



NEWSLETTER

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CREATING A SAFETY CULTURE IN YOUR FIRE DEPARTMENT

In industry, business, and government, workplace safety programs are based on one of three principles: regulatory compliance, monetary savings, or ethics. Those with regulatory compliance-based programs are concerned with avoiding fines and citations, and base their safety decisions solely upon existing safety regulations. Those whose programs are based on monetary savings are concerned with reducing their cost from employee injury, illness, and death. Those whose programs are based on ethics do whatever is necessary to provide a safe workplace.

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY (MD) FIRE DEPARTMENT ADOPTS INITIATIVES

In a ceremony attended by local, state, and federal officials, Chief Thomas Carr and the Montgomery County (MD) Fire and Rescue Service announced its official adoption of the Everyone Goes Home and the 16 Life Safety Initiatives Program into its department operations, a part of the national effort to reduce firefighter line-of-duty fatalities 25 percent by 2010 and 50 percent by 2015.

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EGH WORKING HARD FOR FIREFIGHTER LIFE SAFETY

SOME FIREFIGHTER LIFE SAFETY INITIATIVES PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

- Partnered with North American Fire Training Directors and the National Fire Academy Program Development Specialists to assist in gathering information in order to conduct a needs analysis on resources that are available and that support the implementation of the 16 initiatives.
- Developed the www.everyonegoeshome.com website to provide direct access to all of the materials developed for the Firefighter Life Safety Initiative Program.
- Developed the “Courage to Be Safe...So Everyone Goes Home” program.
- Officially launched the Pennsylvania Demonstration project, providing assistance to Pennsylvania Fire Commissioner Ed Mann in developing a statewide life Safety Initiatives program. Highlights include:
 - Delivery of the “Courage to Be Safe” train-the-trainer program to 21 Pennsylvania Fire Instructors.

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SETTING THE EXAMPLE FOR TAKING EGH SERIOUSLY...EVERY DAY



Firefighters from the Merion Fire Company in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, with their customized Everyone Goes Home banner show that they're on the forefront of the national firefighter safety commitment.

Are you advancing the Life Safety Initiatives in your department? Please tell us how, so we can share your successes with your brothers and sisters across the country. And don't forget: We're accepting nominations for the Seal of Excellence recognition program. Just send us a maximum two-page description of the Initiative(s) you're implementing, why you're implementing it, and how you're implementing it, as well as the individuals (or department) involved. Be sure to include all your contact information. Send your nomination to everyonegoeshome@firehero.org.

— Delivery of the “Courage to Be Safe” program to 600 firefighters in 20 locations across Pennsylvania

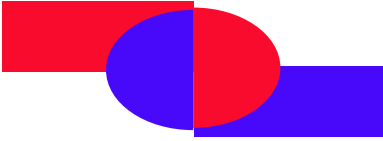
— The July web report indicated more than 18,000 page views, clearly demonstrating that the project has begun to deliver important information to the American fire service. The website addresses a full range of issues related to firefighter deaths, including the two leading causes: heart attacks and vehicle accidents.

- Promoted a national version of “Courage to Be Safe” in the Oklahoma State University’s *Speaking of Fire*, United States Fire Administration’s TRADENET newsletter, and via www.everyonegoeshome.com. Several states, including Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey, and Virginia have requested train-the-trainer courses so they can deliver the program.
- Provided links to the International Association of Fire Chiefs’ National Stand-Down Day conducted on June 21, 2005.
- Conducted the following eight-hour “mini-Summits” at the Fire Department Instructors Conference and Firehouse Expo, with findings of participants summarized and a report produced.
- In addition to the mini-Summits, delivered presentations at Fire-Rescue International, Florida Fire Chiefs Association Conference, Arizona Fire Chiefs Association and Arizona Training Officers Association Conferences, Firehouse Expo, FDIC, and FDIC West (Los Angeles) to thousands of firefighters.
- Produced “LODD, The Untold Story of the Survivors” presentation by Deputy Chief Billy Goldfeder and three LODD survivors, delivering it at FDIC Indianapolis and the Maryland Firemen’s Association Convention in Ocean City, Maryland to a combined audience of more than 1,800 firefighters and their families.
- Developed a marketing plan to promote awareness and implementation of Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives, securing a public relations contractor to assist in the promotion plan.
- In addition to conference presentations, developed materials for exhibit booth, including a DVD program featuring the 16 Life Safety Initiatives. Develop and produce a looped DVD program that features the 16; partnered with the Kidde company to distribute more than 10,000 Everyone Goes Home wrist bands; crated and distributed posters to Partners of the Foundation at the major trade shows.
- In meeting the Program’s objectives to establish at least two research centers to conduct academic research on the initiatives, the University of Maryland initiated a study and testing program for the development of an electronic firefighter accountability system for tracking and physiologically monitoring firefighters in the structure firefighting environment.
- Montgomery County (MD) Fire and Rescue Service has put a plan in place to implement all 16 Life Safety Initiatives.
- Conducted a National Research Symposium in conjunction with national Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

