

Call/Volunteers Serving Today to Protect Your Tomorrow

SMOKE SHOWIN'

The Official Publication of the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association



RESCUE ME!

Goshen Fire trains in open water rescue drills

Photo credit: Retired GFD Captain Bob Labrie

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MCVFA Offices

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From the Editor

Welcome MCVFA members to the Fall 2024 issue. I hope you and your departments are well and gearing up for a new season of training and public service.

Our cover features just one of the many departments that never take a break from strengthening their training in fire, medical, and rescue. In fact, there was quite a bit of training this summer, and we highlight the work and new apparatuses for a range of departments.

We feature first-time contributors (Barrett) and their perspective of the current state of the volunteer fire service and the value of a positive firehouse culture (Hanson Fire), including a book review of one of our columnists (Hanks). As always, you will find important legal/policy updates, communications from our partners, and tasty recipes.

Thank you for your service. Be safe!

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Length-of-Service Certificate

The MCVFA awards certificates to call/volunteer firefighters and EMT's who have achieved 20, 25 and 50 or more years in the call and volunteer fire and EMS service.

The MCVFA also awards certifies to call/volunteer and combination departments with a 75+ year certificate commemorating keystone department anniversary dates.

Certificates are issued by the MCVFA, and we ask that we have at least 3 weeks' notice before the scheduled presentation.

Please forward information to Kevin Connolly at mcvfa@mcvfa.org or mail to:

MCVFA Certificate Request

P.O. Box 13

Northfield, MA, 01360-0013

September 11, 2001

23rd Anniversary

Please join us for a brief
Remembrance Ceremony

September 11, 2024
Ceremony begins at 10:00am

Duxbury Fire Department Headquarters
668 Tremont Street
Duxbury, Massachusetts

9/11/01



"In memory of those who fell, and those that continue to carry on"

Ready or Not, Here Comes the Call

By Kelly Barrett

We've all seen the articles and emails and news reports telling us that we're in a national shortage of volunteers. Considering that multiple sources—NVFC, FEMA, NFPA, and individual state reports—tell us that 70% of firefighters/fire departments in the United States are comprised of volunteers, a growing national shortage seems pretty alarming.

The thing is, career departments are struggling right along with the volunteers. They are bemoaning having only 90 people take the test to join their department and hiring five people when back in the day they had hundreds, maybe even a thousand, people applying depending on the department.

Societal values contributing to this lack of desire to serve—whether volunteer or career, or a combination of the two—is a whole different discussion for another time. The reality is, people are not breaking down the doors to join the fire service anymore, so we need to look at the fire service itself to see how to keep the good people we have and recruit the ones who will actually serve.

One key thing to keep in mind is Quality, not Quantity

You can have a full, maxed out roster. If you have 50 slots available on your roster and all 50 slots are filled, you look like you're in good shape. But if only 25 of those people participate in training and only 15 respond to calls... well, then you have a problem with the quality of your roster and are at risk of losing those 15 people who are going to hit their wall.

Rather than dumbing things down, lowering the bar, in an effort to recruit numbers, the fire service should be digging in on setting high standards to recruit and retain good firefighters.

A few years back at the NVFC Recruitment & Retaining Conference held in Cleveland, OH, one of the speakers offered something along the lines of, who you have in front of people is who you will attract.

I don't remember which speaker said it or in which session, so I can't give credit where it's due. But that sentiment struck a chord.

You've heard of t-shirt firefighters, right? The people who join the department for the "look at me" aspect of firefighting, for the glory calls, to be able to pound their chest and point to the emblem or patch printed on their shirt and tell everyone that they're a firefighter. They want to be the face of the department. They are front and center any chance they get, including during events when you can recruit new members. They're going to bring in the same type of people and the same type of firefighters as they are.

Is this going to raise or lower the standards at your department? Would you rather put the quality members in your department as your primary recruiters to draw more people like them?

“Who you have in front of people is who you will attract”

So, you've drawn people to your department. How do you keep them?

Career departments can review financial incentives such as salary, insurance, retirement, and vacation time to entice people to come to work.

Volunteers have to appeal to people, make the time they dedicate, and sacrifice to the department worth their while. A person who sets



aside 2 hours every week for training wants to actually train, not just watch YouTube videos of firefighter bloopers every week, because no one actually planned and organized a productive and relevant training. Or how about the person who sets aside 2 hours of their time every week for training only to be “taught” fireground tactics that have been repeatedly proven dangerous or ineffective, but their training officer does not stay current and hasn’t been to training outside of the department in the last decade? Do you think people who are sacrificing time with their family after a long day at their full-time job are going to stick around with “training” like that?

Overhaul your training program. There are a few ways to do this. This simply might be to sit your department members down and ask what training topics need to be covered in the upcoming year. Make a schedule for the entire year. Assign someone to teach each training session which includes writing the objectives, skills, any references, etc. so if something comes up that prevents them from leading the training, then someone else is able to lead it based on preparation.

Another approach is to set a multi-faceted training goal—maybe quarterly or halfway through the year or even the end of the year. Every training is leading up to that training goal. You have a goal of doing a live burn at your local fire school at the end of the first quarter? Every training between now and then is preparing your people for that live burn. EMS training is fireground rehab, smoke inhalation patients, burn injuries. Fire training is pulling preconnects, 30-second door drills, hose line advancement, throwing ladders, ventilation, and ICS integration. If your goal is to run an MVA

“Don’t be brutal in training just for the sake of being tough. Standards need to be reasonable. Requiring everyone to don gear in under 20 seconds is not reasonable. You want to encourage your people to learn, not scare them away.”

MCI scene at the end of the 2nd quarter, then every training in the second quarter is geared towards that training— extrication, patient movement, triage, ICS, vehicle fire suppression, and more.

Make your trainings worth the time of your people

There is a difference between working smarter and modifying movements rather than lazy training and lowering the bar or standard.

For decades, firefighters have been donning their gear in 60 seconds or less for their skill tests. Keep that standard high. Do not lower the standard to 90 seconds.

Firefighters who are not as tall as some may struggle with a high shoulder carry. That's fine. Don't force them to do something that could get them hurt. Allow them to modify the carry with a suitcase carry. The ladder still gets thrown in under 5 minutes. That's keeping high standards with a modification.

Don't be brutal in training just for the sake of being tough. Standards need to be reasonable. Requiring everyone to don gear in under 20 seconds is not reasonable. You want to encourage your people to learn, not scare them away.

Have an onboarding program for your new members. Everyone, including new officers, no matter how high-ranking, should go through the onboarding. Learn department standards, learn how neighboring departments operate in relation to your department, and the communication standards for your surrounding area. Don't just rush people through this process; actually take the time to teach and let them learn.

And help them keep learning.

Send your people to training outside of your department! Find conferences, workshops, symposiums, and lectures. Even a training event one district over can be beneficial; it doesn't have to be a trip to Indianapolis or New York.

Set the standards from day one. Determine you want high quality people, not just slots filled on the roster. Recruit those people then help them reach their potential which will help you retain good members.

“The Volunteer Fire Service is not dying. We're just recruiting the wrong people and chasing away the good Firefighters.”

