

Call/Volunteers Serving Today to Protect Your Tomorrow

SMOKE SHOWIN'

The Official Publication of the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association



SUPPORTING OUR HEROES

Ladder trucks from Carlisle FD and Lincoln FD raise the flag in support of the Folds of Honor event, an organization set up to support children of fallen military members and first responders.

Photo credit: Carlisle Fire Department

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Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Hello all and welcome to late summer/fall
weather.

It's been a wild summer of weather to say
the least. I wasn't sure what kind of
message I'd be sending this edition, when
the sound of the pager beeping gave me the
inspiration I needed. By the pager giving
me inspiration I mean my 16 year old son
running down the stairs yelling, "dad we got
a call!"

Yes, just as I could see the retirement light at the end of the tunnel
getting brighter, I was pulled right back as my youngest decided he
wanted to walk in the old man's shoes and join my department as a
junior member. A father's dream becomes a reality but the work
starts all over again. Chauffeur to the station and calls, teaching
how to put gear on the right way, what to do and when to do it....it's
all going to be a review of 38 years of
my experiences.

But then I said to myself; all the
recruitment efforts are paying off
starting at home. My son's energy has
sparked the interest of his classmates,
his friends and family. Our department
continues to grow in membership with a
resurgence of young and old alike.
Three recruits graduated from MFA
Call/Vol Bridgewater academy in
February. Seven Swansea recruits just
began a DFS Call/Vol training program
in Middleborough this June.
Recruitment is just one of my focuses
for MCVFA and my department,
however, there has to be attention paid
to retention of tenured members as well.



As I was able to attend
this summer's NVFC Training
Summit in Salt Lake City Utah.

I did my best to absorb as much
content and information as I could.
to bring back to Massachusetts. My
focus was on what departments
throughout the country were doing
for retention this time. Individual
awards such as years of service,
anniversaries, most calls made,
spoofer or joke awards etc. were a
common theme for a lot of
departments; for retention
purposes. If we don't showcase
longevity and dedication of our
membership, we lose members and
moral. How does my 16 year old
rookie have anything to strive for?

I couldn't be prouder to have a successor in this volunteer role I chose years ago. Keeping my son and others like him engaged has to be a focus of departments.

On a positive note, MCVFA helmet stickers were sent to your department back in June. These stickers are just a few small token of our appreciation for being a member of this amazing organization. Please reach out to your region Vice President if you have any questions or concerns.

Remember that this is your association and input is welcome. I hope to travel to a few different regions this fall, and I'd love to stop in to your fire house. Please reach out if you have a special event this summer... Chief Alan V. Brunacini once said "more than anything else, act like a neighbor" when he was having the words 'Our family, helping your family' on his fire trucks. The least you can do is act like a good neighbor when you take the time to help another. Thank you for volunteering in your community!

Respectfully,

Lt. Christopher J Hajder
Executive Vice President, MCVFA
Swansea Volunteer Fire Department



MAY 2025 - FOUR GRADUATE MASS CALL/ VOLUNTEER CLASS 118 FROM DEPT OF FIRE SERVICES BRIDGEWATER ACADEMY



Left to right: Hanson Fire Chief Robert O'Brien Jr. CALL FFs Nick Podgurski, Scott Davis, Jack Allen, Chris Mansfield & Deputy Chief Charley Barends.

(Photo: Lt. Scott Billings)



HANOVER CALL FIREFIGHTERS RECOGNIZED FOR DECADES OF SERVICE



Top left: LT. John Fontes served Hanson Fire Dept. 1976 to 1988. Hanover Fire Dept 1988 - 2024. Top right: FF Greg Katapodis served Hanover Fire 1995 – 2024. Bottom left: Hanson Fire Chief (RET) Peter Huska hired John Fontes to Hanson Fire in 1976. Bottom right: MCVFA Region 1 Vice President Capt John Walcek (Wareham Fire) with Lt. John Fontes Hanover Fire Dept at retirement recognition for 48 years of Fire Service as a Call Firefighter to Hanson + Hanover Fire Depts. (Photos: Lt. Scott Billings)

SMOKE ALARMS AND LICENSED ELECTRICIANS

By Ira Hoffman

The latest issue of NFPA Journal (Fall, 2025), leads with: “Safety doesn’t happen by chance. NFPA launches an unprecedented campaign to raise public awareness of the critical importance of codes and standards - and what’s at stake if that system of safety were to disappear.”

Jim Pauley, NFPA’s president and CEO, recently remarked that NFPA was facing a critical moment. Codes and standards are under threat from all directions, including the courts, state governments, and special interests. These attacks are bolstered in part by public misperceptions and complacency around the importance of a comprehensive culture of safety. A new public education campaign features a short YouTube video “Reverse Renovations with Jonathan Scott.”

The same issue reports on “Home Structure Fires in the United States, 2019-2023.” From this article: “Almost three out of every five home fire deaths resulted from fires where either **no smoke alarm was present** or at least one alarm was present **but did not operate**”.

U.S. Fire Administration: *“The increasing severity of home fires due to modern building contents and open space configurations makes it crucial that people are prepared to leave their homes immediately in the event of fire. Residents could have less than 2 minutes to escape a home fire once the smoke alarm sounds.”*

What occupants can do is to have smoke alarms that work 100% of the time. Smoke alarms that occupants have the confidence in, that when they sound, occupants immediately stop whatever they are doing, and get to safety. We all know that smoke alarms need regular maintenance, which include testing, verifying that they are not more than 10 years old, have spider webs, etc. removed. It’s a good bet that this isn’t always done.

Get to know a licensed electrician. One way of insuring that smoke alarms are purchased from a reputable company, that they are certified by a



national organization, such as UL, installed where they should be and not where they shouldn’t, is to have a licensed electrician install a hard-wired, inter-connected smoke alarm / CO system. Some benefits of licensed electricians:

- Get the best devices. Not every smoke alarm is equal in quality and effectiveness. Electricians know which models are dependable, safe, and up to code.. Instead of purchasing a cheap model online, trust your electrician to choose and install one that is trustworthy and long-lasting.
- Installed in the right places. A licensed electrician knows where to install the smoke alarms. You can do your own research with regards to smoke alarm placement, but it is much easier to hire an electrician who already has that information readily available.
- Installation in exceptional cases. A licensed electrician can recommend smoke alarms for use in special circumstances, such as where residents have hearing or visual difficulties.
- Fix other problems at the same time. Perhaps there’s a light that keeps flickering or a breaker that is constantly tripping. These problems, among others, can signal a deeper problem with the electrical system.
- Always there to help you. Many things can happen that can affect the system being operational 100% of the time. If the licensed electrician who installed your system is not

available, another qualified licensed electrician can be called to troubleshoot, then fix the problem.