LIFE SAFETY INITIATIVES PROJECTS IN THE WORKS

- Increased Partnerships: More than 50 known or potential partners have been contacted asking for resource assistance.
- The production of 30,000 sets of training and resource materials to fire departments across the United States.
- Production of a CD/DVD overview of the 16 Life Safety Initiatives, to be distributed nationally at no cost.
- The formation of an educational specialist advisory group to conduct peer review of training information.
- Development of a national research agenda, which includes applicable technology and research transfer from the Department of Defense and others.
- A fire service behavior, culture, and methods study of Oklahoma State University.
- A national forum with the American Red Cross to discuss the psychological and emotional needs of first responders who have been dispatched to major large scale incidents and disasters.
- Implementation of the full Initiatives Program in five fire departments. We are looking to add two more departments. If you are interested in having your department participate, please contact us as everyonegoeshome@firehero.org.
- Continued development of the Life Safety Initiatives Speakers Bureau. Please contact us if you’d like us to present at your department or venue!
- Development of the Seal of Excellence Program to recognize departments, projects, individual efforts, or group efforts that significantly advance firefighter life safety through advancing one or more of the 16 Initiatives.

Would you like one of Everyone Goes Home Speakers Bureau members to present on the Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives at your department or your conference? Please contact us at: everyonegoeshome@firehero.org.



LIFE SAFETY INITIATIVES CALENDAR

The Courage to Be Safe...So Everyone Goes Home" Program, developed by NFFF and adopted by the Office of the Pennsylvania State Fire Commissioner, will be presented at the following locations:

SEPTEMBER

9/17/05, Luzerne County Community College, Nanticoke, PA, 9:00 am
9/29/05, Edinboro Volunteer Fire Department, Edinboro, PA, 6:30 pm

OCTOBER

10/5/05, Connellsville Township Fire Department, Connellsville, PA 6:30 pm
10/7/05, Monroe County Public Safety Center, Shrodsburg, PA 7:00 pm
10/11/05, University of PA at Johnstown, Johnstown, PA, 6:30 pm
10/12/05, Allegheny County Fire Academy, Allison Park, PA, 6:30 pm
10/19/05, Moon Twp. Municipal Building, Moon Township, PA, 7:00 pm
10/19/05, Harrisburg Area Community College, Harrisburg, PA, 6:30 pm

NOVEMBER

11/2/05, Lancaster County Public Safety Training Center, Manheim, PA, 6:30 pm
11/17/05, Greensburg Fire Department, Greensburg, PA, 6:30 pm
11/21/05, Pennsylvania Fire & Emergency Services Institute, Radisson hotel, Camp Hill, PA

Life Safety Initiatives Presentation:

10/23/05, Fire Department Safety Officers Association Annual Conference, Rosen Plaza Hotel, Orlando, FL

MONTGOMERY COUNTY (MD)

FIRE DEPARTMENT ADOPTS INITIATIVES

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As part of adopting all 16 Firefighter Life Safety program initiatives, Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan said he will introduce legislation requiring residential high-rise buildings in the county to retrofit sprinkler systems. Such legislation would satisfy Life Safety Initiative 15, which calls for strengthening "advocacy for the enforcement of codes and the installation of home fire sprinklers."

U.S. Senator Paul S. Sarbanes joined Carr and Duncan in announcing Montgomery County's firefighter safety plans, which also will include annual career and volunteer firefighter physical examinations. "The most important, basic initiative is the annual physicals," Carr said, saying that because heart attacks rank first in causes of firefighter line-of-duty deaths, detecting heart problems early could significantly reduce firefighter deaths. The fire department has also implemented a regular exercise and fitness program as part of department policy.

OUR ROAD TRAGEDIES CONTINUE...IN COURT

In March of this year, tragedy recently befell the Traverse City, Michigan, area when a Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department apparatus responding to a fire collided with an SUV, killing a mother and her 11-month-old baby and seriously injuring the father, who was driving. Now, in addition to civil charges, the Antrim County, Michigan, Prosecutor's Office has filed criminal charges against the firefighter driving the apparatus.

Investigators said that the firefighter went through a red light without slowing to check for oncoming traffic. According to Michigan law, emergency responders are to proceed after a red light "only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation." The complaint states that the firefighter drove "without due regard" for the safety of others and operated the apparatus at an "immoderate" speed and in "a reckless manner."

The firefighter, who, according to court papers, was the battalion safety officer when the crash occurred, faces two years in prison if convicted. He was suspended by the fire chief until the case is resolved. The prosecuting attorney said of the firefighter, "We admire these people for their service but if they are not going to follow the rules and use reasonable judgment, something has to be done."

This horrific, ongoing tragedy, and the lessons from it, must be taken with the utmost seriousness and urgency by fire departments and apparatus drivers throughout the United States, with policies and behaviors modified as part of a department-wide safety effort.

MYTH BUSTERS: END THE SLIDE POLE "TRADITION"

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In many departments, the slide pole is part of the firehouse tradition. But the few seconds you save sliding down a pole, compared with walking *calmly* down the stairs, is just not worth the risk. This is a new fire service, a new day—the day when we analyze and minimize risks, not just at the emergency scene but in every aspect of response.