The tones drop at o'dark thirty on a weeknight. Who from your department is responding?

The tones drop on a beautiful Saturday afternoon. Who from your department is responding?

You're the one who called 9-1-1 for your kid who is struggling to breathe or because your house is on fire. Who from your department is responding? Are they ready to handle your emergency?

Do you have a department of quality firefighters or are they just a number on the roster?

Kelly Barrett is a 4th generation Firefighter as well as an AEMT and Fire & EMS Instructor. She serves on the Litchfield Fire & Rescue Department in Ohio as well as on her county's All-Hazard Rope Rescue Team, as an officer for the MCFE, and is on the OSFA Legislation Committee.



Invitation to Participate in New Health Study

September 2024 marks ten years since MCVFA accepted an invitation from Dr. Stefanos Kales to join some of the leading minds at the forefront of firefighter health and wellness at the Mediterranean Diet and Workplace Health Conference at Harvard School of Public Health. This was the start of an important and ongoing relationship for MCVFA with one of the nation's leading firefighter health research groups.

Please see below for a special invitation from Dr. Kales and his team and consider sharing this opportunity with call/volunteer colleagues who may benefit.

Surviving & Thriving Healthy Lifestyle App for Firefighters

Dr. Kales' research team from Cambridge Health Alliance and Harvard is conducting a study focused on enhancing the health and well-being of firefighters. The study centers around the Surviving & Thriving Healthy Lifestyle App, a comprehensive tool designed to meet the unique lifestyle needs of new firefighters. This app is the first to offer a holistic approach, addressing key areas like nutrition, sleep, physical activity, and resilience, specifically tailored to the demanding role of a firefighter.

To ensure the app effectively supports the fire service community at large, we are seeking volunteer/call firefighters to participate in testing it. Your feedback will be crucial in refining the app and making sure it meets the needs of firefighters nationwide. Participants will be compensated for their time and effort, and your involvement could make a meaningful impact on the health of firefighters everywhere. Interested firefighters should contact Irene Lidoriki at elidoriki@hsph.harvard.edu

NVFC Releases Guide for New Fire Service Families



The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is excited to announce the release of our new resource for volunteer fire service families. **What to Expect: A Guide for New Firefighter Families (Second Edition)** is designed to help new fire and EMS recruits along with their spouses/significant others, children, parents, siblings, and other family members make the adjustment to the volunteer fire service lifestyle.

Joining the fire service affects the entire family, and it is important for the responder's wellbeing and their retention that the family is on board to support their loved one throughout their emergency service journey.

The guide introduces family members to the basics of the volunteer fire service life and provides guidance for keeping family relationships strong, being part of the fire

department family, and more. It also includes resources to help families best navigate their "new normal."

The guide is available for free download, or order up to 10 print copies in the NVFC store for just the cost of shipping, while supplies last. Provide a copy to all of your department's new fire and EMS recruits so that their families know what to expect as they embark on this new and wonderful journey with their loved one into the volunteer fire and emergency services family.

Download the guide here: <https://bit.ly/firefighter-family-guide>

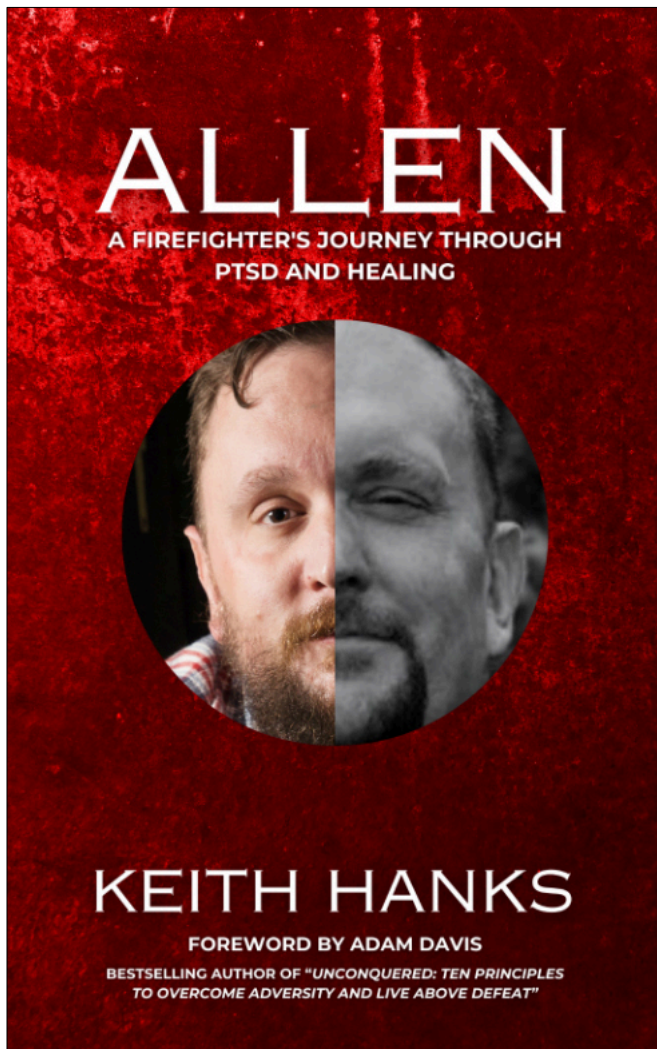
Order print copies here: <https://bit.ly/firefighter-family-guide-print>

Book Review

First Responder Warning Call

In his autobiography *Allen: A Firefighter's Journey Through PTSD and Healing*, Keith Hanks gets personal about the challenges of the job and the promise of healing

By Roland Courtemanche



Allen is an amazing story of one firefighter's struggles to bring normalcy to his life as he pursues a career in helping others. Haunted by the demons from his childhood abuses Keith struggles in his early years to understand why this was happening to him and how to cope with this.

Keith's early teens brings him into the fire service where helping others brings great joy and pride being a multi generation firefighter. A welcomed escape from the demons of his childhood.

As an honorable and noble career begins for Keith he is soon discovered to be that guy we all know, the firefighter with the black cloud following him everywhere he goes. As the tragedies happen one after another in his career he soon discovers the brotherhood doesn't talk about feelings and it is clearly understood if the heat is too hot in the kitchen get out! Bad calls and death you trained to be empathetic and at all costs not to show any emotion which meant a sure sign of weakness.

From a time where no one talked about PTSD or even knew how to deal with PTSD you learned to swallow the pain, despite all the tragedies the deaths and abuses Keith struggled to stand back up and fight.

Allen reminds me of the saying, Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about. We are always quick to judge others' attitudes and never think to ask if their having a bad day or is there anything I can do to help. In the end seeing Keith overcome his demons with the support of an amazing wife who sees who he can be and not what he was finally find's peace. And even better yet the decision to stop and turn around and see who else he can help overcome their struggles.

Allen sheds an important light on PTSD and the value of believing in yourself. We are most certainly our biggest critic in life and certainly would benefit from becoming our biggest cheerleader.

For all my colleagues in Police, Fire and EMS being the credible witness to death and destruction has its price and no one should ever feel alone in their struggles. I don't care how tough you think you are or how many degrees you have on your wall one simple call can send you spiraling out of control.

