



# BACK STEP TALKS

SERIES III ISSUE 1 JANUARY 2024

## How Research and Technology has Changed the Fire Service

It is often said that “The fire service is two hundred years of tradition unimpeded by progress”. While many traditions are held true, the above is a false statement as the fire service has changed dramatically over its history. Many of these changes are directed by advancements through research and technology. As I look back at my own fire service career (50+ years), I recall advances in personal protective equipment design, apparatus design, the inclusion of thermal imaging cameras, and the initiation of computer aided technologies for dispatch, response route mapping, and on-scene resource and personnel accountability tracking.

It seems that, for many years, the fire service held tradition as a barrier to advancement in research and technology. We did the same thing each and every day, because “that’s the way we’ve always done it!” But, within the last twenty-five years, the fire service has not only embraced research and technology development but has led the agenda for further efforts. Advancing the research agenda and guiding technology development were identified as two major factors in reducing line-of-duty injuries and



deaths when the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) established the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives in 2004.

Building on the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives, the NFFF subsequently gathered fire service practitioners and researchers from across the U.S. to develop the National Fire Service Research Agenda. The research agenda includes more than 300 recommendations focused on three core domains related to firefighter safety: hiring/retention/advancement, effective operations, and health & safety. In helping develop the agenda, the fire service representatives acknowledged that we cannot segregate its work from the efforts of research and industry. In order to be successful in reducing line-of-duty injuries and deaths, we

must collaborate with research and industry to define our challenges and help guide solutions. Read more at [National Fire Service Research Agenda Report Released.](#)

In this issue of Back Step Talks, we discuss how research and technology has changed the fire service in our local area. We look at lessons learned from the LODD’s of Nathan Flynn and Joshua Laird, the importance of understanding the hazards of carbon monoxide poisoning, and what actions we need to take to constantly review past incidents through after-action reviews so that we can learn from them and identify the need for additional research or technology implementation.

Please review this issue’s articles and take them back to share with members of your department. By working together and training together, we can become more efficient and reduce line-of-duty injuries and deaths. “Everyone Goes Home” should not just be a cute saying but a motto that we live by every day.

David Lewis

## Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives # 7 and # 8

LSI #7 is an effort to identify areas where research is needed to contribute to the mission of the Life Safety Initiatives. The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) has conducted several symposiums to improve firefighter safety.

These symposiums, and resulting reports, assist organizations and individual researchers to focus their efforts and resources in those areas identified as significant and a priority for firefighter safety with the intent of reducing line-of-duty-injuries and fatalities. The acknowledgement for this need to conduct research and gather data is an important step.

Areas of research conducted since the first symposium in 2004 has included; looking at modern construction features, taking an in depth look at firefighter fatalities, and establishing programs to gather data on near misses, injuries, and deaths.

Some of this research has led to new technologies being developed, changes in the safety culture, and identifying areas requiring further investigation.

This is an on-going effort that we must all support, so completely fill out your fire reports, complete first-report-of-injury forms when needed, and participate in data gathering programs.

LSI #8 – Some of the research associated with LSI #7 found that the fire service is lagging in the use of current technology to reduce the number of firefighter injuries and/or deaths. For example, this includes access to the internet or web-based technologies, owning thermal imaging cameras, having mobile data terminals in their apparatus, or utilizing simulators in department training programs.

Its not just electronic based technology that can be useful, improved cleaning detergents used to clean our PPE, the use of N95 masks to protect responders from respiratory infections, and passing laws requiring the use of residential sprinklers.

All of these technologies can protect our First Responders, it is up to us to stay up to date on the current technology that has an impact of reducing injuries and saving lives – our lives.