- Maintenance and testing - A licensed electrician may be able to offer a service contract for maintenance, testing, and troubleshooting smoke alarm systems. Maintenance would follow the smoke alarm manufacturer's recommended procedure to clean out the smoke alarm. Testing would ensure that all smoke alarms are activated by using the test button, and that each smoke alarm activates all smoke alarms. Troubleshooting would investigate false activations and "chirping" and recommend a solution.
- "It's too expensive" - Some feel that having a licensed electrician install a hard-wired inter-connected system is too expensive. But is it? When you consider that the smoke alarm system will last for 10 years, the cost for entire system, installed by a licensed electrician, is quite low. As an example, if the total cost for the system is \$2500, the cost per day is 69 cents. And that is for the entire house.
- Nuisance alarms - The single most important reason to have a licensed electrician install a hard-wired, inter-connected system is having someone help with nuisance alarms, sometimes called "false" alarms. We want the confidence in our system to know that if it sounds, we must immediately leave the house and get to safety.

One final word. Is there really a problem? I receive Google alerts every day for "no working smoke alarm" "no working smoke detector" "no smoke alarm" and "no smoke detector". Most of the time the fire reported on has resulted in loss of life.

Yes, there is a problem. Take care, stay safe.

Ira Hoffman became an FDNY Auxiliary (volunteer) firefighter in 1961. Except for three years serving in the U.S. Army he has, in one way or another, been associated with the fire service his entire life. This is his 14th article for Smoke Showin'. He can be reached at: IraAtFSP@gmail.com.



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

IS THERAPY RIGHT FOR THE FIRE SERVICE?

By Keith Hanks

For a majority of its existence, the fire service has “White Knuckled” it’s way through the portions of the job most would rather not talk about. That being stress, trauma, mental health, alcohol and substance abuse, and firefighter suicide.

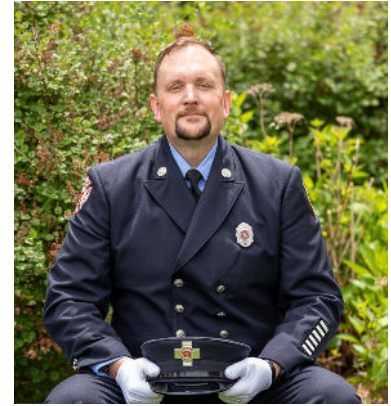
For almost as long, a large percentage of the fire service has claimed that access to and even knowledge of the resources and modalities associated with mitigating these “unspoken” parts of the job, were unavailable.

However, the truth is a lot of what is out there to battle stress, trauma, mental health, alcohol and substance abuse and even help prevent suicide, has been around and available for a long time.

Let’s Talk!

Getting its roots in the late 19th century; traditional talk therapy had its foundation laid by doctors like Sigmund Freud. Beginning as a very fundamental way of trying to understand one’s experiences in life, therapy grew into researching how the brain managed and adapted to different exposures and how humans reacted to them.

From the beginning it was evident that by talking about the good, bad, and terrible, patients saw a positive change in their life when consistent effort was applied.



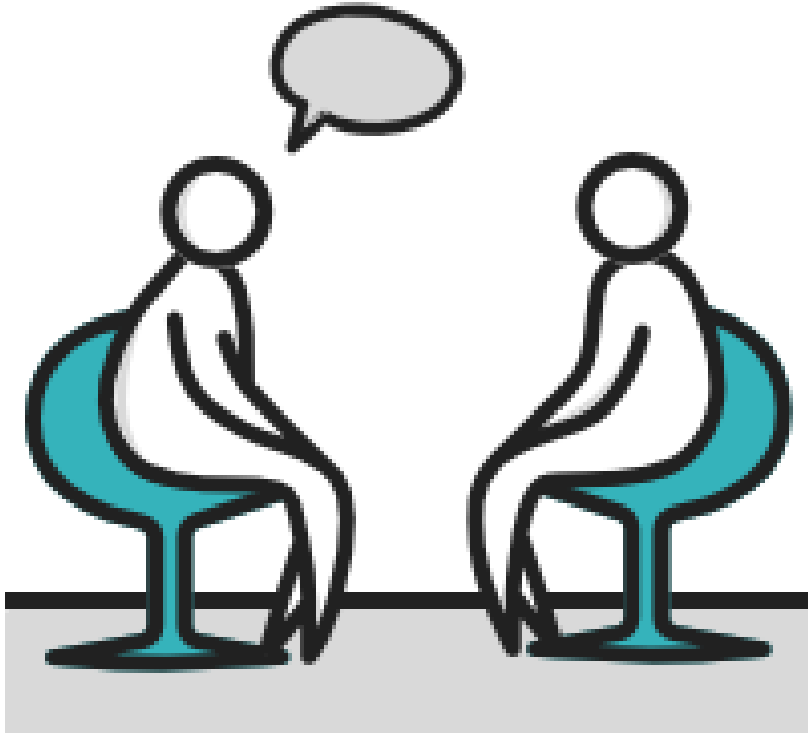
A lot has changed over the last 135 years or so, but the basic idea has remained the same. Getting out what hurts often leads to stronger, more long-term healing and more importantly, growth.

Different Strokes for Different Folks

Since its inception, traditional talk therapy has developed into several different models with some working better than others for different people. Here are a few:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). A type of talk based therapy that focuses on identifying and changing negative thought patterns and behaviors.
- Dialectic Behavior Therapy (DBT). This focuses on helping individuals manage intense emotions and improve relationships. Traditionally associated with borderline personality disorder.
- Interpersonal Therapy (IPT). Here relationships and social functioning are addressed and improved on.
- Exposure Therapy. Used to treat anxiety disorders by gradually exposing patients to feared situations, objects, or topics.
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). A therapy specifically used for processing trauma, it involves accessing deep, upsetting memories and reprocessing them in a healthy manner.

Individuals have to try and find what works best for them. In addition, it’s important to find a therapist that is the right fit for you. Especially as a first responder.



Cultural Competence

As a first responder, we are unique in many ways when it comes to how we view the world and what happens in it. Our job literally entails being present for others worst days, exposing us to potentially trauma after trauma. For decades it was looked down on to seek out help, to express being affected by the things we see, and especially to need treatment to heal.

An attitude rooted as deep as many of the other traditions associated with the job, not talking about the pain no one can see has caused us to be hard nuts to crack once we finally do seek out professional help.

Cultural competence is a word that is thrown around a lot these days. Most of the times it is

misused and misunderstood as to what it truly means. Finding a therapist that can work with a first responder in a beneficial way to the first responder is crucial because of that traditional mentality of NOT talking about what we see and feel.