So, give Allen a read and take a moment, and start the conversation with your brothers and sisters on the job.

Roland Courtemanche is a former Topsfield firefighter/paramedic and a member of First Responder Therapy Dogs.

Welcome New Apparatuses!

MCVFA congratulates the Boxford FD, Southwick FD, and West Barnstable FD on their new 3000-gallon engine tankers.



GO AHEAD BE A SHOWOFF!

Got new truck, engine, or ambulance to share?

Submit a photo of your newly delivered apparatus so we can feature it in the next issue of *Smoke Showin'*. Send to editor@MCVFA.org

Duxbury Fire Department: Saving Lives Is Part of the Job

By Robert Reardon, Chief of Department



In just the first week of August, our fire department has responded to 69 emergencies, including 48 medical calls. Thanks to the expertise of our highly trained paramedics and EMT's, lives have been saved. In one case, our team successfully shocked a patient back into a life-sustaining rhythm. Another patient was spared from imminent cardiac arrest through the timely administration of life saving medications.

Beyond these cardiac cases, our medics also reversed a severe anaphylactic reaction, utilizing advance medication and their exceptional skills.

This snapshot of our recent activity highlights the critical, life-saving interventions your firefighters perform, alongside their firefighting duties.

Hanson Fire Department: Positivity Feeds Progress

By Scott S. Billings, Call Firefighter / Lieutenant;
Delegate, Hanson Fire Department

I'm coming into the home stretch (38-year anniversary soon) and happy to report that by shifting gears recently, I feel both myself and my agency are in a much healthier position today. Let me explain.

I consider myself very fortunate to be a part of a young & energetic Department in such a dynamic area. The Town of Hanson is in Plymouth County in Southeast Mass, Fire District #2 is comprised of 27 Municipalities ranging from large all Career Civil Service Departments with Private EMS Service, Combination Fire & EMS Departments and paid on-call Fire Departments. Geographic challenges includes a diverse mix of seaside communities and a blend of a busy city coupled with dense rural urban-wildland interface challenges—a truly unique and always evolving area of the State!

I'm very fortunate to have had worked with many great leaders over the years, and been a part of some significant incidents & events. There is sometimes a philosophy of staff either being part of the problem or part of the solution, to which I found myself getting stuck in the mud in a pool of negativity and somewhat cynical thinking. It wasn't until a slow gradual change from some very special people helped me to reflect and realize this.

Our strong roots strengthen our mission to the public

Hanson is considered as a smaller bedroom Community, Full service – Combo Department. We have full time career staff (PFFM L-2713) and paid Call-Firefighters that provide both Fire & EMS for all levels of service calls, including a close working relationship with our Police,

Highway/Water Depts. Our foundational roots have always been to allow for the process of onboarding Call –Firefighters, proper training and process for active call back, details, shifts etc. and ultimately the opportunity for career positions as they become available and in that tradition allows for unique harmony within our agency family.



“Rank and file also support the philosophy of the Community spirit in that of much more than just response to Public Safety emergencies...”

Both our Fire Chief & Deputy Chief (Chief Robert O'Brien Jr.) and Deputy Chief (Deputy Charley Barends) continue to be the biggest example of that process still working today in that both started as Call Firefighters and rose through the ranks, never forgetting their roots and continuing to be huge supporters of MCVFA and Call Firefighters today. Rank and file also support the philosophy of the Community spirit in that of much more than just response to Public Safety emergencies but rather as the complete package of Residents supporting Residents in an open house type management style for supporting taxpayers at all available events and opportunities.

This fresh reset appears to be widely recognized and appreciated by both Town Officials and residents and a key factor towards department moral. At the very time of writing this article, my Chief was preparing for a possible EMAC deployment for SWIFT water rescue out of State for Hurricane “Debby,” and my Deputy Chief had recently completed a Local radio station interview for his involvement organizing Community events throughout the year. There is little downtime and yet so much positive energy and forward momentum.

Key advice for both new and tenure staff that can aid both individually and the agency

- You signed up for this profession to go on calls and help people. Even on your worst day on the job, you are still in a better spot than those who summons us.
- Everyone plays a role in the drama threshold for your Department. attempt at all avenues to avoid the negativity and take the high road.
- Limit your Personal, Religious and Political views inside the Firehouse.
- Have patience with the dinosaurs gang ! We grew up in a different Fire Service, have patience onto us as we do onto you, in some cases, we are jealous but just too macho to say so. Never underestimate the power and value of experience. Our ancestors that paved this road never realized the changes we are experiencing today. (Somebody had to stay up late to feed the horses!)
- Every day and every call is a training opportunity and when you forget that complacency sets in. Beware!
- Harness all the excitement and enthusiasm you had on Day 1 – nourish that forever.
- Network with your peers and counterparts, near and far

- Humans complains, a lot! Understand the difference between critique of an incident and constant complaining.
- The fire service will humble and mature you, if you let it. That’s a good thing.
- Value those you got you where you are today. Thank them and keep them in your close inner circle.
- What happens in the Firehouse stays in the Firehouse.

“Everyone plays a role in the drama threshold for your Department. attempt at all avenues to avoid the negativity and take the high road. “

We all play a huge role in the health of our agencies, and often times it’s not the major incidents that will impact a department the most but the little day-to-day operational things that sometimes are ignored or overlooked, that play such a pivotal role in achieving a positive momentum. Once that momentum is moving forward, it’s critical to feed that positivity because it’s that positivity that feeds the future and progress for you individually and that of your entire agency.

I would like to acknowledge both current and retired staff of the Carver Fire Department, the movement Carver Fire staff started in 1990 on the 2nd floor of the former Station #1 started this Association and continues to carry that positive torch. Its vigilant attention into recruitment and retention has affected so much of the Fire Service, in Massachusetts and beyond. Kudos to you all for being such a unique and dedicated group of special people and continuing to allow Call-Firefighters into this special family of the best job in the world.

Hanson Fire Recognitions



Recent onboarding of Six new Call Firefighters, will continue both classroom and practical field evolutions until the Call FF I / II Training at Bridgewater DFS Academy in December 2024. (Photos credit: Scott Billings)



Continuous training and ongoing Community events



Members in Action



Chief Rob O'Brien and Deputy Chief Charlie Barends have great working relationships with both Local Town Officials and our local Sheriff's Office (Sheriff Joseph McDonald) and Plymouth County District Attorney (Timothy Cruz). This relationship is greatly beneficial at so many levels.

Call Firefighter Michael Means, who was my MCVFA Alternate who recently retired after nearly 25 years. Mike was a huge asset as a full time Hanson Highway employee as well as an active member within the Plymouth County Technical Rescue & Dive Team.



Chief O'Brien recently coordinated new turnout gear for all staff, transitioning to Tradition black. Yellow is still in use for probationary FF and used at training evolutions. Hanson Call Firefighters have great working relationship with Full time/career staff, tenure staff are approved to drive apparatus and certified Paramedics are active on EMS responses. All Call staff are allowed ample coordinated training on an ongoing basis and allowed shift work on a scheduled basis to further enhance operational capabilities.