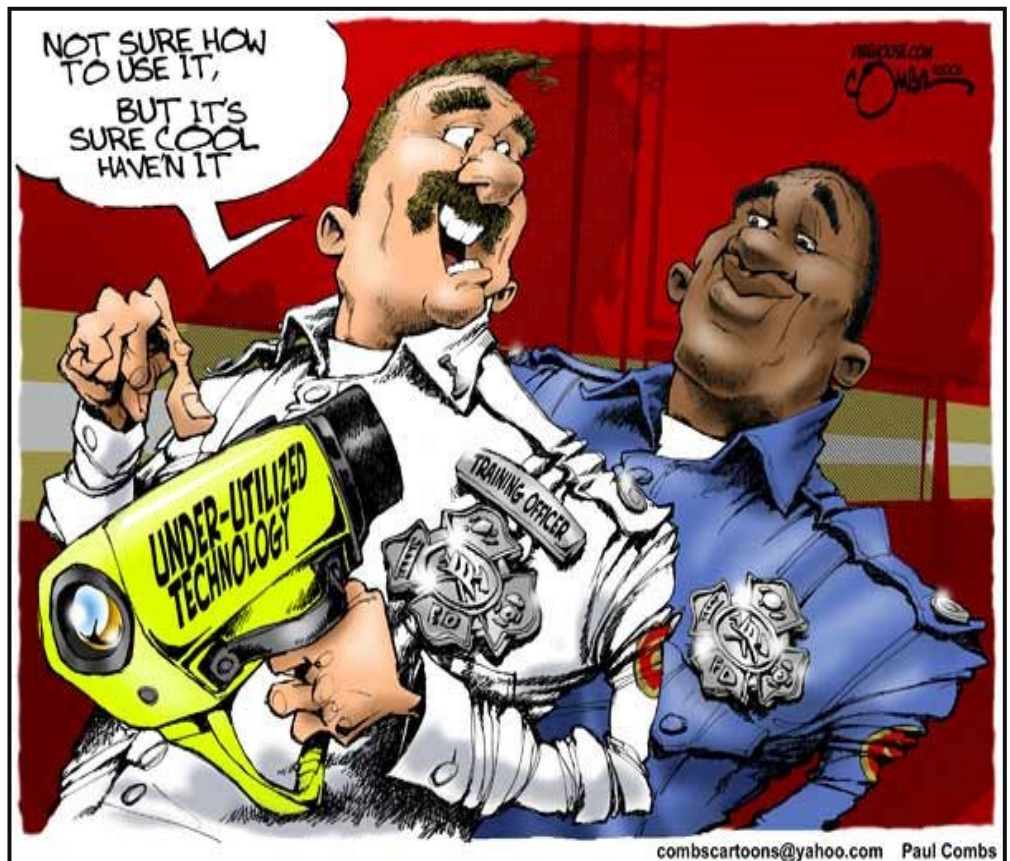
Once our department obtains the technology, we need to train on it and use it!

For access to reports coming from the various NFFF symposiums, go to [www.everyonegoeshome.com](http://www.everyonegoeshome.com).

Dave Reid

EMS Lt/Safety Officer

United Communities VFD



## Firefighter Life Safety Summit #4 – What was said about research and technology?

In 2004, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) sponsored the first Firefighter Life Safety Summit in Tampa, Florida, with the goal of identifying the means of reducing firefighter line-of-duty injuries and deaths. Following the first summit, the NFFF developed and released the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives and inaugurated the *Everyone Goes Home* campaign. The initiatives were developed to educate the fire service on the LODD problem and propose a unified agenda for reducing LODD's.

It was generally agreed by the fire service organizations that reducing LODD's was not a one-shot solution but that the summits needed to be repeated every five years. NFFF hosted additional Firefighter Life Safety Summits in 2007, 2014, and again in 2022. Each summit measured progress towards reducing LODDs and reaffirmed the importance of the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives.

From September 19-21, 2022, representatives of America's fire service gathered in San Antonio, TX to participate in the fourth Firefighter Life Safety Summit. The focus of the summit, as with each other summit, was to evaluate the relevance of the NFFF's 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives, and to develop strategies to continue efforts to reduce preventable line-of-duty deaths in the fire service.

During the summit, eight breakout groups were identified to review LODD's from a different viewpoint. Each group was tasked to identify the root causes of LODDs, recommendations for reducing LODDs, identify stakeholder responsibility for implementing changes to the fire service culture, and prioritizing changes to have the greatest short-term and long-term impact on firefighter safety.