Finding someone who understands our job, the mentality, traditions, our family's and our overwhelming need to protect them from what we see and do is at times very difficult. It does not translate into getting a therapist that ONLY works with first responders. It especially doesn't mean that the therapist needs to be a first responder themselves.

What cultural competence really means is someone who understands and can work through the following: Our dark sense of humor, using our humor as a way to deflect from talking about our pain, our selflessness, not putting our needs first, getting us to see that its ok that we hurt,

sitting with our pain and not trying to "fix" it, understanding how much our family means to us, our hypervigilance, and earning our trust by doing all of the above.

In a time where trauma is finally being spoken of in a job riddled with it, we as a culture rooted in tradition need to break free of that mold and allow ourselves to heal. In a job where you are two to three times more likely to die by suicide than be killed by the job itself, we owe it to ourselves and the next generations, to show that by using therapy we can in fact heal.

Not only can we heal, and in most cases, grow stronger, we can create a safer and more healthy culture in the greatest job on the planet.

"In order to heal it, you need to feel it!"

Sources: Psychology Today. For additional support, visit On-Site Academy (<https://onsiteacademy.org/>) and McLean's LEADER Program (<https://www.mcleanhospital.org/treatment/leader>)

WILDLAND FIRE AVIATION TRAINING

Photos by Natural Resources & ITAM Program, Massachusetts Army National Guard. Camp Edwards – Joint Base Cape Cod, MA.

During the past 23 years with the assistance of partner organizations, the Massachusetts Army National Guard has sponsored and hosted wildland fire trainings at Camp Edwards. Trainings have been offered with the intent of furthering wildland fire suppression and prescribed fire capacity at Camp Edwards and among its wildland fire partner organizations. Instructional and logistic support for this year's training was provided by the Massachusetts Army National Guard, Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation, and Maine Forest Service.

S-270, Basic Air Operations. July 28 and 29. S-270, Basic Air Operations covers aircraft types and capabilities, aviation management and safety for flying in and working with agency aircraft, tactical and logistical uses of aircraft, and requirements for helicopter take-off and landing areas. Note: The regulations, procedures, and policies addressed in this course are primarily those governing federal agency and ICS operations. State, county, or other political subdivisions using this course will need to consult their agency having jurisdiction with respect to regulations, procedures and policies.

Student Agency Breakdown (Total 40)

- Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (26)
- New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands (2)
- Rhode Island department of Environmental Management (1)
- National Park Service (2)
- Wareham Fire Department (1)
- West Barnstable Fire Department (1)
- Massachusetts Army National Guard (6)
- Maine Army National Guard (1)

S-271, Helicopter Crewmember. July 30 – August 1. S-271, Helicopter Crewmember is a combined classroom/field course designed to provide student proficiency in all areas of the tactical and logistical use of helicopters to achieve efficiency and standardization. Topics include aviation safety, aircraft capabilities and limitations, aviation life support equipment, aviation mishap reporting, pre-flight checklist and briefing/debriefing, aviation transportation of hazardous materials, crash survival, helicopter operations, and helicopter field exercise.

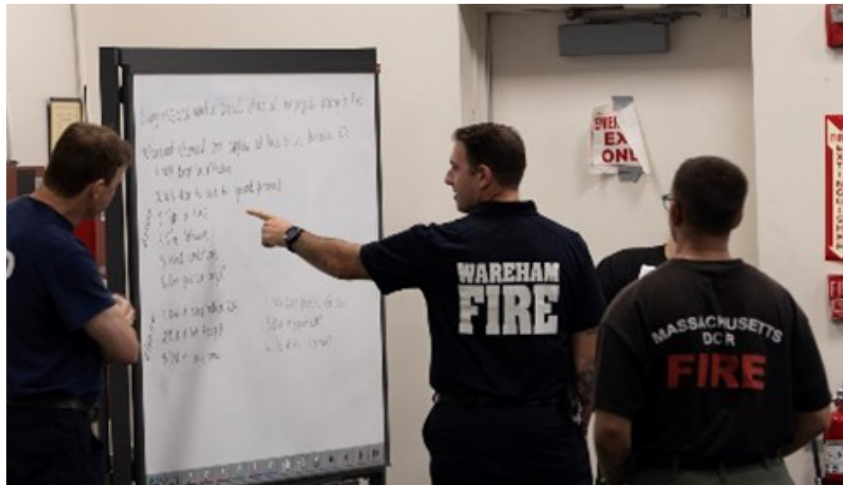
Student Agency Breakdown (Total 30)

- Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (8)
- New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands (2)
- Rhode Island department of Environmental Management (1)
- National Park Service (2)



Training

- Massachusetts Maritime Academy
- Wareham Fire Department
- West Barnstable Fire Department
- Massachusetts Army National Guard (4)
- Maine Army National Guard



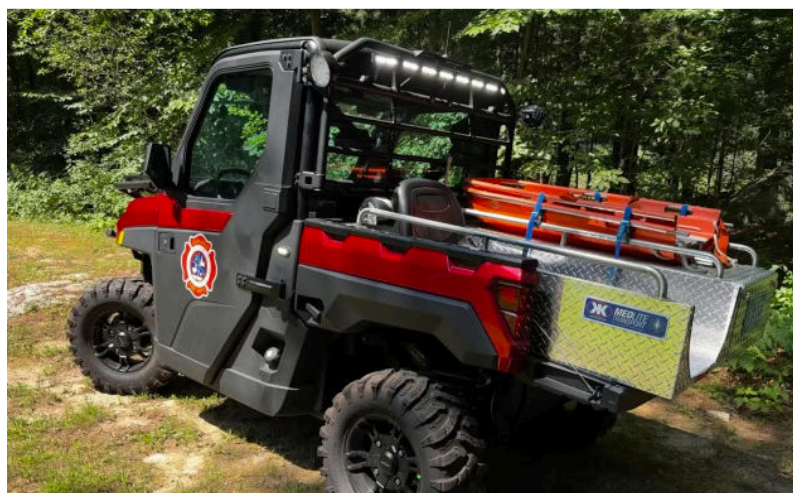
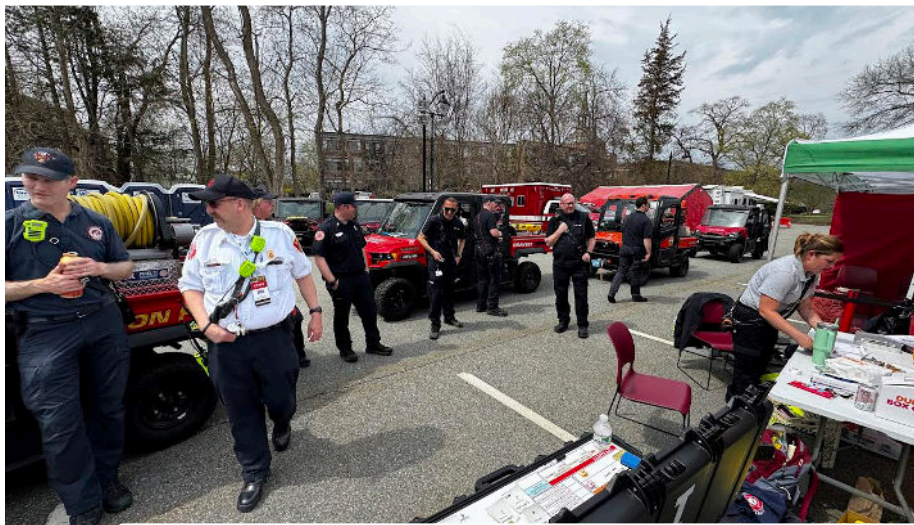
Sign up for training:

October 1: S-219 ignition training and also a wildland fire refresher for our two MAARNG Fire Detachments.