"Picking" on the slide pole may seem trivial—until your brother gets injured sliding down it. It's yet another impediment to safety, another hurdle that can loom large when the adrenaline kicks in.

Take it out of the firehouse and sell it for scrap. Better yet, just leave it there but fill in the floor above it. Walk *calmly* down the stairs. Is there any reason to run? Do you run on a fireground? Stop running to the rig; stop racing to the scene. Yes, you need to get to the scene quickly—but not at the expense of your health or your life.

PLEASE PARTICIPATE IN EGH NEWLETTER'S MYTH BUSTERS! Let's work together on how we can change the fire service for the better.

EVERYONE GOES HOME

FIREFIGHTER LIFE SAFETY INITIATIVES PROGRAM



CREATING A SAFETY CULTURE IN YOUR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Continued from p. 1

Many employers feel that regulatory compliance and workplace safety are the same thing. An army of "safety consultants" market their services by encouraging employers to fear regulators, which only exacerbates the problem: Most workplace safety regulatory agencies throughout the world make it clear that their regulations are only minimum requirements.

Violating a legal regulation is different than violating an ethical principle. In fact, reducing ethics to little more than compliance may lead to more non-compliance than if ethics were the guiding light for safety. "Compliance" means not exceeding the limits defined by law. Compliance is a good thing, but it does not guarantee a safe workplace—whether for industry employees or for firefighters.

An exclusive focus on laws and regulations restricts our attention to the edges of the playing field. Cross this line and you're busted. But if you play the game by always working as close to the edges as possible, you're likely to stumble or sneak across the forbidden limit. Ethical principles of workplace safety sometimes do spell out "law-like" boundary conditions through written policies and procedures, but such policies and SOPs extend from "what is right," not "what is legal." That's an important difference for the fire service to understand.

The ethics question is "what is right?" Asking "what is right?" most often leads to our exceeding the minimum regulatory requirements. Asking "what is right?" and acting on the ethical imperative leads to a true safety culture in a way that can't be established through regulatory compliance alone.

The fire service should adopt the eight principles of workplace safety developed by the National Association of Safety Professionals, which have given direction to hundreds of safety managers and trainers worldwide. We've adapted these principles for the fire service. **Safety is a culture, not a program.** The combined commitment and participation of the entire organization is necessary to create and maintain an effective safety culture. Every person in the organization, from the fire commissioner/fire chief to the newest recruit, is responsible and accountable for preventing injuries.

Officers are responsible. It's the fire officers' responsibility to lead the safety effort in a sustained and consistent way, establishing safety goals, demanding accountability for safety performance, and providing the resources necessary for a safe workplace. Managing safety is the responsibility of everyone in the organization.

Firefighters must be trained to work safely. Awareness of safety does not come naturally; everyone needs to be trained to work safely. Effective training programs are necessary to both teach and motivate firefighters to be a productive part of the safety culture.

Safety is a condition of employment. The organization's management must exhaust every reasonable means to lead, motivate, train, and provision firefighters to hold safety in the highest regard. In the event a firefighter refuses to take the actions required to work safely, management must utilize a system of progressive discipline to enforce safety requirements and protect the firefighters in their charge—even if it means removal of the offending firefighter from the active duty.

All injuries are preventable. Sometimes accidents occur without the apparent indication of fault or blame. But there is always some chain of events leading up to the accident that, had we realized the eventual outcome, someone could have interceded. The fundamental belief that injuries are, by their nature, preventable is a catalyst that encourages us to prevent injuries.

Safety programs must be site-specific, with recurring audits of the emergency, station, and training operations, and with prompt corrective action. The purpose of a safety audit—after operations, we call them critiques—is to discover and remedy faulty thinking or unsafe actions before they result in injuries, or worse. Analysis of the root cause of injuries and near misses, not only in the department but on a nationwide basis, is necessary to identify weaknesses in safety plans, programs, policies, and procedures. Safety regulations and generic safety programs do not uncover operational hazards—critiques and after-action analyses do. A safety audit program is operation-specific. Whenever a safety deficiency is found, prompt action is required both to overcome the act and to reinforce the message that safety is a priority.

Safety is good business. Reducing workplace injuries and illnesses reduces the costs of workers' compensation, medical expenses, potential government fines, and the expenses of litigation. Effective workplace safety is not an expense; it's an asset.

A properly managed safety culture based on these Eight Principles of Safety will motivate firefighters to participate actively in training, to identify and alert each other to the hazards, to manage potential hazards, and to feel a responsibility and take action for their safety and the safety of their brothers and sisters.

Safety is an ethical responsibility. At its core, ethics holds up a positive vision of what is right and what is good. It defines what is "worth" pursuing as guidance for our decisions and actions. Line-of-duty deaths and injuries are too often seen in the abstract, as statistics. But when it happens to someone we love, we suddenly see the reality of the horrible pain and suffering and its widespread effect. Fire service leaders are ethically responsible to do what is necessary to protect firefighters from death and injury. Accepting safety as an ethical responsibility is the only foundation on which a true safety culture can be built.

(This item was excerpted and adapted from an article written by the International Association of Safety Professionals' Safety Sentinel. Refer to www.iaspweb.com for more safety information.)