The five key recommendations of the participants in Firefighter Life Safety Summit #4 were:

1. Successful organizational culture progress and change must include input from all stakeholders within a fire department, with individuals in leadership positions (formal and informal) leading by example.
2. All members of an organization must have personal accountability and be empowered to contribute to organizational change.
3. Fire service research and data must be presented in a relatable manner to have the most significant influence.
4. Partnerships with non-fire service entities, academic partners, and researchers are vital to improving firefighter health and safety.

5. Researchers, practitioners, and the industry must work together on comprehensive strategies to address behavioral health issues and occupational cancer risks in the fire service.

Note the emphasis on research and technology in at least three of these recommendations. No longer should it be acceptable for the fire service, the research community, and industry to operate within their own domains. We must collaborate together to review the data, understand the need for change, and mutually identify solutions based on that need.

At the close of the summit, the attendees were challenged with the question: "What are you going to do?" Helping identify the challenges is only the first step. Each department must assess where their department stands with implementation of the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives and determine a course of action to further improve health and safety. By doing so, we all can reduce line-of-duty injuries and deaths and live to the motto "*Everyone Goes Home*".

David Lewis

[Firefighter Safety Summit Reports](#)



## CO Monitors on EMS Bags Save Lives

One evening in 2012, Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad Firefighter Tim Holtzclaw was at his day job as a nurse covering the trauma bay at Children's National Hospital. An ambulance brought in a 5–6-year-old boy who had reportedly fallen out of a bunk bed. The father had accompanied the patient on the transport.

Upon examination, the boy showed no signs of traumatic injury and was acting normally. About 30 minutes after arrival, though, the father still seemed oddly distressed by his son's condition. He also reported that he was concerned about the rest of his family, as his wife was not answering her phone.

Considering the boy seemed a little old too have fallen out of a bed, the father's "disproportionate" behavior regarding his son's condition, and the fact that no one was picking up at the house, Tim concluded "*something's going on in the house.*" He called the hospital's Emergency Communication and Information Center and asked that an ambulance be dispatched to the house to check on the welfare of the occupants. A short time later, a fire apparatus made entry and found everyone inside unconscious. The family, including the father and son, were ultimately found to have toxic carboxyhemoglobin levels and several were transported to the hyperbaric chamber in Baltimore. All recovered.

Tim's application of his experience and knowledge, along with his

taking decisive action, undoubtedly saved the lives of this entire family. But could the cause of the problem have been identified and addressed before it led to several unconscious patients on the verge of death?

In 2018, a South Shore (MA) EMS ambulance was dispatched for a patient reporting she had woken that morning with severe chest pain. Soon after the crew entered the home, the CO monitor on one of their EMS bags began to alarm. It leveled out at about 450 ppm, a concentration that is typically fatal after a few hours of exposure. The crew immediately evacuated the entire family, saving their lives before any showed serious symptoms.



In 2019, Roanoke County (VA) Fire and Rescue Medic 7 was dispatched to assist a Roanoke Fire Department truck crew with an unresponsive patient. Entering the home, the medic crew found the truck crew, EMS Supervisor, and a number of family and friends inside with the patient. The CO monitor on their bag began to alarm almost

immediately, settling at about 350 ppm. Again, a deadly level. In this case, the CO monitor protected family and friends, along with the EMS and fire crews, and led to the appropriate diagnosis and care for the patient.

We all know CO poisoning can mimic many other conditions, sometimes leading to a misdiagnosis by EMS responders. CO is odorless and colorless and can be missed without metering devices. A continuously running CO monitor, attached to an EMS bag, can be the final clue to solve a potentially deadly mystery. Many modern CO monitors run continuously (You can't turn it off). They are set to alarm at relatively low concentrations, but concentrations that would almost always indicate a problem.

As cold weather months have arrived, many homes look to natural or propane gas, kerosene, or wood to heat a home or power appliances. We advise all homeowners that use these products to protect their home with CO monitors/alarms. Should we not provide the same level of protection to our responders? As the examples above show, they regularly save lives. They are valuable early warning devices that should be considered by any organization that provides EMS services.