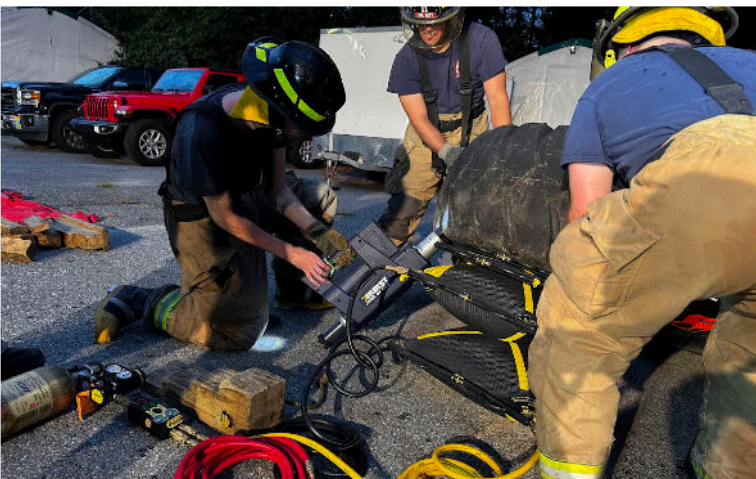
December: S-300 Incident commander and a S-330 Task force/Strike Team Leader course. All except the refresher are always open to local fire departments.



Newburyport's Annual Yankee Homecoming.



Left: Carlisle UTV1. A 2024 4WD Polaris with a Kimtek med skid on the back was put into service for off-road medical calls and supporting large events. Right: Carlisle, Harvard, Boxborough, Stow, Hanscom, Westford support Acton FD in fighting a stubborn mulch fire on Easter morning. The setup involved a tanker shuttle in conjunction with a 3 porta-tank setup to supply both a master stream on Acton's aerial ladder and several handlines.



Extrication training. Members practiced with tools and lifting a simulated car accident.

COMING TO SMOKE SHOWIN': KNOW YOUR TRAINING

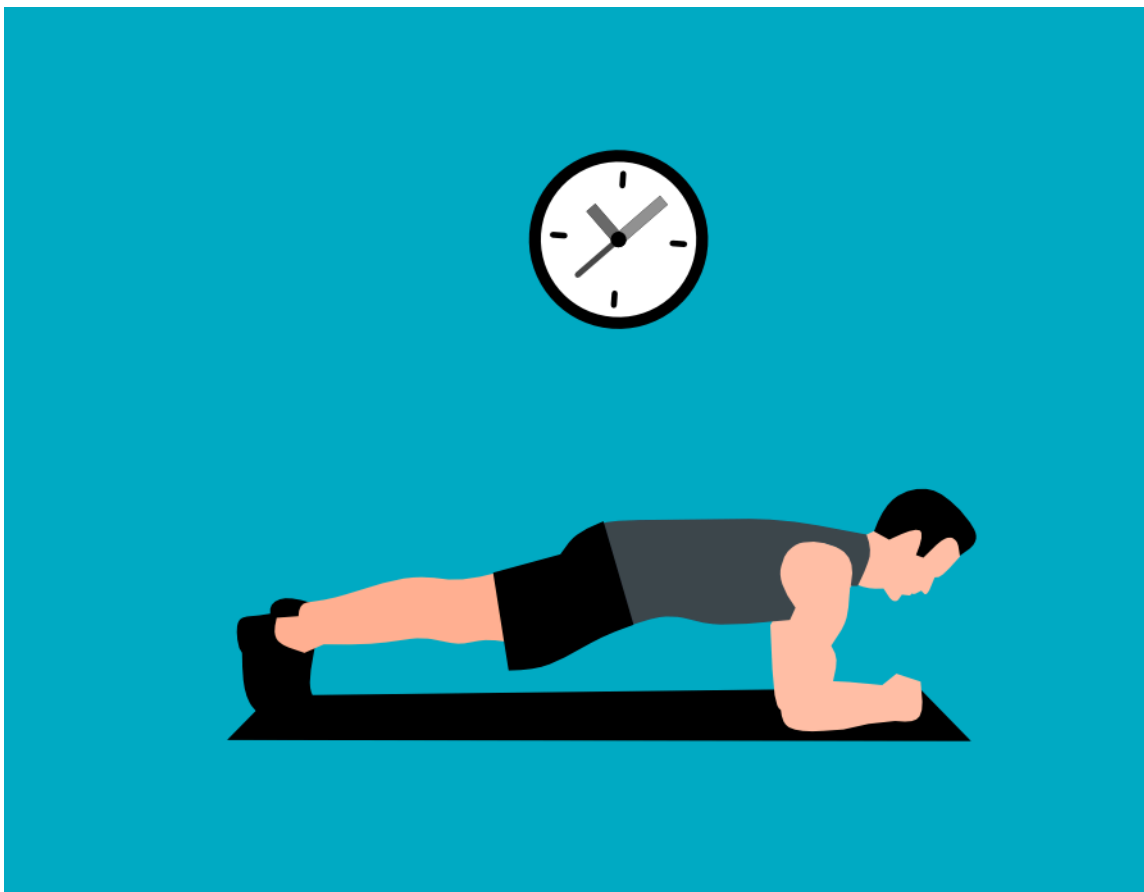
By Jonathan Miller & Joe Maruca

Each issue of Smoke Showin' will contain an outline for a model training exercise that any call/volunteer or small combination fire department can easily use. These drills can be conducted without any special props, certified instructors, and for no cost. The drills follow NFPA standards.

Each drill can easily be modified to fit your trucks, equipment and staffing. Add or subtract personnel from the truck assignments based upon what is typical for your department. If you subtract staffing, you need to split up the tasks assigned to that lost firefighter among the rest of the crew. If you add staff, you can spread out the tasks among more firefighters. The MCVFA recommends you practice these drills with staffing that would be typical for your department.

