



# Maryland Fire Chiefs Association

## Safety and Health Committee

### Minutes of meeting held April 28, 2025

The Safety and Health Committee of the Maryland Fire Chiefs Association met on April 28, 2025, via Zoom.

Members of the committee present were

David Lewis, Chairman  
Joe Chornock  
Rhonda Cohen  
Dick Devore  
David Reid

The meeting was scheduled with the following agenda items:

- Topics to be written for the July issue of Back Step Talks
- Discuss plans for the joint MSFA/MFCA Safety booth at the MSFA Convention
- Actions for the 2025 National Firefighter Safety Stand Down

The first discussion was about topics for the July edition of Back Step Talks. It was previously decided that we would focus 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, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania). The following subtopic areas were presented as possible areas for articles:

- Cover – define WUI, explain why it is a concern, it is not just a West Coast challenge (Dave Lewis will write)
- Recent incident highlights – South Carolina, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, others (Dave Lewis will write)
- Wildland Firefighting Safety (Dave Reid will write)
- Dress for the job - Wildland PPE is NOT structural firefighting PPE (Dave Reid will write)
- Structural firefighters in the urban interface - What structural firefighters need to understand about the WUI (possibly will be covered in the two articles above)
- Traffic Safety concerns in a WUI environment – build off ResponderSafety project (Joe Chornock will write)
- Health concerns for WUI responders – cardiac stress, cancer, mental health (Rhonda will write about nutritional needs for wildland firefighters)
- Challenges with the Insurance industry (Dave Lewis will write)

You will note that most of the writing activity will fall on Dave Lewis and Dave Reid for this issue. Our meeting was lightly attended, and no committee members offered to write articles in response to the

email sent before the meeting. This is a committee project, and all committee members are expected to participate in each issue. If committee members who were not on the meeting call would like to take ownership of one of these topics, please let us know.

Schedule for the next issue of Back Step Talks:

- Draft articles due by June 8
- Committee meets to discuss and approve the draft on Wednesday, June 25
- Back Step Talks, July 2025, released on July 1

The committee next discussed plans for a joint MSFA/MFCA Safety booth at the MSFA Convention. Several options were discussed to have handout materials available at the booth. If anyone has access to materials, please let us know. We also discussed possibly procuring a pull-up display for the MFCA Safety and Health Committee. MSFA already has one or more pull-up displays, and this one would be specific to the MFCA Safety and Health Committee. The cost would be about \$200. This could be used at the convention and other events where MFCA has a presence. After the meeting, Dave Reid submitted a proposed graphic for the pull-up display. See the attached proposed design and let us know what you think. If we like it, we will need to ask MFCA for funding. We will also need to get Paul Combs' approval for the use of his artwork for the background. Dave Lewis will contact Paul once we get input from the committee and approval from the MFCA. And finally, we will need to generate a staffing plan for the booth so that it is covered for the two days that the exhibit hall is open, and the responsibility is shared between members of the MSFA and MFCA committees.

The last topic of discussion was that the National Firefighter Safety Stand Down Week is June 15-21, 2025 (yes, that is the same week as the convention). This year's focus is on "Breaking the Stigma: Behavioral Health RESET". RESET stands for Recognize-Educate-Strategies-Empower-Training. Each day of the week will focus on one of these areas. This topic is very important to our safety and health concerns, and we should make every attempt to get the message out. The committee will plan to use social media posting and have information available at the convention booth to help spread the message. More information can be found at <https://safetystanddown.org/>

The committee will meet again (via Zoom) on Monday, May 19, at 7 pm to discuss progress on the above issues. 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

**Proposed banner design – Let us know what you think !!!**