With recent addition in July of six new call FF brings our roster to thirteen total. Career staff include full time administrative assistant, Chief, Deputy Chief, and full-time Lieutenant plus three paramedics per group.

Four groups work a 24-on, 24-off, 24-on, 4 days off. All Call FF are assigned into two groups for call-back purposes, as is typical when both ambulances are committed to hospital transports, for a combination of off-duty & call FF staff recall at HQ.

Goshen Fire Department: Realistic Scenarios for Open-Water Rescue Drills

The Goshen MA fire department is home to three separate bodies of water, Upper Highland Lake, Lower Highland Lake, and Hammond Pond.

Because of this, the fire department trains biannually; ice rescue in the winter and open water rescue in the summer. Our fire department occasionally works cooperatively with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) of Massachusetts at the DAR State Forest in Upper Highland Lake.

In July of this year, the Goshen fire department held a drill at Hammond Pond. In an effort to try to make more realistic and challenging situations, first responders were tasked with rescuing persons with possible neck injuries off of a floating dock in the water. This enabled our firefighters, many of whom are EMTs, to truly flex their skills. As the training officer, I try to utilize all of our resources for water rescue. All aspects of Reach, Throw, Row and Go were all practiced as well as the expedient inflation and deployment of our banana boat.

At one point during this training, I was extremely impressed by the precise deployment of a Res-Q-Disc by one of our newer members.

Turns out, he is an avid disc golfer, and had what it took to deploy it successfully!



During these life like scenarios, I try to utilize members of the community to volunteer as victims as well. This method of outreach has actually led to the addition of many of our volunteers. Our winter and summer water rescue drills usually have a very large attendance due to the significant amount of hands-on scenario training.

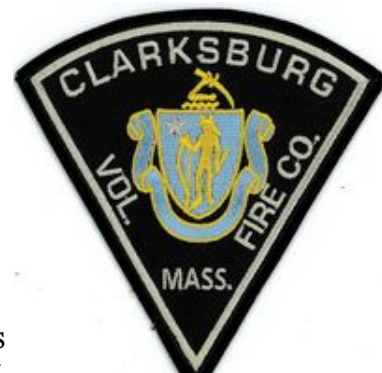
I highly recommend getting creative and try to make trainings as hands on, safe, and fun as possible.



Left: Firefighter Ed Sturtervant is repacking a throw bag, while Firefighter Vuk Whallon demonstrates perfect deployment of a Res-Q-Disc. Right: Firefighter/EMT Emily Godden and Firefighters Kayla Jones and Joshua Lafond perform spinal stabilization on volunteer victim.

Photo credit: Retired GFD Captain Bob Labrie

Clarksburg Fire Department: Fireground Training



Members of CVFC training on different aspects of the fireground, from pump operations to ladder placements, search and rescue, and hose line advancements. Training was conducted at the Clarksburg State Park.



Photo credit: Steven Beagle

Did You Know? You Have A Voice on the Massachusetts Fire Training Council

We all know that training is vital within the fire service, and the Massachusetts Fire Academy (MFA) is a great resource, but did you know that you can help shape the future of training in the state?

Massachusetts has one of the best fire academies in the nation, with top-notch instructors, excellent leadership, and access to all firefighters. The MFA serves thousands of firefighters each year. In 2023 MFA conducted over 800 classes, with more than 13,700 participants. The Academy also issued an average of nearly 200 certificates each month. MFA has such a robust program not only because of the quality of its courses, but because of its accessibility. The Academy has three sites throughout the state, and training is offered at no cost to current Massachusetts firefighters. The Academy is led by a director, deputy directors, and falls within the Department of Fire Services.

The Department of Fire Services oversees the day-to-day operations of the MFA, but the Massachusetts Fire Training Council (MFTC) also has an important role in guiding the Academy. The MFTC approves the courses/curriculum taught by the Fire Academy. It is also the sole certifying agency for all levels of fire service personnel in the Commonwealth, i.e. Pro-Board certification. The Council was created by statute to represent a cross-section of the Massachusetts fire service, including two representatives from MA Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association (MCVFA). The Council meets monthly to conduct business and review input brought forward by representatives of the fire service.

Your voice matters. The Council has a diverse membership to ensure that the MFA is serving all aspects of the Massachusetts fire service. Let us know what programs best serve your department and community, what you'd like to see more of, and what you'd like to see developed. As one of your MCVFA representatives, I can tell you that we want to hear from you.

To find out more about the MFTC visit the website [Massachusetts Fire Training Council | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/web/content/massachusetts-fire-training-council), contact your MCVFA regional coordinator or a member of the eBoard (listed on their website MCVFA – Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association), or reach out directly to your MCVFA representatives on the Council.

Assistant Chief Jonathan L. Miller

Monson Fire Department;

MA Fire Training Council MCVFA Representative

Skillet Fried Ribeye Steaks with Martini Olives and Wine Sauce

By Joe Maruca

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

4 Thin Cut Ribeye Steaks about 1/2 pound each

3 Tablespoons of Butter

2 Garlic Cloves – peeled & smashed

1 Cup of Olives Stuffed with Pimentos – Chopped

1/8 Cup of Olive Brine

1 Cup of Dry White Wine

2 Tablespoons of Red Wine Vinegar

Salt & Pepper (coarse ground)

Canola Oil

Large Cast Iron Skillet

Directions:

- Depending on the size of your skillet and the size of the steaks, you may have to brown the steaks in two batches.
- Season the steaks with salt & pepper on both sides.
- Add about a tablespoon of oil to the skillet.
- Heat the skillet over a medium flame until the oil is hot.
- Add the steaks to the skillet and cook on one side until the bottom is browned.

- Flip the steaks and cook for one or two minutes.
- Add the half the butter and garlic and swirl around the steaks.
- Cook the steaks another two or three minutes until well browned.
- Transfer the steaks to a serving platter and cover with foil to rest about 10 minutes.
- Remove the garlic from the skillet.
- Lower the heat to medium.
- Add the oils and cook, stirring, for about one or two minutes.
- Add the wine and bring the mixture to a simmer.
- Cook until most of the wine has evaporated.
- Remove from heat.
- Add the olive brine, vinegar, and the remaining butter.
- Stir until melted.
- Remove from heat.
- After the steaks have rested, slice them diagonally into 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick slices. Pour over all of the juices and the olive sauce.

Serve

HAIL TO THE CHEF!

Got a “secret” recipe or “hot” firehouse dish?

Share your department’s recommendations for firehouse grub. Name it what you want—as long the food’s good!

Editor@MCVFA.org

Paying Volunteers and Call Firefighters: A Regulatory Primer

By Joe Maruca, Retired Fire Chief, West Barnstable Fire

Recently, I fielded questions about whether a volunteer firefighter can get paid (yes), do call firefighters have to get paid for everything they do (yes), and is a volunteer firefighter stipend different from call firefighter pay (it's the hourly rate). Here's a primer on unpaid volunteers, volunteers who get paid a stipend, and call firefighters (who are part-time employees) and to how legally "pay" them.

The federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) says that you can't be both an employee and a volunteer for the same entity/organization for the same or similar duties. So, a teacher can be a volunteer for the same town they teach, but they can't volunteer to do teaching (or related duties) for the same town. A paid career firefighter in one town (or fire district) can volunteer for a different town (or fire district) because it's a different legal entity. (In fact, the AFG and SAFER grant rules say that if you accept federal grant money, a department can't prevent career firefighters from volunteering in another town.)

If you pay your firefighters an hourly rate (i.e. \$18/hour) for going to fires or any other activity, they are no longer volunteers no matter how little or how much they are paid. Instead, they are employees under the FLSA, and you must

pay them hourly for all work they do. If you pay them hourly to go to fires, you must pay them hourly to attend drills, do truck checks, conduct an inspection, teach a community program, and clean the fire station. They can't legally volunteer for some duties and get an hourly wage for others.

It is the hourly pay rate that converts volunteers or call firefighters into employees and subject to the FLSA employee rules

If you pay hourly, you must pay at least minimum wage, but you can pay different hourly rates for different duties. It would be legal to pay \$25/hour to respond to nighttime calls, \$35/hour for daytime calls, and \$20/hour for drills and truck checks. You can still pay bonuses for achievements, extra participation, and such.

If your firefighters are volunteers and paid a stipend, then you do not have to pay a stipend for all duties. You can still have some duties paid and some traditional (unpaid) volunteer duties. This is because the FLSA treats these firefighters as volunteers and exempt from the wage rules.

The generally accepted definition of a volunteer firefighter under the FLSA is as follows:

The volunteer firefighter is paid no money, OR

The volunteer is paid a stipend that:

- Is not hourly; AND
- Is less than 20% of what a career firefighter is paid.

Some examples of acceptable stipends under the FLSA that retain volunteer status are:

Payment category	Allowance
<i>Per call stipend</i>	You can pay \$20 per call (or any amount you want) so long as the stipend is paid whether the call lasts 2 minutes or 2 days
<i>Per drill stipend</i>	It can be a different amount than the per call stipend.
<i>Per shift stipend</i>	<p>You can pay a stipend for covering a shift or a detail, so long as the stipend is not pro-rated and essentially an hourly rate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, you can pay a \$50 stipend to cover a detail at high school football game, but the \$50 has be paid whether the game runs 2 hours or 3 hours. <p>You can pay a stipend for covering a defined shift period, so long as you don't make it hourly – this is a bit tricky.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, you can pay \$100 for someone to cover the 4-hour morning shift, but if they have to stay past the end time, you have pay them the full stipend for the next shift even if they only stay for 10 minutes until the next person arrives. If you two people split the 4-hour shift, they both get the full stipend.
<i>Annual stipend</i>	Based upon rank and qualifications
<i>Annual lump sum</i>	A bonus or stipend for extra ordinary participation such as responding to more than X calls
<i>Simple annual or monthly stipend</i>	For simply being a member of the department

Keep in mind that these stipends shouldn't (routinely) add up to more than 20% of what a career firefighter is paid. Guessing that the typical career firefighter in Massachusetts has a compensation package worth \$80,000 to \$100,000 (or more in some regions of our state), volunteers shouldn't be getting stipends that are more than about \$20,000 a year. Although generally there is some latitude here, because most compensation packages go well beyond the stated base pay and you can take that into account when determining the typical compensation for a career firefighter in your area. But don't get carried away.

Breaking it down by member type

- For call firefighters, who are part-time employees, there is no 20% cap. They can be paid as much as the town or district is able and willing to pay because they are already employees and not volunteers.
- Combination departments can simply look to their own career staff pay in order to figure out the maximum for volunteer stipends. Volunteer departments can look at the average of two or three nearby career

departments for guidance

- Volunteers can always be given “swag” without impact on their volunteer status. The department can give out T-shirts, hats, coffee mugs, beer mugs, multi-tools, and other awards and incentives without it being an issue.

There are exclusions to compensation

Providing PPE, insurance, professional association memberships (MCVFA and NVFC), uniforms, training, and equipment is not compensation and is not a factor in determining volunteer or employee status. You can provide your volunteers and employees with all of the same training, PPE, and, to the extent allowed by state law, benefits of career firefighters. (Note, you are required to provide PPE at no cost to your firefighters.)

You can also reimburse volunteers for actual fire department related expenses and that is not compensation and is not a factor in determining volunteer or employee status. If a volunteer drives to a training class and the department reimburses him/her for the class fee and milage

(at the IRS rate) then there is no compensation or issue under the FLSA.

Reimbursements without receipts and for amounts that exceed the actual cost of the expense are income for tax purposes. Giving a firefighter a check for \$1000 for expenses, without receipts or having to prove they had \$1000 in expenses is income to the firefighter.

Similarly, access to a take-home vehicle by chiefs or duty-officers and other responders is not usually compensation. In Massachusetts, there is a way that an assigned take-home vehicle can be classified as compensation, but it requires some special steps and is only done for qualifying the car as compensation towards pension calculations. (It is uncommon and almost impossible to do unless you intend to.)

Be aware of the fine print

Since almost all fire departments in Massachusetts are municipal departments within a city or town (or fire district) there are some extra issues to be aware of. First, if your firefighters are call firefighters or paid-on-call firefighters who get an hourly rate, then they are municipal part-time employees. State law limits municipal part-time employees from working a schedule of twenty or more hours per week. If they work twenty or more hours per week, then they are eligible for full-time benefits (think health insurance and pensions) and you are required to offer those benefits.

However, simply working more than 20 hours in one week does not necessarily trigger the requirement to provide full-time benefits. The town/department can choose to measure the hours weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually. Quarterly seems to work best. The town/department must have a written policy stating the measuring period.

If you measure part-time employee hours quarterly, the quarterly limit is 260 hours (13 weeks x 20 hours). If the part-time employee works 260 hours in that quarter, you are required to offer benefits for the next full quarter. If their hours drop back to 219 hours or less, then you can withdraw benefits in the next full quarter.

If you track hours monthly, this means a call or part-time firefighter can work 15 hours one week, 28 hours the next week, 4 hours the

following week, and then 21 hours in the next week, for an average of 17 hours per week in the month and are under the 20-hour limit.

Emergency call back doesn't count towards scheduled work hours of call firefighters or part-time firefighters. So, if a call or part-time firefighter works a schedule of 15 hours one week and goes to 6 hours of emergency calls for a total of 21 hours, only the 15 scheduled hours count towards the under 20-hour limit.

Scheduled work hours for call firefighters will typically fall into three categories: scheduled drills, scheduled truck checks/station maintenance duty, and shift coverage. Many departments have "per-diem" firefighters working shifts each day. For FLSA purposes and Massachusetts employment law purposes, a call firefighter, a paid-on-call firefighter, a per-diem firefighter, and a part-time firefighter are all different names for the same thing.

If your call or part-time firefighters work for another town department such as the DPW or the schools, they can still be call firefighters, but plan on paying them overtime.