Steve Maloney  
Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad

## CSST - The Hidden Enemy

Corrugated Stainless-Steel Tubing (CSST) was introduced in 1989 and quickly replaced the usage of black threaded pipe for LP and Natural gas due to reduced cost of installation. The use of CSST was approved in the following codes, NFPA, ICC and ANSI. However, the fire service early on recognized the hazards after several fire incidents were noted caused by lightning strikes damaging CSST piping and fires resulting from the escape of burning gas. Since the use of this piping was new, there was very little data or research to substantiate the theory of a fire hazard. Over time with the occurrence of more incidents, and with documented research and testing, there was proof that lightning strikes could damage CSST installations. This triggered some additional research in reducing the possibility of fires caused by lightning strikes. More recently, two residential fires involving lightning strikes and CSST piping resulted in line of duty deaths in Maryland. In 2018 Firefighter Nathan Flynn of Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services and in 2021 Joshua Laird of Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services died in the Line of Duty. In both cases, the fires occurred in very large single-family dwellings during thunderstorms with multiple lightning strikes in the area. It was determined during the investigations that the lightning strikes induced an arc failure of the CSST piping and resulted in fires. These fires both occurred in the basement or crawlspace causing a

failure of the floors above the fire and both firefighters falling into these spaces.



As a result of these fires and line-of-duty deaths, representatives of the Maryland fire service sought legislative actions to alter the use of CSST piping. The 2022 Maryland General Assembly introduced HB 1052, Public Safety - Natural Gas and Liquefied Propane Piping Systems - Construction Requirements (Flynn and Laird Act). In April of 2022 the Governor of Maryland signed this law.

***This bill prohibits the use of non-arc-resistant jacketed corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST) in (1) the new construction of a customer-owned natural gas or liquefied propane piping system in a building; (2) a natural gas or liquefied propane piping system in a renovated property if the renovation affects more than 50% of the total square footage of the property; or (3) a natural gas or liquefied propane piping system that requires the addition of a new gas line to the gas piping system. The bill applies to any building that uses fuel gas***

***piping systems not subject to Title 49, Part 192 of the Code of Federal Regulations. The bill applies prospectively only and may not be applied or interpreted to have any effect on or application to any new construction for which a building permit is issued before the bill's effective date.***

As emergency responders, we must be aware of the risks involved when CSST piping may be involved in a fire. Training updates should be provided to all department members so that they understand the risks and what to look for when responding to a fire incident that may involve CSST piping. The Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), with the support of Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services and Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services, produced a video that models the fire spread through simulation, as well as using on-scene audio from the LODD incidents mentioned above. The link for this is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ceIAOo-xiQ>.

Lexipol has also developed an excellent webinar presentation on CSST Awareness that can be viewed on-demand at <https://info.lexipol.com/webinar-csst-awareness-ty>.

David Black

[Howard County Report  
LODD of Nathan Flynn](#)



[Frederick Co. Report  
LODD Joshua Laird](#)

## The Double-Edged Sword: The Gear That Protects Us May Also Be Killing Us

In 2014, Lieutenant Paul Cotter of the Worcester Fire Department in Massachusetts was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Lt. Cotter and his wife began searching for answers as to where this diagnosis may have come from as Lt. Cotter lived a very healthy lifestyle during his time in the fire service. As his wife, Diane, searched for an explanation, she began to look at the fire service as the source of her husband's cancer. Many people agree that there are significant carcinogens present on a fireground from the smoke and various chemical vapors that can be created during the combustion process. But Mrs. Cotter hypothesized that it was possible the turnout gear firefighters wear could be the cause of her husband's cancer. As she was now a firefighter cancer activist, she received some inspiration from an activist from a related field. In 2017, she corresponded with Erin Brokovich on her hypothesis and Ms. Brokovich suggested she inquire about the presence of polyfluoroalkyl and perfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, in structural turnout gear (Emmanuel, 2023).