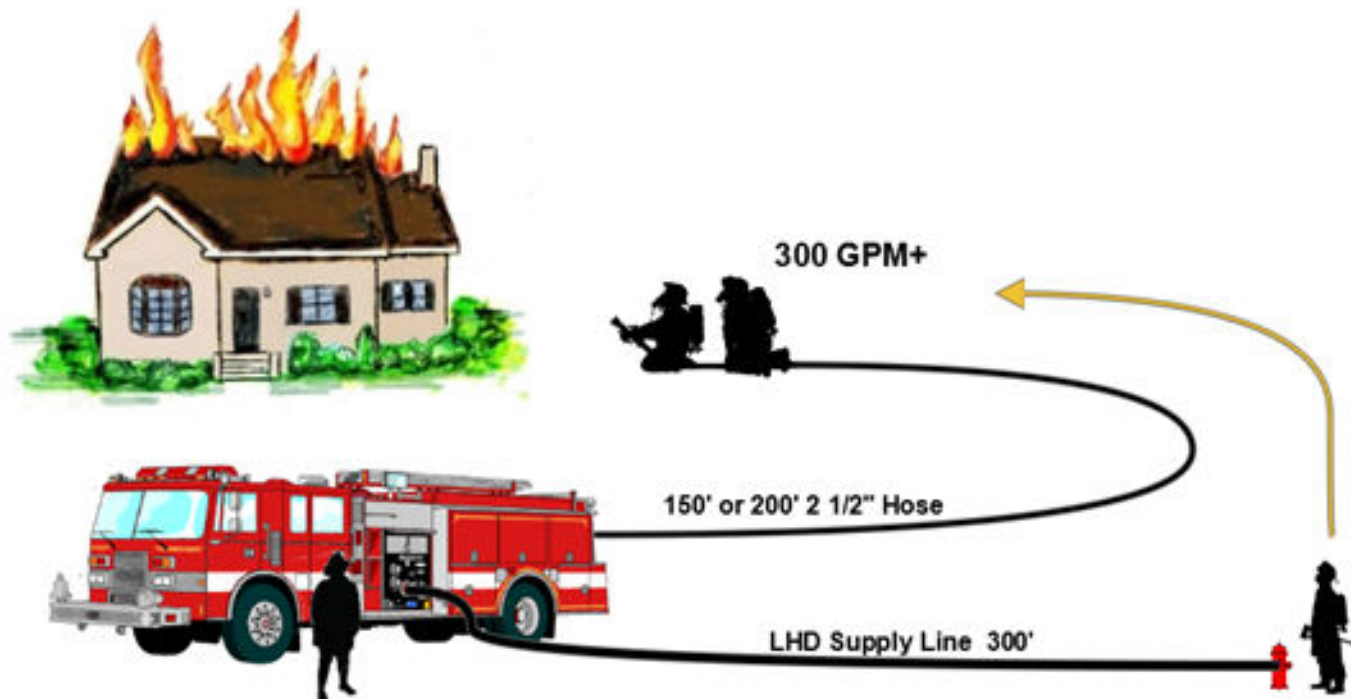
Each drill only takes about 15 to 20 minutes to explain, execute, repack the truck, and review. You should repeat the drill two or three times in an hour and rotate firefighters among the positions.

This first drill is titled MCVFA Model Engine Company Evolution #2: Single Engine Fire Attack – Blitz Line Attack. (We published Evolution #1 in [last winter's edition](#).) It is designed to build your proficiency stretching a 2 1/2" hose line and rapidly putting 300 gpm on a fire. You can do it with or without a hydrant. Give it try at your next drill and see how well you can do it. And next time your engine arrives at a house or a barn with heavy fire showing, see how much better you can knock it down with two or three firefighters.



MCVFA Model Engine Company Evolution #2: Single Engine Fire Attack – Blitz Line Attack. An NFPA 1410 Evolution

Objective: To place an initial exterior 2 1/2" attack line of a minimum 150' in-service and flowing a minimum of 300 gpm using a single engine (or engine-tanker) with staffing of the average number of personnel that ordinarily respond. A forward lay of LDH supply hose from a hydrant (if available) shall be established of a minimum 300'. (1 1/8" tip flows 300 gpm at 65psi. 1 1/4" tip flows 300 gpm at 45psi.)



Evolution Description: Engine forward lays 300' into the fire from a hydrant (if available). Crew deploys a 2 1/2" attack line for an exterior blitz attack flowing at least 300 gpm. Engine will charge line and flow water from its water tank while a water supply from the hydrant is being established. If there is no hydrant, the engine will limit its attack to the water it carries.

Evaluation Criteria: Attack line shall be completely deployed from hose bed. Nozzle shall be flowing at least 300 gpm at the appropriate nozzle pressure. Time begins when the engine stops and sets its parking brake at the simulated fire and time ends when the hydrant is charged and supplying the engine, and 300 gpm has been flowed on the simulated fire for four minutes without interruption. (If there is no hydrant, time ends when the engine runs out of water.)

Recommended maximum time: 4 minutes with hydrant / 3 minutes without hydrant.

Source: NFPA 1410, 2000 Edition, Training for initial Emergency Scene Operations.

The next page has the score sheet for tracking how well you do each time you practice this drill. Not only can you use this to review performance with the crew, it also gives you a tool for demonstrating your ability and value to the town. Feel free to modify score sheets to meet your needs.

MCVFA MODEL ENGINE COMPANY TRAINING EVOLUTION #2

Single Engine Blitz Line Attack
With or Without Hydrant

Safety

	Yes	No	N/A
1. Everyone Seated and Belted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. PPE + SCBA Worn Properly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Wheels Chocked + Traffic Cones Deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Flood Lights on if Nighttime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Procedures

	Yes	No	N/A
1. Engine and crew lay supply line properly (no kinks)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. FF makes hydrant + charges supply line as trained and per policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Officer transmit appropriate initial report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Hose stretched without spaghetti and charged	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Nozzle pressure + flow correct	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Minimum of 300 GPM delivered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Water stream operated without major interruption	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Water flowing on target/fire with 3.5 minutes of arrival	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8A. Time to complete evolution: _____ minutes			

Date _____ Time _____ Engine _____

Crew Members _____

Judge/Referee _____

Note: Time starts when engine stops at hydrant and ends when 300 GPM is flowing on the fire.



Mentoring for the Future: Junior Firefighters

By Captain Monica Neveu, Goshen FD

As everyone knows, there are always staffing challenges in the rural volunteer fire department. With aging rosters and declining recruitment, one of the most effective solutions is recruiting junior firefighters. At Goshen Fire, we have an active junior firefighting program. The benefits are early exposure for teenagers to gain first hand experience and build interest within the fire service. Juniors often transition into adult volunteers in their hometown or even career firefighters.