For most hourly jobs, the FLSA (and state law) require paying overtime after 40 hours. (The FLSA requirement to pay overtime for firefighters is after 52 hours.) If an hourly DPW worker works 40 hours for the town at his or her regular job, and then works 5 hours as a call firefighter, they are owed 5 hours of overtime. Their overtime rate is a blended rate between their DPW pay rate and their fire department pay rate. (My math skills are too weak for this – talk to legal counsel or a CPA.)

Many towns balk at the idea of overtime and then restrict their town employees from joining the fire department, but it's a short-sighted, knee-jerk reaction to the word "overtime". When you look at the actual cost and compare it to the cost of other options, particularly hiring part-time or full-time firefighters, it's a good deal and financially sound.

Salaried (exempt) town employees can be call or volunteer firefighters without having to worry about overtime (unless they somehow work as call firefighter for more than 52 hours a week). For example, the town manager or school superintendent are going to fall into this category.

“There is no one definition that fits all the different laws and situations. But, for IRS and DOR purposes, anyone, volunteer or call, who gets paid hourly or a stipend, is an employee for tax purposes.”

Know the IRS rules for stipends

If you are paying stipends to your volunteers (not expense reimbursements) or paying call firefighters an hourly wage, then you must provide them with W-2 forms, withhold taxes, Medicare, and enrollment in the state’s mandatory OBRA retirement plan. Using 1099’s is inappropriate and violates IRS and State law.

The distinctions between volunteers who stipends and call firefighters who are part-time employees matter for FLSA questions, but the IRS and the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) have their own definitions, laws,

and interpretations. It is sometimes difficult for us to comprehend that the labor board says you’re a volunteer, the IRS says you’re an employee, the civil rights divisions might say you’re a volunteer, the insurance company treats you as an employee, and so on. There is no one definition that fits all the different laws and situations. But, for IRS and DOR purposes, anyone, volunteer or call, who gets paid hourly or a stipend, is an employee for tax purposes.

I hope all of this helps you understand this sometimes confusing and complex set of rules. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at jmaruca291@gmail.com

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What Does OSHA's Proposed Emergency Response Standard Mean to Your Fire Department?

OSHA is proposing a new Emergency Response Standard to replace the existing Fire Brigades Standard. This proposed standard imposes numerous requirements that would be infeasible for many volunteer fire departments to comply with. The initial public comment period on this proposed standard concluded on July 22. OSHA will hold a virtual public hearing regarding the proposed Emergency Response Standard beginning on November 12. Anyone can testify at this hearing. OSHA is accepting Notices of Intention to Appear (NOITA) for those wanting to testify at this hearing through September 27. You may submit a NOITA here: <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=GpBvzoA6hommhZiNlvHxgKOaggO3AFpDjJxNgPHiXopUMEpOMDIWjFSMVRGNEIKRzZTTLxOVFBTiQlQCNoPWcu> and view resources to assist with submitting an NOITA and developing hearing testimony on the NVFC's OSHA landing page: <https://www.nvfc.org/osha-standard/>. Below are a few "pain points" in OSHA's proposed rule to possibly elaborate on in your testimony.

- **Approximately \$14,000:** OSHA estimates that the annual cost for a small volunteer fire department to comply with this standard would be approximately \$14,000. The NVFC believes the cost of compliance would be much greater. What's your department's budget? Could you absorb this expense? Is there any local funding source to assist you? Is this estimated cost of compliance accurate or is it underestimated? Why or why not?
- **Truck Check Training:** Only personnel who are certified Emergency Vehicle Technicians would be required to perform daily, weekly, monthly, semi-annual, and annual inspections on apparatus. Do members of your department have this expertise and is this training readily available to you?
- **Medical Exams:** Firefighters will have to pass an NFPA 1582 medical exam every two years, or annually if they've been exposed to products of combustion 15 or more times. Each of these physicals cost hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars. Does your department have the resources to facilitate this for each firefighter? And regarding the threshold of 15, OSHA doesn't adequately define what an "exposure to products of combustion" is and has no basis as to how they arrived at the arbitrary number of 15.
- **Officer Training:** All officers will be required to have training that meets or exceeds NFPA 1021 Fire Officer Training. This training is a one size fits all approach, outside the scope of many small departments, costly and not readily available.



According to the National Associations Fire Training Directors, Fire Officer 3 training is only available in approximately 20 states. Is this training readily available to you?

- **Brake Testing:** You will be required to set up and conduct an annual brake test for all of your trucks. Do you have access to such a testing facility? Can you take your apparatus offline for such annual testing?
- **Mandate of Voluntary Consensus Standards:** OSHA's proposed Emergency Response Rule would incorporate by reference over all or portions of 20 plus industry consensus, effectively making them law. These standards are available to view for free online, but printed copies of these standards are not free. This limited access to consensus standards is particularly problematic since many volunteer fire departments in rural areas lack reliable internet access. OSHA should not be mandating departments to comply with standards they cannot readily access. What obstacles does your department face in retrieving these standards? Cost? Reliable internet access?
- **Administrative Tasks:** This proposed standard would require your department to: Create, annually review, and annually update a written community emergency response plan.
 - Create, annually review, and annually update a written pre-incident plans for all high risk properties.
 - create, annually review, and annually update a written risk management plan for the department.
 - Conduct a conduct a community vulnerability and risk assessment for your service area
 - OSHA estimates that one-time setup of these various administrative requirements would take about 92 hours and an additional 43 hours to review annually. The NVFC believes much more time would be needed to comply with these requirements.
 - Does your department have local funding for the hazard assessments of all buildings in your area? Additionally does your department have the administrative capability and expertise to fulfill these requirements? Are OSHA's estimated hours needed for compliance correct?

Answering the Call of Duty



For Marine veteran and MFA graduate Bruce Katz, service to the community never stops

Photos and content provided by Massachusetts Department of Fire Services.

Many prospective call/volunteer firefighters answer the call to service based on the nature and importance of the fire service and its role and responsibilities to the community and its residents. Some volunteers choose to pursue the opportunity at a young age through participation in youth or junior firefighting programs, or after military service. For others, joining a call/volunteer program is a continuation of their commitment to serve and assist others.

For Bruce Katz, a volunteer firefighter with the Swansea Fire Department, his decision to serve is a combination of all of these reasons. The unique part of his story as a volunteer firefighter is that it began at the age of 58. He may be the oldest recruit to have completed the Massachusetts Fire Academy's Call/Volunteer Program, having graduated in Class 111 at Bridgewater on May 1, 2024 at 58 years, 8 months and 25 days old.

"Becoming a volunteer firefighter was not a goal or ambition I had for a long time," explains Katz. "The desire to volunteer and serve my community is something I am deeply invested in and have had for all of my adult life."

Katz served on active duty in the United States Marine Corps for 20 years following his graduation from high school in 1983. His military career spanned from the Beirut Marine Barracks bombing to just after the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

"When I retired from military service, I decided to continue service to others and my community through active participation in organizations I was particularly invested in and whose causes I was committed to..."

"When I retired from military service, I decided to continue service to others and my community through active participation in organizations I was particularly invested in and whose causes I was committed to," he explains. "I began serving in the Marine Corps League and the American Legion. I am a life member in both these veterans' organizations and a few others today."