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), PFAS chemicals "are a group of chemicals used to make fluoropolymer coatings and products that resist heat, oil, stains, grease, and water. [They] do not breakdown in the environment, can move through soils and contaminate drinking water sources, [and they can] build up (bioaccumulate) in fish and

wildlife." While the effects of PFAS are still being studied in larger sample sizes, initial data suggest PFAS exposure is linked to "prostate, kidney, and testicular cancers as well as thyroid disease and low birthweight" (Sieff, 2018).

Ms. Cotter attempted to have her husband's turnout gear tested but found the chemical testing necessary to be very expensive. She reached out to several universities to see if they would test the gear and provide further research into the presence of PFAS in turnout gear. She found a partner in Dr. Graham Peaslee at the University of Notre Dame. He tested Lt. Cotter's gear and found very high levels of fluorine and PFAS. He then extended his research to other firefighters and eventually whole fire departments and found similar results. As his research expanded, Dr. Peaslee also found evidence of PFAS contamination in dust at firehouses as well as evidence of PFAS cross contamination at a fire department logistics warehouse that handled new turnout gear delivered directly from the manufacturer.

PFAS contamination usually occurs through ingestion of food or beverages containing PFAS. Dr. Peaslee conducted a study using lab mice in 2017 to identify if PFAS could enter the body through skin absorption and found that those chemicals were accumulating "in various organs such as the brain and stomach" (Sieff, 2018). These results when combined with the

presence of high levels of PFAS in turnout gear present a grim recipe for the development of cancers and other health risks in firefighters. On March 16, 2023, the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) filed a lawsuit against the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to remove the Ultraviolet Light Degradation Test required for turnout gear to receive NFPA approval under the NFPA 1971 Standard. According to the IAFF, the only substance that can pass the test, which requires gear be exposed to ultraviolet light for forty (40) hours without degradation, are PFAS. The NFPA 1971 Standard adopted in 2018 restricts the ability of fire departments to purchase PFAS-free gear due to not being able to meet the performance requirements of the standard, thus resulting in the liability of a fire department providing gear that doesn't meet the current NFPA standard.

The NFPA is in the final stages of publishing NFPA 1971 - a standard that will encompass turnout gear (currently addressed in NFPA 1971) and SCBA (currently addressed in NFPA 1981) as well as station and work uniforms standards (NFPA 1975) and Personal Alert Safety Systems or PASS (NFPA 1982) all into one standard (Stull, 2023). The pre-publication document of the new PPE standard proposes a requirement for "the measurement of PFAS in gear and apply criteria for acceptable levels" to be present in the gear (Stull,

## The Double-Edged Sword: The Gear That Protects Us May Also Be Killing Us (cont)

2023). The new standard would also allow gear manufacturers to label their gear as “PFAS Free” if PFAS levels were below a certain limit (Stull, 2023).

The structural turnout gear required for the performance of firefighting duties represents a significant investment into a firefighter’s safety. The presence of PFAS in this gear presents a dilemma for fire chiefs and other personnel charged with purchasing turnout gear and other fire-resistive clothing (I.E. – fire-resistive work/station uniforms) for their departments. While changes are on the horizon that will allow for PFAS-free alternatives, some best practices for departments going forward to limit exposure can be implemented.

### Best Practices for Limiting Exposure to PFAS In Turnout Gear

- Wearing non-latex gloves when handling turnout gear (new or used)
- Washing hands with soap and water any time after handling turnout gear
- Limiting the time personnel are in turnout gear during emergency and non-emergency operations
- Purchase and utilization of a second set of gear for personnel to always have a clean set
- Performing gross decontamination of gear on scene after a working incident and a thorough washing upon arrival back at the station
- Personnel should shower and put on a clean uniform upon returning from a working fire
- Strict enforcement of no turnout gear in living areas of a firehouse

[Implications of New NFPA 1970 Standard](#)



Jon Johnson



[Presence of PFASs in Turn Our Gear](#)

[Front Line Battle with PFASs](#)



## IAFC-VCOS Symposium in the Sun From an Attendee

As a longtime member of the public safety service in Maryland, I have mixed feelings about the way Company Officers are trained.

