one area.

Fire extinguishers must be available where flammable and combustible liquids are stored. Always observe “no smoking” signs where these liquids are present. Employers may be required to post a “no smoking” sign even if the company prohibits smoking on the premises.

Some Workers may fight Fires while Others Evacuate

Employers might choose to provide portable fire extinguishers for employees to fight incipient stage fires. An incipient stage fire is generally defined as one that can be controlled or extinguished using portable fire extinguishers. However, the regulation on portable fire extinguishers at 29 CFR 1910.157 provides alternatives for employers that do not want employees fighting these fires.

Many employers plan to evacuate employees to a safe location in the event of a fire. However, training some employees on fire extinguisher use may be necessary. For example, workers assigned to a fire watch after welding or other hot work are generally trained to use portable fire extinguishers. Potentially, some of your employees are trained to use fire extinguishers, while others would evacuate.



Employers who opt for evacuation do not have to comply with certain requirements of 1910.157, depending on the option chosen. These options are:

- **Evacuate all employees when a fire occurs.** Employers who select this option are relieved from compliance with 1910.157 unless some other regulation requires that portable fire extinguishers be provided. If the employer opts to evacuate everyone, it must have an emergency action plan compliance with 1910.38.
- **Evacuate all employees except those designated to use portable fire extinguishers.** Employers who select this option need not comply with the distribution requirements of 1910.157(d), which describes the distance to an extinguisher based on the class of fire. Under this option, the employer makes extinguishers available to the employees who are designated to use them. Complying with the emergency action plan provisions is still required.
- **The employer has portable fire extinguishers but does not want employees fighting fires and evacuates everyone to safety.** Fire extinguishers may be required by insurance companies or local fire departments. However, extinguishers not intended for employee use may still pose a hazard if they are not properly maintained. Employers who follow this option must comply only with the extinguisher maintenance, inspection, and testing requirements of 1910.157.

Extinguishers for Everyone

The other option is to provide portable fire extinguishers for use by any employee to fight incipient stage fires. In that case, the employer must comply with 1910.157 in its entirety, but there is no requirement to comply with the emergency action plan provisions of 1910.38.

If any employee could grab an extinguisher to fight an incipient stage fire, the employer must provide an educational program for all employees that covers the principles of fire extinguisher use. Employees expected to use portable fire extinguishers must be provided with “hands on” training in the use of the equipment, and this training must be repeated annually. 🛑

HOW WE CAN HELP



MassSupport Network provides free community outreach and support services to residents of all ages in response to the unprecedented public health crisis, COVID-19.

This Crisis Counseling Program (CCP) is funded by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and managed in partnership between the MA Department of Mental Health and Riverside Trauma Center, a program of Riverside Community Care.

Our anonymous, confidential, and free program is for individuals (including youth), families, organizations, schools, businesses and communities. We provide emotional support, coping strategies, resources, and up-to-date factual information; also group supports, consultations, and psycho-educational presentations on range of topics including stress management. 🌸

Western Mass based outreach clinicians and counselors:

Neal Boyd, MA

nboyd@riversidecc.org, 781-805-5514

Monica Bellucci, LMHC

mbellucci@riversidecc.org, 781-805-5456

Isabel Belen-Coppin, Ed.D

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Team Leader Sarah Gaer, MA

sgaer@riversidecc.org, 781-805-5422

888-215-4920 or MassSupport@riversidecc.org

REGION 1

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

Vice President Christopher J. Hajder, Swansea

Hello from Region 1. I'd like to start by thanking each and every one of you for your continued support to your respective communities during the continued pandemic we know as Covid-19. Your dedication does not go unnoticed. I hope all is well with you and yours, as this summer of 2020 continues to astonish us each and every day. C'mon 2021!

Region 1 will host its first 'quarterly' meeting on August 28th in Carver with socially distancing and safety at the forefront. A special thank you to Chief Weston and his department for their continued support and hospitality to the MCVFA. Covid-19 has put a damper on much of this Association's day to day business but we remain focused on the region and moving the MCVFA forward each and every day. My personal focus remains on recruitment and retention; not only for the MCVFA but to this region specifically.

I'd like to take a second to remind our readers that *Smoke Showin'* is the magazine for the members of MCVFA. Its content is for you and if you would like to see a story, information about your department (an event, a milestone), pictures, advertisement etc.; let us know. If we don't know about it, we can't print it, so make it happen.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that on Saturday, October 17, 2020, the MCVFA will hold our 30th Annual Meeting in Carver, MA. Why Carver you might ask? Well, Carver is where the idea of MCVFA was born and they have graciously offered to host this special occasion. Stay tuned for details as they emerge and I look forward to seeing old faces and meeting new peers.

Thank you for making a difference in the Commonwealth and stay well brothers and sisters!

Respectfully, Lt. Christopher J. Hajder, EMT Swansea Fire Department, Region 1, VP



Wareham Fire Dept. receives \$909,091 Grant for an Aerial Tower Truck

Reprint from The Courier & Sentinel

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has announced \$42.4 million in direct assistance grants to 221 fire departments nationwide through the agency's Fiscal Year 2019 Assistance to Firefighters Grant program, including \$909,091 to the Wareham Fire Department for an aerial tower truck.