In our department, we try to incorporate the juniors into every aspect of our training including first responder certification, drills, truck maintenance and emergency response. We designate junior firefighters with an orange helmet, which indicates to us that they are not allowed to participate in interior firefighter attack, rooftop operations, or work in the roadways. While attending drills and responding to calls as able, they are learning how to balance school, work and fire department commitments. They are also learning teamwork, responsibility, numerous technical skills, as well as earning community service hours for their local high school.

Two individuals who started out as juniors in Goshen that I would like to highlight are: Adrién Neveu and Jake Lulek. My son, Adrién, joined when he turned 14 (although he was marching with me in parades as early as two!) Adrién was a two-time recipient of the MCVFA Robert J. Hindley Memorial Scholarship. He attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, graduating magna cum laude with his Masters in Mechanical Engineering this past May. While home during summers and school breaks, Adrién completed the Hampshire County Six formal trainings, and continued to respond to drills and emergencies as able. Adrién has formally left Goshen Fire after 9 years on the department, moving on to Philadelphia for a job with the Department of Defense, but he will surely bring the skills he learned being part of the firefighting family everywhere he goes.

Jake Lulek joined both Goshen and Williamsburg Fire Departments in 2013 when

he was 17 years old. Jake grew up in Williamsburg, but now resides with his wife in Goshen. He is an extremely active member who manages to respond to calls frequently in both neighboring communities. Because of his dedication to the fire service and his loyalties to both towns, he was promoted to Lieutenant by both departments. Lt. Lulek proves how homegrown talent leads to long term retention in the fire service. As the Captain of Goshen Fire, I can honestly say the one person I want on a nozzle, driving apparatus and standing next to me at a medical emergency is Jake. I am grateful that Lt. Jake Lulek continues with his commitment to our communities and the fire service. He is a valued member of our department!

These two fine young men are examples of the assets and potential of junior volunteer firefighters. They learn life long lessons of doing something for the greater good. It is vitally important to remember that having a junior firefighting program is a solution and an investment into our future departments.



Ret. Captain Bob Labrie and Ret. Chief Sue Labrie teach 14 yo Adrién Neveu how to wear an SCBA (photo by Monica Neveu).



Left: Junior Firefighters Adrien and Dillon Neveu during hose line drill (photo by Monica Neveu) Right: Lt. Steve Estelle, Adrien Neveu, Captain Monica Neveu and Bill Connell cooling down after mutual aid box alarm in Williamsburg.



Left: Lt. Jake Lulek after cutting a hole in the ice at Hammond Pond prior to ice rescue drill (photo Bob Labrie) Right: Lt. Lulek in his dry suit during the drill (photo Bob Labrie)

SPAGHETTI CARBONARA: AN EASY FIRE HOUSE DINNER

Submitted by Joe Maruca

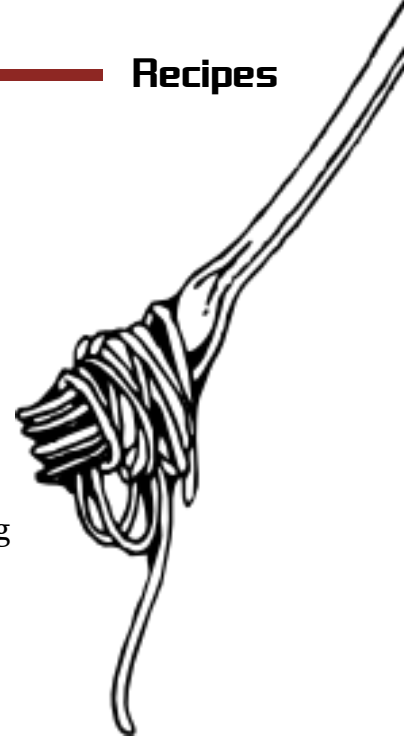
Serves 4-6

Ingredients:

- Salt
 - 3 large eggs, room temperature
 - 3/4 cup grated imported pecorino Romano cheese, plus additional for serving
 - A lot of coarsely ground black pepper
 - 1 tablespoon olive oil
 - 1/2 pound thick bacon, sliced into pieces about 1/2 square
 - 1 pound box of spaghetti (or bucatini)
- **Step 1.** Place a large pot of lightly salted water (no more than 1 tablespoon salt) over high heat and bring to a boil.
 - **Step 2.** In a mixing bowl whisk together the eggs and pecorino Romano cheese. Season with a pinch of salt and lots of black pepper.
 - **Step 3.** Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat, add the bacon, and sauté until the fat just renders, on the edge of crispness but not hard. Remove from heat and set aside.
 - **Step 4.** Add spaghetti to the water and boil until a bit firmer than al dente. Reserve 1 cup of pasta water, then drain pasta and add to skillet (heat off) with bacon. Stir for a minute or so with a wooden spoon or spatula.
 - **Step 5.** Add the bacon and spaghetti mixture to a serving bowl and quickly stir in the cheese mixture, adding some reserved pasta water if needed for creaminess. Serve immediately, dressing it with a bit of additional grated pecorino Romano cheese and pepper.

There is almost no such thing as too much cheese or too much pepper in this recipe, so add as much as you like.

Serve with a loaf of thick crust Italian Bread and a salad. **At home.** Serve with your favorite Italian Wine. **At the fire station.** Serve with a pitcher of non-alcoholic sangria



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

NVFC BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPRING MEETING



Michael Goldstein, MCVFA President and Chief Joe Maruca (Retired) attended The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) Board of Directors met on May 8-10 in Alexandria, VA.

Sixty-five directors from 43 state associations were in attendance, including Michael Goldstein and Joe Maruca from Massachusetts. The meeting featured officer and Executive Committee elections, a strategic planning session, and an awards banquet.

The NVFC Board of Directors is comprised of up to two directors from 48 state fire associations and meets as a whole twice a year to conduct business, hold committee meetings, advocate for the call/volunteer fire service at the national level, and steer the direction of the organization.

Several committees met to discuss a range of issues, from legislation, OSHA, and NFPA standards and codes, to wildland, recruitment and retention, and health, safety, and training. The EMS/Rescue Section also held its bi-annual meeting. Joe Maruca is vice chair of the Recruitment & Retention Committee, and is vice chair of the Bylaws Committee. Michael Goldstein is vice chair of the Finance Committee and serves on the Membership/Awards Committee.

In addition, the board conducted a strategic planning session as the first step to developing the strategic plan that will guide the direction of the organization for the next five years.

