



Maryland Fire Chiefs Association

Safety and Health Committee

Minutes of meeting held July 21, 2025

The Safety and Health Committee of the Maryland Fire Chiefs Association met on July 21, 2025, via Zoom.

Members of the committee present were

David Lewis, Chairman
Dick Devore
David Reid
David Black
Chris Caisse
Pete Mellits

The committee welcomed new member, Chris Caisse, who recently retired from the Baltimore City Fire Department and brings a wealth of experience to the committee.

The meeting was scheduled to select a focus topic for the October issue of Back Step Talks.

After discussing potential focus topics for the October issue, the committee decided to follow the lead of the MFCA's recent decision to provide a toolbox for new fire chiefs. This decision came up at last weekend's MFCA meeting, and they will be forming a task group to determine what is necessary. The MFCA Safety & Health Committee decided that we will support these measures by focusing on safety and health responsibilities for the new fire chief.

The following subtopic areas were presented as areas for articles:

- Cover – the fire chief's responsibilities for safety and health, following NFPA 1550 and the need for a Risk Management Plan (Dave Lewis will write)
- Selecting key personnel to keep your department safe and well, including the appointment of officers, drivers, Safety Officer, Training Officer, and Chaplain (address mental health aspect) (Dave Reid will write)
- Safety considerations for the Fire Chief, including non-operational tasks, facility safety, training safety, response (driving) safety, and fireground operational safety (Pete Mellits will write)
- Understanding modern building construction and its impact on safety, including the modification of older structures, dangers of lightweight construction, CSST hazards (Chris Caisse will write)
- Recognizing your Safety Heroes, the value of recognition so that everyone knows that the department values safety, highlight MSFA Smith Stathem Award, IAFC/VCOS Jim Seavey Award, others?? (Dave Black will write)

Schedule for the October issue of Back Step Talks:

- Draft articles due by September 8
- Draft copy to the committee by September 15
- Committee reviews draft and comments by email
- Committee meets to discuss and approve the draft on Monday, September 29
- Back Step Talks, October 2025, released on October 1

It is anticipated that the committee will work on the draft using email correspondence. A meeting will be scheduled if necessary; otherwise, the committee will meet again (via Zoom) on Monday, September 29, at 7 pm to review and approve the final draft. 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