The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program includes grants to the following fire departments in Massachusetts:

- Massachusetts Firefighting Academy (Stow) – Federal share of \$400,000 for a mobile protective gear washing unit
- Oakham – Federal share of \$61,905 for an air compressor / breathing apparatus refill system
- Oxford - Albion Fire Department – Federal share of \$200,000 for firefighter breathing apparatus
- Plympton - Federal share of \$230,476 for a brush fire truck
- Wareham - Federal share of \$909,091 for an aerial tower truck

Since 2001, the Assistance to Firefighters Grant has helped firefighters and other first responders obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training and other resources necessary for protecting the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards.

This grant is funded through FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grant program. Eligible applicants include local fire departments, fire districts, nonaffiliated EMS organizations, tribal fire departments and State Fire Training Academies. The grant applications are submitted from each agency directly to FEMA, where the applications are reviewed and scored by fire service personnel from throughout the nation.

FEMA obligates funding for this project directly to the recipient agencies. It is the recipient agency's responsibility to manage their grant award within federal guidelines with technical assistance and monitoring provided by FEMA Fire Program Specialists.

Additional information about FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters grant program(s) may be found at www.fema.gov/firegrants. 

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REGION 2

Covering the counties of Essex, Middlesex

Coordinator Lisa Evans, Groveland

Some of my brothers in firefighting have purchased trucks, ski mobiles, and even tractors. When I ask about the financing of the item, the percentage rates are out of this world; they are just way to high! With a little preparation and knowledge about interest rates and credit ratings, maybe we can save you a whole lot of money.

Start with your local banks' or credit unions' web site to learn about current interest rates and credit building opportunities. Did you know the Haverhill Fire Department Credit Union has memberships available to any person who is a public safety employee, present or retired, in Northern Essex County and their immediate families? Immediate family includes spouse, children, parents, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, and in-laws. Credit unions are generally not for profit and sometimes offer lower interest rate loans for their members. (Not to mention the Haverhill Fire Credit Union has a Fire Museum in the same building.)

It is important to build your good credit. You may want to start with a secured credit card through the credit union or bank. If you are first starting this process you may need to deposit for example \$500 into an account and request a credit card. Usually this type of secured credit card has a \$25-\$30 annual fee, but it is so important to build your credit. You want to build your credit prior to the purchase of your first truck because the good credit you have created could potentially earn you a better loan interest rate and save you on the interest cost for the length of the auto loan. This all adds up quickly to huge savings!

Remember, credit unions generally have excellent opportunities for auto loans rates. Do not go into a dealership to purchase a truck without knowing the going rates on auto loans. Knowledge is power; you need to know if the dealership is offering you a reasonable rate on a loan or if it is just a bunch of smoke and mirrors.

Finally, if you have already agreed to your dealerships terms for financing an auto loan you can still take a look at the credit union auto loan rates to determine if refinancing is a good choice for you or not. Check

your area for credit union opportunities, including opportunities on home mortgage loans. Stay safe my brothers and sisters in fire. 🚒

REGION 3

Covering the counties of Worcester, Middlesex, Norfolk

Vice President Michael Goldstein, Sherborn

Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Call/Vol Class 086 – Classes resume with Covid-19 restrictions:

The Massachusetts Firefighting Academy (MFA) Call/Volunteer Class 086 had its orientation on Monday, June 29, 2020. Unlike previous orientations, this orientation was done virtually through Adobe Connect due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Similarly, the first two days of class on Tuesday, July 7 and Thursday, July 9 were also taught virtually through Adobe Connect. A number of the class lectures are being taught virtually using Adobe Connect to reduce face-to-face time during the pandemic, and the system has been working well.

The first in-person class was a full day at Stow on Sunday, July 12, 2020. There are a number of new rules and protections put in place as a result of Covid-19 precautions, such as all persons must wear face masks while in the MFA building. In addition, each person (students and instructors) has his/her temperature taken as soon as he/she enters the building, and again mid-day. The "line-up" has moved from the "old firehouse" to the "new firehouse" to enable better spacing between students, so apparatus needs to be moved each time. There are a number of other precautions that have been put into place as well.

Class 086 consists of 39 students, about half of which were also part of the previous Class 083, which was cancelled a few weeks after it started (it is the only class in MFA history to be cancelled completely). Many of the members of Class 086 are from MCVFA Region 3 area fire departments including Athol, Ayer, Barre, Berlin, Dunstable, Dover, Groton, Harvard, Holden, Hopedale, Leicester, Millbury, Millville, Oxford, Pepperell, Princeton, Sherborn, Shrewsbury, Southborough, Stow, Tyngsborough, Upton, Uxbridge, West Boylston, and Weston (there is one other member of the class

REGION 4

Covering the counties of Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire

Vice President Kevin Connolly, Northfield

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, search & rescue, long lug out, MPO and drafting, ladders, combination attacks, transitional fire attacks, etc. Class 086 is about halfway through and should graduate on November 5, 2020, assuming no additional issues related to the pandemic.