The board celebrated and honored the recipients of the NVFC's 2025 achievements awards:

- David Denniston, William J. Darley Lifetime Achievement Award, sponsored by Darley
- Jeremy Sonenschein, Chief James P. Seavey Sr. Health & Wellness Leadership Award, co-sponsored by VFIS and Ward Diesel Filter Systems
- Jiya Jadhav, Junior Firefighter of the Year Award, sponsored by California Casualty
- West Virginia University Fire Service Extension Junior Firefighter Camp, Junior Firefighter Program of the Year Award, sponsored by California Casualty
- Brian McQueen, E. James Monihan Director Award, sponsored by Provident

The NVFC thanks the following sponsors for their support of the NVFC Spring Conference: AES, Anheuser-Busch Foundation, Clarion UX's Fire & Rescue Group, Columbia Southern University, ESIP, F.I.E.R.O., FirstNet Built with AT&T, National Fire Protection Association, Provident, State Farm®, Tesla, Wendell's Mint.

The next board of directors meeting will take place September 22-24 in Rapid City, SD.

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is the sole national nonprofit membership association representing the interests of the volunteer fire, emergency medical, and rescue services. The NVFC serves as the voice of the volunteer in the national arena and provides critical advocacy, resources, programs, and education for first responders across the nation. Learn more and join at www.nvfc.org.



FREE TRAINING



EV/AFV Incident Management: Safety and Response Techniques

As the number of electric vehicles on the roadways increases, it is important for first responders to understand how a response involving these types of vehicles is different than those with an internal combustion engine. This awareness and fundamentals course will introduce first responders to hybrid and electric vehicles, share data and resources, and equip the first responder with the knowledge and tools to respond more safely when a hybrid or electric vehicle is involved in an incident.

Hosted by the Bungay Fire Brigade



September 20, 2025



0900-1700 EST



Bungay Fire Brigade

1256 Route 171

West Woodstock, CT 06281

**To register, please email Captain James
Montanez at jm7908@att.com**

Contact Information:

Course host - Captain James Montanez, jm7908@att.com

NVFC Training Coordinator - Amanda Tegtmeyer, amanda@nvfc.org

From Our Partners

CONGRATULATIONS TO MASSACHUSETTS ACADEMY CALL/VOLUNTEER TRAINING GRADUATES!



82 Call/Volunteer Firefighters Graduate from Fire Academy.
Recruits from Dartmouth, Whately, and Harvard Recognized as
Outstanding Students (*Photos courtesy of MFA*)



The 25 members of Call/Volunteer Recruit Class #118 graduated on May 14. They represent the fire departments of Avon, Dartmouth Fire District 1, Dartmouth Fire District 2, Duxbury, Freetown, Grafton, Halifax, Hanson, Lakeville, Norwell, Onset, Raynham, and Westport. The Martin H. McNamara Outstanding Student Award was presented to Firefighter Kayla Kalamajka of Dartmouth Fire District 2.

Video of all three ceremonies is available at the Department of Fire Services' YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/dfsosfm.

The MFA's Call/Volunteer Firefighter Recruit Training Program delivers a standard recruit training curriculum, meeting national standards, on nights and weekends to accommodate the schedule of firefighters in suburban and rural departments who work full-time jobs or go to school. Making the training more accessible means more firefighters can participate and allows them more time to practice training skills with instructors. The program has been offered since 2003 and trained about 3,500 recruits to date.



The 26 members of Call/Volunteer Recruit Class #119 graduated on June 25. They represent the fire departments of Brimfield, Gill, Hadley, Hampden, Hatfield, Huntington, Orange, Palmer, South Hadley District 1, South Hadley District 2, Southwick, Spencer, Sturbridge, Three Rivers, Warren, Whately, and Windsor. The Martin H. McNamara Outstanding Student Award was presented to Firefighter Daniel Hurwit of the Whately Fire Department.



The 31 members of Call/Volunteer Recruit Class #120 graduated on June 30. They represent the fire departments of Ashby, Boylston, Carlisle, Douglas, Dover, East Brookfield, Groton, Hamilton, Harvard, Leicester, Lunenburg, Mendon, Merrimac, Millville, New Braintree, Pepperell, Princeton, Shirley, Sterling, Stow, Sutton, and Tyngsborough. The Martin H. McNamara Outstanding Student Award was presented to Firefighter Christopher Tota of the Harvard Fire Department.

TODAY'S FIREFIGHTERS DO FAR MORE THAN FIGHT FIRES



Today's firefighters train for all types of hazards and emergencies. They are the first ones called to chemical and environmental emergencies, ranging from the suspected presence of carbon monoxide to Fentanyl overdoses or a gas leak. They may be called to rescue children who have fallen through the ice or locked themselves in a bathroom. They rescue people from stalled elevators and crashed vehicles. They must test, maintain, and utilize equipment such as self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), hydrants, hoses, power tools, and apparatus.

At the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, they learn all these skills and more, including the latest science of fire behavior and suppression tactics, from certified fire

instructors. They also receive training in public fire education, hazardous material incident mitigation, flammable liquids, stress management, and self-rescue techniques. The intensive program involves classroom instruction, physical fitness training, firefighter skills training, and live firefighting practice.

Students receive classroom training in all basic firefighter skills. They practice first under non-fire conditions and then during controlled fire conditions. To graduate, students must demonstrate proficiency in life safety, search and rescue, ladder operations, water supply, pump operation, and fire attack. Fire attack operations range from mailbox fires to multiple-floor or multiple room structural fires.

(Photo Credit: Massdfs instagram)

MASSACHUSETTS FIREFIGHTING ACADEMY EARNS INTERNATIONAL REACCREDITATION

Pro Board Accreditation Represents the Fire Service’s “Gold Standard”

The Massachusetts Firefighting Academy has received reaccreditation by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications, better known as the Pro Board.



The Pro Board’s 18-month process examined and validated the training, exam development, and testing processes that the Academy uses when assessing firefighters for more than 40 levels of professional certification. The reaccreditation period will run for five years.

“Pro Board accreditation is the gold standard for agencies like ours and I want to recognize the staff whose efforts led to this recognition,” said State Fire Marshal Davine.

The Massachusetts Firefighting Academy recorded more than 12,500 course enrollments last year, with training delivered at campuses in Stow, Springfield, and Bridgewater; on location at local fire departments; and online.



Massachusetts Call Volunteer Fire Association

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FOLLOW US: WE HAVE A NEW FACEBOOK PAGE!

The MCVFA has a new Facebook Page at <https://tinyurl.com/MCVFA-Facebook>.

Check it out and follow us for updates on benefits, grant and give-away programs, fire/EMS legislation, promotions, retirements, new trucks, fire department fundraising events, and to see what training and complex incidents other MCVFA departments are doing.

The MCVFA had to abandon its old Facebook page due to a technical problem.

