



Maryland Fire Chiefs Association

Safety and Health Committee

Minutes of meeting held March 26, 2025

The Safety and Health Committee of the Maryland Fire Chiefs Association met on March 26, 2025, via Zoom.

Members of the committee present were

David Lewis, Chairman
David Black
Joe Chornock
Rhonda Cohen
Pete Mellits
David Reid

The meeting was scheduled to review the draft copy of the April edition of Back Step Talks. Some minor comments were submitted and will be used to revise the draft before release on April 1.

The discussion then moved to identify a focus topic for the July edition of Back Step Talks. It was suggested that we consider focusing on safety and the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). While the East Coast is not prone to large wildland incidents experienced in the Midwest and West regions, the problem is moving in this direction (consider recent incidents in the Carolinas). The committee agreed that this would be our next focus topic. All members were asked to consider subtopic areas for articles and be ready to discuss them at our next meeting (April 28).

The committee will meet again (via Zoom) on Monday, April 28, at 7 pm. An invite from the Zoom account will be sent out before the meeting.

Thanks again for everyone's continued support and participation.

Submitted by: David Lewis, Chairman

Recommended topics for Back Step Talks - April 2025

Cover page – discuss the need for safety during live fire operations

Cite NFPA statistics - [United States Firefighter Injuries | NFPA Research](#)

Fatalities - [Firefighter fatalities in the United States | NFPA](#)

Be Combat Ready - Understanding the enemy

Understand fire behavior and how it affects operations

The Role of the Incident Safety Officer

Reference to the “Five Reads” presentation from FDSOA

[Fire Department Safety Officers Association - The 5 Reads](#)

The importance of rehab

Give your body time to rebound

Medical evaluation during rehab

Importance of rehydration

Reference NFPA standard on rehab (NFPA 1584/1580)

Be a good sport – Prepare like an athlete

The importance of fitness and nutrition on health and safety

We can’t save you if we can’t get there – driving safety

Slow down, obey traffic laws

Arriving one minute later really doesn’t make a difference

Live Fire Training – Safety Is Still Important

Cite statistics on training injuries/deaths

Just because it is training, we can’t leave safety at home

Actions needed to reduce training injuries/deaths

NFPA 1403 and legal consequences of not following it

Mental Health Conference Scholarship Opportunities

The MFCA and MSFA are sponsoring 6 MD Fire service Individuals to attend the Fire Service Mental Wellness and Suicide Prevention Symposium, hosted by the NFFF and First Responder Center for Excellence (FRCE) on March 19-21, 2025, in Nashville, TN.

See <https://www.firehero.org/event/fire-service-mental-wellness-and-suicide-prevention-symposium/>

Priority to scholarship awards will be given to individuals directly involved in mental health and awareness, especially on the topic of suicide. These people should be advocates on a county or state level, i.e., Chaplains, members of the LAST team, Mental Health Taskforce, Peer Support Team members, etc.

Reimbursement will cover air travel to Nashville, local transportation to/from the hotel, up to 3 nights of lodging, and conference registration fee.

The MSFA and MFCA are sponsoring 20 MD fire service individuals to attend the 1st Responder Mental Health & Wellness Conference. March 24-25, 2025 - in Ocean City, MD

See -> <https://app.clearevent.com/eventPortal#event/6f44d386-02dd-4ac6-a941-bcc28ca20fe4/home>

Reimbursement will be for the conference fee, up to TWO nights lodging at \$115/night, and mileage for anyone traveling over 50 miles one way.

To apply for either of these conference scholarship opportunities, complete the application form at <https://mdchief.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Training-and-Conference-Scholarship-Request-Form.pdf>

Your completed Scholarship application form must be emailed to scholarships@mdchief.org

There are also two upcoming roadway safety conferences that you should consider attending. Both are local events and are FREE.

April 23 - Baltimore Regional Traffic Incident Management Conference, held at the Maritime Institute

Register online at [2025 Baltimore Region Traffic Incident Management Conference Tickets, Wed, Apr 23, 2025 at 8:30 AM | Eventbrite](#)

April 29 - Maryland Highway Safety Summit, hosted by the MDOT Safety Office, at the BWI Hilton

Registration opens on January 30, so I don't have a link yet.