Many thanks to the members of Class 086 for giving their time, and thanks to the MFA instructors for their time in providing safe training during the pandemic. Due to the pandemic, there has not been a Region 3 meeting. Meetings may resume in the winter depending on the course of the pandemic.

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 we can feature YOUR department or association in the next *Smoke Showin'*.

E-Board Meeting

The E-Board held a meeting on Saturday, August 1, 2020 at the Millbury Fire Station 3 in the parking lot. The members practiced social distancing during the meeting. Members discussed filling the treasurer and secretary positions, scholarship winners, cash calendar, and the future meetings. 🚒



Attending were Chris Hajder, Region 1 VP, Tom Burnett, President; Kathy Bird, recording secretary, Kevin Hempstead, Region 5 Coordinator, Frank Speth, VP Region 5, Kevin Connolly, VP Region 4, Lisa Evans, Region 2 Coordinator, Matthew Lemieux, Region 4 Secretary.

Hello to all! I hope that this finds all our members and their families in good health and spirit.

The MCVFA is still plugging along. The Executive Board has been holding meetings to take care of the usual business of the Association for the benefit of its members. One of our concerns is to keep our members engaged and to remind them that although we can't get together, the Association is working for them and still needs their support. Due to COVID-19 concerns, the plans we had for various fund-raising projects (to include a golf tournament) were put on hold for the time being. We are planning on a less restrictive project at this time.

We have had a few Chief changes in the over last few months: Chris Norris (Westhampton/Northampton) was sworn-in as Easthampton chief in July, replacing long time Chief Dave Mottor, who was sworn in as Blandford's (Region 5) new chief. Ed Poulin was appointed chief in Hampden, Joe Larson was appointed Interim Chief in Warwick and Deputy Chief Bruce Carpenter is currently the Acting Chief in Granby.



MCVFA Treasurer Larry Holmberg presents Goshen Firefighter Adrien Neveu a \$750 check as a 2020 recipient of the Robert J. Hindley Memorial Scholarship. Adrien is off to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY to begin his pre-med studies.

I would like to congratulate Adrien Neveu of Goshen and Ryan Moore of South Hadley as 2020 Robert J. Hindley Memorial Scholarship recipients. Adrien will be attending the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute while Ryan will be attending Anna Marie College.

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The MCVFA Executive Board would like to thank our member departments for their continuing support of the Association. We'd like to remind our member departments if they have not paid their dues for FY21 (July '20 – June '21), it's not too late. For those reading this whose departments are NOT members, we urge you to consider joining the Association. In addition, if your department is not a member, you may join as an individual member.

The Association has many benefits for its members, so please continue to support the Association so you do not lose these benefits.

If you have any questions in regards to membership, please feel free to contact Membership Secretary Kathy Bird at kibird@verizon.net.

Lastly, I would like to pass along one of my favorite recipes during the pandemic! This is my go-to favorite as comfort food – Crock Pot Chili! 🌶️

Thanks...Be well, be safe!

Remember – Wash, Mask, Distance

REGION 5

Covering the county of Berkshire

Vice President Frank Speth, III, New Ashford

Clarksburg Volunteer Fire Company's Wave Parade

The Clarksburg Volunteer Fire Company had held a wave parade on May 13th. The parade was held to help ease the stress of the stay at home COVID-19 crisis and help lift the spirits of the residents of the Town.

Agencies that participated in the parade included all the apparatus of the Clarksburg Volunteer Fire Company, Northern Berkshire EMS Medic-1, Northern Berkshire EMS Ambulance, Northern Berkshire Transport Van, the Stamford VT Fire Department, Clarksburg Police Department cruiser, and an empty school bus honoring all of the 8th grader seniors from the Clarksburg Elementary School.



There were groups of all ages waving, holding signs, and cheering the first responders on as they drove throughout the Town of Clarksburg.

It was a welcoming sight and well received by Clarksburg residents and visitors. Thank you to all the involved agencies and Townspeople.

Let's stay safe and healthy during this crisis.

Kevin Hempstead, Clarksburg Volunteer Fire Company
MCVFA Region 5 Coordinator

Dalton Fire Department Live Burn

The Dalton Fire Department held a live fire training at a 2-story house on Kirchner Rd in Dalton. The homeowner had graciously donated the house to the Department to use for training over the month of June. Several drills with a confined fire in a small room that was assembled by members of the Department to practice a controlled structure fire simulation. Many other local departments were afforded the use of the structure for some training/drills for their members.

On June 27th, the Dalton Fire Department held a live fire training with multiple departments. Other departments that participated were Hinsdale, Richmond, Peru, and Windsor Fire Departments. Hinsdale provided an engine for relay pumping as well as setting up two portable ponds. Hinsdale also provided their Rehab Unit.

A water shuttle operation was established utilizing tankers from Richmond, Peru, and Windsor.

Thank you to the Dalton Fire Department and to the homeowner for inviting the mutual aid departments to participate in the use of this building for training. It was a great learning experience for all involved. 🌶️



New Hancock Rescue Truck



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.

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).



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