Did You Get Your Helmet Sticker?

In June, each MCVFA member department was mailed MCVFA logo Helmet Stickers to distribute to everyone. If you didn't get yours, please email the number of stickers your department needs to MCVFA Executive VP, Chris Hadjer at chrishajder559@gmail.com, and we'll send you some.

NERIS is Coming. Are You Ready?

The old NFRIS incident reporting system will end at the end of 2025 and be replaced with a new system called the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS). Massachusetts fire departments are expected to make the transition from NFIRS to NERIS starting in October 2025. Now is the time to prepare for the transition.

For details go to NERIS.fsri.org and the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services (DFS) NERIS page [here](#)



ARE YOU INSURED?

By Chief Joe Maruca (Retired)

I commonly hear from firefighters and chiefs that they didn't know

what kind of insurance coverage their town has for them if they are injured in the line of duty. Even more common is not knowing what insurance coverage they have for the trucks, equipment, and fire station. You should know what your town's insurance covers and doesn't cover.

What do you do? Start by asking your town for a copy of the insurance policy that covers firefighter injuries, disabilities and death. It's a public document and anyone can get a copy. Then read it. Then I ask an insurance agent to tell me what it really says.

In some towns you might discover there is no insurance. This is legally acceptable. The law doesn't require cities, towns and districts to carry insurance. They can self-insure by paying claims from their annual operating budget. They can hope that nobody gets hurt and nothing breaks. If the town does have insurance, the law does require that the town exhaust insurance coverage before paying claims from town funds.

Let's focus on firefighter line of duty injuries. Here are some questions to ask:

- If a call/volunteer firefighter is injured in the line of duty, what is the limit of coverage? This means, what is the maximum amount of money the policy will pay before the town has to start paying the bills out of pocket.
- If a call/volunteer firefighter is injured in the line of duty is there a deductible the town or department must pay before the policy starts paying the claim?
- What are the limits on the types of injuries or illnesses that are covered?
- If a call/volunteer firefighter has a short-term disability that won't allow them to work as a firefighter how much does the policy pay them and for how long?
- If a call/volunteer firefighter has a short-term disability that won't allow them to work at their regular job (or continue to attend college) how much does the policy pay them and for how long?

I suggest these five questions as a starting point, even though there are plenty more you can ask, because these five questions represent most issues

that have come to my attention over the past twenty years.

Even though state law (MGL Chapter 41, Section 100) requires that cities, towns and districts pay 100% of the medical bills for any firefighter injured in the

line of duty, problems still tend to arise regarding deductibles and coverage limits, and especially when the town hits their insurance coverage limit. It's not unheard of for towns to stop paying the medical bills when they hit the coverage limit and tell the firefighter "Your medical bills aren't covered anymore because we've reached the limit of our insurance coverage". Legally, the city, town or district must pay medical bills even when it's beyond their coverage limit, but sometimes this is poorly understood. Therefore, by exploring the deductibles and coverage limits in advance of an injury, the chance for misunderstandings is greatly reduced, and the town might decide they need to increase their coverage.

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

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



While GL Chapter 41, Section 111F provides for firefighters (and Section 111M for EMS providers who are not firefighters) to continue to get paid their salary when they are out of work due to a line of duty injury, this provision isn't particularly helpful if you are an unpaid volunteer or get paid \$15/hour as a call firefighter. As a volunteer, you'll get nothing, except what your town's insurance policy pays you.

As a call (or part-time/per diem) firefighter you are entitled to get paid what you would typically have gotten paid if you were not disabled. For call firefighters this means looking at what you got paid last year and dividing it by twelve to get your monthly pay rate and then paying you that monthly amount while you are out of work. If you were paid \$2000 as a call firefighter last year, your monthly short-term disability payment will be \$166.67 per month this year. The town will have to pay you this amount until you can return to work as a firefighter, or you are permanently retired as a firefighter. (See MGL Chapter 32

Sections 85H and 85H ½ for the law on permanently retiring a call/volunteer firefighter.)

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

Short-term disability benefits for volunteer and call firefighters is a weakness here in Massachusetts. That is why the MCVFA has filed legislation (S.1882 by Senator Paul W. Mark (D), Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire & Hampden District) to require a minimum amount of short-term disability to be paid to call and volunteer firefighters that is based upon the entry level wage for career firefighters in the region.

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

ACCIDENTAL DEATH & DISABILITY INSURANCE: A MCVFA MEMBER BENEFIT

As a member of the MCVFA you have a \$10,000/\$20,000 accidental death & disability insurance Les issued by Provident Insurance of Pittsburg PA. Provident specializes in insuring fire departments and firefighters. This is a group insurance plan that covers all members of the MCVFA.

The policy pays a death benefit of \$10,000 for any accidental death when off-duty. It pays a death benefit of \$20,000 for any accidental death while on-duty. You must be a member of the MVFC to receive a benefit. (This is one reason why timely renewals and membership rosters are important.)

In addition, the policy pays up to the \$10,000/\$20,000 limits for a disability in accordance with the following list:

- Loss of or Loss of Use of Two or More Hands or Feet 100%
- Loss of Sight in Both Eyes 100%
- Loss of Speech and Hearing in Both Ears 100%
- Loss of One Hand or Foot and Sight in One Eye 100%
- Loss of or Loss of Use of One Hand or Foot 50%

- Loss of Sight in One Eye 50%
- Loss of Speech 50%
- Loss of Hearing in Both Ears 50%
- Severance and Reattachment of One Hand or Foot 50%
- Loss of Thumb and Index Finger of the Same Hand 25%
- Loss of all Four Fingers of the Same Hand 25%
- Loss of all Toes of the Same Foot 25%
- Loss of Thumb 25%
- Loss of Index Finger 25%
- Loss of Any Joint on Either Hand 6.25%
- Loss of 2nd, 3rd, or 4th Finger of Either Hand 12.5%
- Loss of Large Toe of Either Foot 5%
- Loss of a Joint of a Toe 1%

There are limitations to what is covered. Some of the events that are not covered are deaths and injuries from the commission of a crime, an airplane crash, suicide, medical malpractice, illegal drug use, and illnesses (viruses, cancer, diseases, etc.).

If you would like a copy of the full policy, please email us.



Massachusetts Call Volunteer Firefighters' Association Annual State Meeting 2025

Saturday, October 18th ,2025 - 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 am- Registration

9 am- Firefighter Memorial

9:30 am - 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:

Dan Wolf mcvfamembership@gmail.com





Please forward information to Kevin Connolly at mcvfa@mcvfa.org or mail to:
 MCVFA Certificate Request
 P.O. Box 13
 Northfield, MA, 01360-0013

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Smoke Showin' Wants You !



Submit your articles and photos for the next issue.

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NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 18

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