Helping and advocating for veterans was the beginning of his post-military service to others in 2003. Ten years ago, in 2014, Katz became an adult volunteer in the Young Marines, a youth program founded by the Marine Corps League in Waterbury, CT in 1959. The national organization has 280 units in 46 states with 2,500 volunteers leading nearly 9,600 young people age 8 to 18.

"Sharing my experiences and the opportunity to help young people see the value of service and helping them achieve goals they have for themselves is very rewarding," he shares. "It is one of the best ways to have a positive impact on not only the youth, but our communities,

From Our Partners

through instilling responsibility and accountability in the next generation of leaders.”

In March 2024, Katz was named the Adult Volunteer of the Year for Division 1 in the Young Marines, a territory that covers the northeast region of the country that includes Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and the New England states.

“The reason I joined the fire department as a volunteer was because of the mission and the importance of these people to our community,” he shares. “Our community is served by a department that is almost all volunteers. Without these volunteers and the services they provide, there could be an extremely detrimental impact on residents and the town.”

“The reason I joined the fire department as a volunteer was because of the mission and the importance of these people to our community...”

“In my professional role, I deal with a lot of emergency management and community response scenarios through training exercises and real-world responses,” adds Katz, who serves as the public information officer at Naval

Station Newport, RI. “When I saw a notice our town was seeking volunteers to serve in the fire department and emergency management, I thought of how my training and experiences could help me to serve my community in another way.”

Katz states he does not know how long or where his fire service career will lead, but he hopes his example of service is something that inspires community members equally, whether young or old.

“Becoming a volunteer firefighter has its challenges and rewards,” he explains. “Choosing to be part of the fire service connects me with my community, its residents and provides a vital service. This mission, and those who serve, are

making a real difference in the town and I am so glad to be part of it. I strongly encourage others to seek out opportunities to volunteer in their community.”



Firefighter Bruce Katz, on his graduation from the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy's Call/Volunteer Recruit Training Program.

(pictured with State Fire Marshal Jon Davine)

Congratulation to Massachusetts Academy Call/Volunteer Training Graduates!

52 Call and Volunteer Firefighters Graduate from Fire Academy. Two Graduating Classes Represent 36 Communities



Graduates of Call/Volunteer Recruit Class #112 represent the fire departments of Adams, Brimfield, Granby, Hadley, Huntington, Lee, Leverett, Orange, Palmer, Richmond, South Hadley Fire District 1, Southwick, Three Rivers, Tyringham, Warren, Warwick, and Whately.

The Martin H. McNamara Outstanding Student Award was presented to Firefighter Max Arvidson of the Hadley Fire Department. The award is named for Martin "Marty" McNamara V, a call firefighter with the Lancaster Fire Department who lost his life in the line of duty in 2003 while battling a fire in a multifamily home. It is presented to one member of each graduating call/volunteer training class and recognizes their academic and practical skills, testing, and evaluations over the course of the program.



Graduates of Call/Volunteer Class #113 represent the fire departments of Boylston, Carlisle, Grafton, Haverhill, Holland, Hopedale, Lincoln, Millis, Millville, Northbridge, Oakham, Paxton, Rutland, Shirley, Tyngsborough, Uxbridge, Wenham, and Weston. Deputy State Fire Marshal Maribel Fournier presented them with certificates of completion.

The Martin H. McNamara Outstanding Student Award was presented to Firefighter Jake Braga of the Paxton Fire Department.

Video of the ceremonies can be found at the Department of Fire Services' YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/dfsosfm.

The Call/Volunteer Firefighter Recruit Training Program is unique in that it delivers a standard recruit training curriculum, meeting national standards, on nights and weekends to accommodate the schedule of firefighters in suburban and rural areas. Making the training more accessible means more firefighters can participate and allows them more time to practice training skills with instructors. The MFA, a division of the Department of Fire Services, has offered the program since 2003. About 3,000 call and volunteer recruits have graduated since then.

Region 2

Get ready for the Trifecta of Training! Units will all be on site in Newbury the weekend of October 26/27.

1. The Mobile Training Unit (MTU) is complete with simulations of kitchen fires, bedroom fires, below grade fires and SO MUCH MORE!
2. The Flashover Unit offers a unique experience to view the non-combusted particles in the air of a structure fire, all in a live fire educational environment; (Not fully combusted particles resemble Jelly Fish floating above your spot in the flashover unit.)
3. The SCBA Maze Unit includes an obstacle course a fire fighter may be presented with in an actual structure fire event. This additional training experience offers the firefighter critical training in a controlled educational environment.

Oh yeah... this is the training that just might save your bootstraps!

Thanks to the Department of Fire Services and the MFA, cohesively working with Newbury, Newburyport, West Newbury, and Groveland Fire Departments—all of whom will be hosting this first of its kind Trifecta of Training.

Call/Volunteer Recruit Class to be held in the MCVFA Reg 2 Area

The Rowley Fire Department will be hosting the CV Hybrid class in addition to classes being held at the MFA Stow Campus and virtually.

An application packet and medical physical needs to be completed prior to acceptance into this class. See your chief and LMS for additional details.

Important dates:

- September 4. Deadline to apply
- October 10. Online overview
- October 16. Orientation

Lisa Evans

Region 2 Coordinator

Region 4

Hello, hope this finds you well. It has been a wet summer and it seems to have kept the brush fires down. (Thank you, Captain Obvious!)

In the meantime, departments all over the Region have been doing all kinds of training to include forcible entry, pump training, SCBA training and training on new apparatus. Training is necessary; it keeps you sharp and can save your life or someone in peril during an emergency situation. The more you train, even simple driver training, that task becomes second nature.

Westhampton FD Anniversary

I had the pleasure of attending Westhampton F.D.'s 75th Anniversary Celebration on August 17th and presented Chief Dave Antoz with a certificate from the MCVFA for their 75 years of service to the community and to the Massachusetts Fire Service. They also held an Open House for their new facility and hosted a Chicken BBQ.



Photo credit: John Zimmerman

Kevin Connolly presenting award to Chief Dave Antoz.



Westhampton FD celebrating in style with gourmet chefs (left), chicken BBQ (center), and the ice cream trailer (right).

Photo credit: John Zimmerman and Kevin Connolly

Courses and training

A number of Active Assault Integrated Response Classes have been held in the region – recently in Bernardston, Ashfield and Hadley with another one planned for Buckland later in September. The state is behind this training and is pouring a lot of effort and funds into the training, as they do with many other classes, so it would be wise to make every effort to attend. You'll need to sign up through the ALERRT portal (www.alerrt.org). Log in or set up a student account then register for the course (course number 21306). If we do not show up for these classes or other trainings, we will lose them and DFS will lose its funding.

Coming up...

- Starting October 5, 2024. Tri-State Fire Training, Basic 6 will be presenting its Fall Class. For more info contact: Lt. Ryan Martin – training@tsfma.org
- WMEMS will be hosting two Nero's Law Practical Training sessions this fiscal year. All practical session attendees must bring proof of completed didactic training to be admitted to either session. These will be the only practical sessions hosted by WMEMS this fiscal year. Agencies can hold their own sessions if they can coordinate qualified instructors per A/R 2-270 and WMEMS has equipment available for loan towards that purpose. <https://wmems.org/>
 - October 17, 2024. Berkshire Community College
 - February 8, 2025. Baystate Health's Whitney Ave Training Center in Holyoke

Dues are overdue

If you haven't paid your dues yet, please do so. We have a new email list that you may not be on and we can't inform you of important info without it!