The sheer volume of training provided to Maryland fire/rescue personnel through the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) and the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute (MFRI), is daunting and highly technical in nature.

The Integrated Emergency Command Structure (IECS) in the Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service (MCFRS) clearly documents promotion requirements at all levels, from candidate through Fire Chief.

Due to those requirements, our personnel are aware of the technical requirements for promotion. While these requirements do a decent job of preparing for working on the Ramp side of the Bay Doors, I feel they do not provide an adequate level of training for the “kitchen table” side of the house. We proficiently train technical personnel, while neglecting the soft skills required of personnel managers. A common complaint heard in my station, and I would surmise many others, is the lack of “professional development” provided to the Company Officer community.

When I joined the Maryland Fire Chiefs Association (MFCA), several members suggested that I consider applying for scholarships to attend training events. Through a combination of sponsorships from the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire & Rescue Association (MCVFRA) and my department, Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad (WVRS), Captain Juan Alfaro and I were able to attend this year’s International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) Volunteer & Combination Officers Section (VCOS) Symposium in the Sun (SITS), in Clearwater Beach, FL.

## IAFC-VCOS Symposium in the Sun From and Attendee (cont)

The range of topics was engaging and largely focused on the soft-skills side of the equation. The opportunity to discuss and brainstorm additional ways of facing the challenges of managing a diverse workforce was invaluable. Having instructors representing departments, from rural through urban, provided a variety of experiences and instructional capabilities, generating interactive discussions among those attending.

For years, I thought the Symposium was a venue designed exclusively for Chiefs since it is sponsored by the IAFC. I am glad to learn that I was mistaken, and I recommend this program, wholeheartedly, to anyone functioning at the Company Officer or higher level, or for those considering that as the next step in their department.

An adage that I have followed, and recommended to others for years,

“advocate for yourself” – doing so is what allowed myself and Captain Alfaro to attend this year. I look forward to attending in future years.

Michael Doherty

Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad

[IAFC-VCOS](#)



## In Case You Missed it (ICYMI)

The 2023 Leadership Training Weekend was held in Ocean City over the weekend of December 9-10, hosted by the Maryland Fire Chiefs Association and the Maryland Fire & Rescue Institute. There were 140 emergency response personnel from across the state of Maryland gathered for a weekend of education and networking.

Day 1 featured a full day program by Chief Richard Gasaway entitled “Flawed Situational Awareness: The Stealth Killer of First Responders”. Chief Gasaway is regularly featured in Maryland training programs and always offers an educational and enlightening program. This program was no different. He presented an understanding of the three elements of situational awareness – Perception, Understanding, and Prediction. To fail at any of these elements can cause bad things to happen. As a final exercise, Chief Gasaway challenged the participants that attaining a state of situational



awareness can be difficult with multiple things going on at once and information coming from all directions. Responders must use all of the resources available to make intelligent decisions in a time constrained environment. Follow Chief Gasaway’s work at <https://www.samatters.com/first-responder/>

Day 2 featured representatives from Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services delivering a program entitled “The Ball Road Fire, and the Two Years Since”. On

August 11, 2021, the Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services suffered the tragic line-of-duty death of Battalion Chief Joshua Laird while operating at house fire in the 9500 block of Ball Road in Ijamsville, Maryland. Chief Tom Coe, along with Battalion Chief Frank Malta, Lt. Aaron Waltz, Lt. Mike Knight, and FF Trevor Meador detailed their personal experiences from that day and what organizational changes were made after this tragic event to help prevent it from happening again. Emergency responders are encouraged to read the after-action report so that they too can learn from the incident and implement changes in their own department to avoid having to experience this event.

The MFCA is proud to be able to present training programs such as this weekend’s Leadership Training Weekend. See Save the Dates for more leadership training offerings.

David Lewis



# Highlights of IAFC-VCOS Symposium in the Sun

From November 9-12, 2023, the annual IAFC/VCOS Symposium in the Sun conference was held at the Hilton Resort in Clearwater Beach, FL. There were over 570 participants from all over the country including more than 30 from Maryland.

The keynote address was delivered by Eriks Gabliks, the Superintendent at the US Fire Administration / National Fire Academy. Eriks introduced the audience to the U.S. Fire Administrator's Summit on Fire Prevention and Control held on October 10, 2023. The summit was held with the intent to bring all of the national fire service organizations together as one under **#FireServiceOneVoice**.

Chief Tim Sendelbach presented an enlightening presentation with highlighted how much the fire service has changed. He compared firefighting techniques from the time of Ben Franklin to today's hero's and noted how we have made significant changes. Our service model has been expanded, following the advice of

Chief Alan V. Brunacini, who reminded us to "be nice" and to take care of Mrs. Smith. Chief Sendelbach explained that leaders must listen to ideas and empower their people. He also noted that we must embrace a culture of safety for firefighters through command competency and adoption of standards developed by the NFPA.

Chief Chris Barron offered a presentation on the 10 Commandments for leadership. Although each is important, #5 really struck home with me.

## #5 Get rid of the bad apples!

- Stop the cancer before it spreads!
- Don't let one ruin the bunch!
- Don't be afraid to fire the volunteer!
- Do you have the mechanisms in place?
- Member handbook – is it current?

- Code of Conduct
- Define/Enforce "Active Member" status.
- Disciplinary forms/Notice of Disciplinary Action

If you have never attended the IAFC-VCOS Symposium in the Sun, I would highly recommend that you do. It is the only national level conference that addresses leading and managing combination and volunteer departments. Additionally, the networking opportunities are second to none and you are guaranteed to meet a new friend from across the country that you will continue to share experiences with after the conference is over. Mark your calendar for the 2024 VCOS Symposium in the Sun – November 14-17, 2024. The MFCA has provided stipends to seminars like the FDIC, FRI and IAFC-VCOS in the past and we will continue to do so in the future.

Joseph Chornock  
MFCA Health & Safety Committee



The Maryland attendees at VCOS Symposium in the Sun.

# The Importance of Post –Incident Analysis

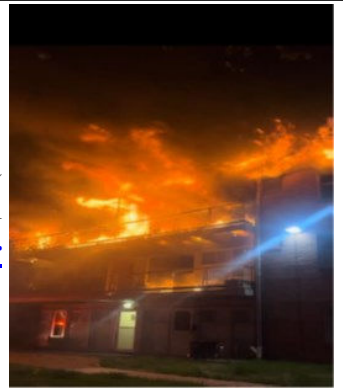
The value of what we can learn from past incidents and the importance of post-incident analysis can be of great value to the eyes of the reader, if the reader allows themselves to focus and become “a virtual participant in the incident”.

- A. Recounting the 911 call received and the incident information given begin to set the outcome.
- B. Recounting the decisions of communications and the units dispatched initiate the outcome.
- C. Recounting the operational; apparatus response, apparatus arrival and apparatus placement contribute to the outcome.
- D. Recounting operational arrival of the first unit; layout instructions, address confirmation, conditions assessment, 360 report and establishment of an incident command structure begin to organize the outcome.
- E. Recounting the operational; crew safety, crew water supply layouts, crew hose line deployments, crew ladder deployments, crew searches, crew rescues, crew safety, crew fire attack, crew utility assessments, crew overhaul, crew safety and crew wrap up facilitate the outcome.
- F. Recounting the command operational administration; decisions while enroute, decisions upon arrival, face-to-face transfer of command, confirm established assignments, make additional assignments, seek added resources and ensure crew safety solidifies the outcome.

The above details listed, along with the exhibits and photos, repaint the picture of what went right, what went wrong and what can be improved. This, to ensure that others are able to learn and be able to recount for their own use, the ability to do our jobs better; save lives and property, making sure “everyone goes home”.