SAVE THE DATE: MCVFA Annual State Meeting

Saturday, November 2, 8:00 am ET. Upton Fire Department, 20 Church Street, Upton, MA

Be well, be safe! See you at the State Meeting!

Kevin Connolly

Northfield FD

Region 4 – Connecticut River Valley



Photo by Art Burns www.firenews.org

Massachusetts Call Volunteer Firefighters' Association Annual State Meeting 2024

Saturday, November 2, 2024 - Upton F.D. Headquarters - Upton, MA



Join us for the MCVFA Annual State Meeting. The program will start off honoring those who have gone before us at the MCVFA's Firefighter Memorial Service.

The business portion will follow for the transaction of such business as may be properly brought before the meeting.

The meeting is open to all members and non-members and EMS personnel.

Please let us know if you will be attending!

8 a.m. - Registration

9 a.m. - Firefighter Memorial

9:30 a.m. - 12 noon - Business Meeting;

Call to Order by President Michael Goldstein, Sherborn F.D.

Meeting Headquarters: Upton F.D., 20 Church Street, Upton MA

Questions and Registration:

Please contact:

Kevin Connolly, MCVFA Past President

mcvfa.2024meeting@gmail.com



MCVFA Membership Update

By Kevin Connolly, MCVFA Past President

A number of events have happened this past year concerning your membership. We'll get to that in a minute.

Regarding the current membership dues year, we appreciate those departments that have already paid their dues. However, in order to administer a budget, the Association depends on timely receipt of membership dues for its operation. The membership committee sent out the packets in mid-April to give everyone time to pay their dues by September 1st as prescribed by the By-Laws.

The membership committee understands that most member departments operate on a fiscal year which in Massachusetts, as you know, runs from July 1 to June 30 which means it straddles two calendar years. The Association also utilizes this format.

The Association does not expect everyone to pay their dues on July 1, but allows departments a two-month leeway to get their dues in; it also takes into consideration that some have Fire Associations (who pick up the tab) and are able to make their payment prior to July 1.

What we are trying to avoid is having departments pay late in the fiscal year. It makes it more difficult on the already short-staffed committee and the treasurer.

So, if your dues haven't been paid, we thank you for taking care of it as soon as possible.

Now if you were not aware, Kathy Bird, our long-time Membership Secretary, has retired from that position. Kathy will be missed, though she has agreed to keep in touch on matters concerning our membership and to assist us when she is able.

At last year's State Meeting, the membership voted to raise the dues to \$25.00. The main reason for this was that the current dues structure could not keep up with the fact that the cost of doing business had increased.

Next, Region 3, which encompasses Worcester County and portions of Norfolk and Middlesex Counties, contains approximately 80 possible members departments. It had become apparent that because of the size, the Association needed to come up with a plan to make it more manageable. This plan was discussed at the State Meeting and with the members voting in the affirmative, it was agreed to split the region along the lines similar to Mass Fire District 7 (South) and District 8 (North) with about 40 departments in each. The regions will be known as Region 3 - Worcester South and Region 3 - Worcester North.

Those departments in Region 3 from Middlesex and Norfolk will remain in Worcester South and those in the northwest corner of Middlesex will continue in Worcester North.

In addition, the membership committee is in the process of updating its e-mail list. It was previously done through Constant Contact, but that platform became cumbersome due to the fact that outdated emails continued to be utilized without the possibility of deleting them.

The reason we need your email is because it is our main means to pass on information to you from the President's Message, Smoke Showin', state legislative matters, and important news at the national level through the NVFC, as well as notification of regional meetings. You can also become a member of the NVFC if you are a member of the MCVFA. www.nvfc.org/join-nvfc/

The Association's email list is not sold to any outside organization.

Now, if you are reading this, we need you to consider stepping up and filling positions of leadership, not only in Region 3, but within the other regions with vacancies around the state as well as several important Association committees. The MCVFA can only function soundly if it has the assistance of its members. These positions are not difficult ones. If you might be interested, please contact us at www.mcvfa@mcvfa.org.

GET YOUR SWAG ON!



T-SHIRT. Gildan, 99% Cotton/1% Poly, Maltese Cross, Gray. MCVFA on back.

(S – XL) \$13.00 plus postage

(2X – 3X) \$15.00 plus postage



T-SHIRT. Gildan, 100% Cotton, Maltese Cross, Navy Blue, Pre-Shrunk. MCVFA on back.

(S – XL) \$13.00 plus postage

(2X – 3X) \$15.00 plus postage



T-SHIRT/ Gildan, 99% Cotton/1% Poly, Maltese Cross, Pink. MCVFA on back.

Portion of sale will go to the Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition.

(YL – 3X) \$15.00 plus postage



MCVFA 16 oz. Coffee Mug.

\$8.00 plus postage

MCVFA Merchandise has Men's and Ladies Golf Shirts, 16 oz. Pint Glass, Sweatshirts, Window Decals, Lapel Pins, Patches and Portfolios.

To order any items, or for more info, contact merchandise@mcvfa.org

CURRENT MCVFA MEMBER DEPARTMENTS

Region 1 – Southeast

Acushnet
 Berkley
 Carver
 Hanson
 Mattapoisett
 Middleborough
 Rehoboth – Station #2
 Swansea
 Wareham
 West Barnstable
 West Tisbury
 Westport

Region 2 – North Shore

Carlise
 Groveland
 West Newbury

Region 3 – Worcester South

Hopedale
 Sutton
 Upton
 West Brookfield

Region 3 – Worcester North

Dunstable
 Paxton
 West Boylston

Region 4 – Connecticut River Valley

Ashfield
 Belchertown
 Bernardston
 Bondsville
 Brimfield
 Buckland
 Erving
 Gill
 Granville
 Hatfield

Region 4 – cont.

Monson
 Montague Center
 Montgomery
 Northfield
 Orange
 Shelburne
 Shelburne Falls
 Tolland
 Turners Falls
 Warwick
 Wendell
 Williamsburg

Region 5 – Berkshire County

Alford
 Egremont
 Florida
 Hancock
 Hinsdale
 Lanesborough
 Monterey
 New Ashford
 Otis
 Savoy
 Windsor

Retired/At-Large

Russ Anderson – Rockport (2)
 William Belknap – Dartmouth Dist. #1 (1)
 Rick Clark – Goshen (4)
 Richard Gaj – Granby (4)
 George Randall – Granby (4)
 Chuck Seaman – Greenfield (4)
 Stephen Scala – Conway (4)
 Jim Winn – Greenfield (4)

Smoke Showin' Wants You!



Submit your articles and photos for the next issue.

Winning photo makes the cover. Runner ups are guaranteed a spot in the issue.

NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 18

Editor@MCFVA.org

Visit us on
social media