The AAR can be presented via You Tube which provides the opportunity to include actual video and audio footage from various sources as is the case with this AAR for [AAR 10203 Baltimore Ave.](#)

These reports can be in a written report such as the AAR for [3509 Toledo Terrace After Action Review.](#)



The reports can be a written report with a particular message as is the case with [PITT 49th Ave 23-11](#)



Reports can also be written and include a QR code to imbed an audio recording for the incident or added messages as is the case with the AAR for [51 Harry S Truman Dr After Action Review](#) as well as [PITT Lexington Avenue 23-07](#)

Chief Pete Mellits  
Bowie Volunteer Fire Dept.

# New Year Resolutions or Intentions

With the end of the year upon us, it is a time to reflect on our accomplishments, and set New Year's resolutions or intentions. You may be wondering, what is the difference? Resolutions are statements that pertain to the future. They are specific goals that don't allow for adjustment. Therefore, resolutions can set us up for failure. An example of a resolution is: I will lose 20 pounds by June. If you don't accomplish this, you may feel defeated. An intention focuses on the present. It is adjustable, and sets you up for success. An example of an intention is: In 2024 I am going to improve my health and wellbeing. To do this I would like to lose 20 pounds, perhaps by losing 3-5 pounds a month. To lose the weight, I will exercise more and watch portion sizes. This leaves room for adjustment. If you find that you are not accomplishing your intention, determine the sticking point and make adjustments. It is important to set yourself up for success.

I have created a list of potential intentions pertinent to our field in the box to the right.

What intentions are you going to add to the list?

**Happy, healthy, safe, and prosperous New Year!**

summarized by Rhonda Cohen  
FF/EMT, RD, LDN, CSN



## *Fire Service New Years Resolutions*

1. I will reduce my risk of cancer by wearing full protective equipment (PPE) throughout the entire incident, including SCBA during salvage and overhaul.
2. I will get my annual physical.
3. I will start, or continue my personal fitness program.
4. I will find a hobby that is not related to the Fire Service to allow myself time to separate and refocus.
5. I will practice box breathing when I feel stress or anxiety.
6. I will prioritize sleep, aiming for at least 7-8 hours per night when off shift.
7. I will improve my diet by including more fruits and vegetables, decreasing risk of cardiovascular disease.
8. I will continue to train to become more proficient in my career.
9. I will shower as soon as possible after being exposed to products of combustion or other contaminants "Shower with the Hour".
10. I will use sunscreen on all exposed skin to reduce the risk of skin cancer.
11. I will stay on top of new research and implement recommendations when possible.
12. I will be consistent in improving my mental and physical health.
13. I will remain hydrated with water and electrolytes when needed.
14. If needed, I will reduce my alcohol intake (one drink or less per day for women and two drinks or less per day for men).
15. I will laugh and live my best life.

# Save the Dates

Maryland Fire Chiefs  
Association  
General Membership Meeting

January 13, 2024  
Earleigh Heights Volunteer  
Fire Company

Five Alarm  
Leadership Program



March 23, 2024  
Ocean City Fire Headquarters  
Ocean City, MD

[National Fire  
Service Staff &  
Command Course](#)



March 3-8, 2024  
Double Tree Annapolis  
Annapolis, Md

[Mark G. Falkenhan  
Leadership Seminar](#)



January 20, 2024  
Carroll County Public Safety  
Training Center  
Westminster, MD

[Maryland Weekend at  
the National Fire  
Academy](#)



February 24-25, 2024  
National Fire Academy  
Emmitsburg, MD

John W. Hoglund Officers  
Seminar

March 2-3, 2024  
Rockville, MD

[Essentials of Fire Chaplaincy](#)

Register with MFRI  
March 18 and 19, 2024  
MFRI Lower Eastern Shore Re-  
gional Training Center  
Princess Anne, MD

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# 88

The number of 1st responder  
suicides through  
December 31, 2023.

[Firefighter Behavioral  
Health Alliance](#)

EMERGENCY RESPONDER  
STRUCK-BY FATALITIES



THIS YEAR (THROUGH 12/28/2023)

- 8 FIRE/EMS
- 14 LAW ENFORCEMENT
- 20 TOWING AND RECOVERY
- 0 ROAD SERVICE TECHNICIANS
- 3 DOT/SSP

# 82

The number of fallen firefighters  
through December 31, 2024.

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# 988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE