



# NEWSLETTER

January 2006

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>USFA Releases 2005 Firefighter Fatality Statistics</i>	1
<i>LAFF—Fit to Survive</i>	2
<i>NFPA Signs on as Sponsor of NVFC Heart-Healthy Firefighter Program</i>	2
<i>Are You That Kind of Firefighter?</i>	2
<i>NJ Adopts "Courage to Be Safe Program"</i>	3
<i>Dumb Questions by Chief Billy Goldfeder</i>	4-5
<i>NFFF Tackles Apparatus Safety</i>	6
<i>Firefighter Oath of Honor and Safety by Greg Collier, Battalion Chief</i>	7
<i>Seal of Excellence</i>	8
<i>Calendar of Events</i>	8

## USFA RELEASES 2005 FIREFIGHTER FATALITY STATISTICS

FROM: USFA/JAN. 10, 2006

Emmitsburg, MD — The United States Fire Administration (USFA) announced today, this nation suffered 106 on-duty firefighter fatalities in the United States in 2005. In addition to these fatalities, the USFA has learned of 4 firefighter fatalities in 2005 related to injuries suffered in previous years, prior to 2005.

"The fire service of this nation has tragically lost again, too many firefighters in 2005," said Deputy USFA Administrator Charles Dickinson. "The USFA approaches 2006, joined with the fire organizations and fire department leaders, to commit to doing what it takes to reduce these too often, preventable losses."

In 2005, there were 4 multiple-firefighter fatality incidents.

- Two New York City firefighters died in January when rapid fire progress forced them to jump from a fire-involved structure;
- Three firefighters were killed in the crash of a helicopter in Texas in March as they assisted with a controlled burn;
- Two Wyoming firefighters died in a residential structure fire in April; and
- Three firefighters were killed in the crash of an air tanker in California.

Additionally, the New York City Fire Department suffered a third firefighter fatality on the same day as the January incident cited above, at another incident scene. The Memphis, Tennessee Fire Department lost two firefighters in separate incidents during the year.

Additionally, heart attacks were responsible for the deaths of 48 firefighters in 2005, reduced from 61 in 2004. Seven firefighters died of CVAs in 2005, up from 4 in 2004. Vehicle crashes took the lives of 26 firefighters in 2005. Five firefighters were killed in tanker (tender) crashes, five firefighters were killed in crashes that involved passenger vehicles, and four firefighters were killed in pumper crashes. Firefighters were also killed in crashes involving ATVs, aircraft, and a boat.

The United States Fire Administration has developed educational programs in the past few years to directly address firefighter deaths in vehicle crashes. Efforts have specifically targeted tanker operations, career firefighter vehicle operations, and volunteer firefighter vehicle operations. For additional information regarding these programs, go to: <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/research/safety/vehicle-roadway.shtm>.

The average age of a firefighter killed in 2005 was 46. The youngest firefighter to die while on duty in 2005 was an 18-year old Connecticut firefighter who died after falling from a ladder during training. The oldest firefighter to die while on duty in 2005 was a 76-year old New Jersey firefighter who was struck by a suspected drunk driver at a roadside emergency scene.

These fatality statistics for 2005 are provisional and subject to change as the USFA contacts State Fire Marshals. For additional information on firefighter fatalities, including the annual fatality reports from 1986 through 2004 and the Firefighter Fatality Retrospective Study 1990-2000, please visit the USFA website: : <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/fatalities/>



**ARE YOU THAT KIND OF  
FIREFIGHTER?**

*What kind of firefighter are you?*

One who keeps safety a priority in all actions?

One who's not afraid to stop an unsafe or noncompliant situation that's unfolding?

One who's not afraid to knock the "it won't happen to me" chip off another firefighter's shoulder before another tragedy occurs?

One who shows up to all calls in full protective gear?

One who stops at all stop signs and red lights while driving the apparatus or car?

One who practices the belief that everyone is a teacher?

One who shares your light with the rest of the world?

One who advocates for safety beyond the firehouse, in the public arena?

One who has no axe to grind against other public safety agencies, and, in fact, sees training with them as a necessary opportunity?

One who knows what it means to be accountable and personally responsible?

One who has a vision for the future fire department and fire service?

One who'll do what it takes to help ensure

**Everyone  
Goes  
Home?**

## NFPA SIGNS ON AS SPONSOR OF NVFC HEART-HEALTHY FIREFIGHTER PROGRAM

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVC) announced that the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recently signed on as a key sponsor of the NVFC Heart-Healthy Firefighter Program. The generous contribution from NFPA will be applied to Phase Three of the Program, which aims to decrease firefighter fatalities from heart attacks.

With this sponsorship, NVFC plans to continue providing free

health screenings to firefighters around the country. Additionally, NVFC will offer cooking demonstrations to educate firefighters on how to cook in a "heart-healthy" manner. Other exciting new components of the Program include a firefighter cookbook and workout to assist firefighters with all cornerstones of the Program, health, nutrition, and fitness.

"The NVFC has enjoyed working side by side with NFPA for

many years now and we are excited to partner with them on this very important initiative," said NVFC Chairman Phillip C. Stittleberg. "This donation will go a long way towards saving the lives of many firefighters, something both NFPA and NVFC have worked on for countless years."

## IAFF—FIT TO SURVIVE

IAFF General President Harold Schaitberger recently returned to the Fairfax County, Virginia Local 2068 union he helped organize 30 years ago to prepare and serve dinner at Fire Station 25. Chef Schaitberger's menu of shrimp cocktail and salad caprice, lean beef tenderloin, red roasted potatoes and steamed Brussels sprouts sprinkled with garlic is featured on the [Fit to Survive](http://www.foodfit.com/iaff/default_issue5.asp) website. [http://www.foodfit.com/iaff/default\\_issue5.asp](http://www.foodfit.com/iaff/default_issue5.asp)

The site also explains why chocolate is good for your heart and includes expert advice and practical information on staying fit and healthy, as well as recipes and nutrition tips to make your next firehouse meal wholesome and delicious.

Check out "Chef" Schaitberger's recipe for Black Pepper-Crusted Beef Tenderloin below:



IAFF General President,  
Harold "Chef" Schaitberger

## BLACK PEPPER-CRUSTED BEEF TENDERLOIN

**Serves 8**

**Ingredients:**

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
- 1 3-lb. piece beef tenderloin, trimmed
- 1 cup non-fat sour cream
- 2 tablespoons horseradish
- Fresh sage sprigs
- Fresh rosemary sprigs

**Cooking Instructions:**

1. Rub the tenderloin with oil and sprinkle it with black pepper. Place it in a roasting pan, cover and chill for 8 hours.
2. Preheat oven to 500° degrees
3. Bake for 15 minutes or until browned. Lower temperature to 375° degrees and bake for 20 more minutes or until desired doneness is reached. Let stand 10 minutes before slicing.
4. Meanwhile combine the sour cream and horseradish in a small bowl. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Slice the beef on the bias. Serve with horseradish-sour cream and garnish with fresh herbs.

Serving Size: 6 ounces.



# NEW JERSEY ADOPTS “COURAGE TO BE SAFE” PROGRAM

The “Courage to Be Safe...so Everyone Goes Home” (CTBS\_EGH) program – New Jersey Edition, is now available to every fire department in New Jersey, free of charge. Based on curricula developed by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation’s Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives (FLSI) Program, the course examines line-of-duty deaths in New Jersey from 1981 to 2005 as a means to help prevent future firefighter fatalities and injuries. Through a cooperative effort between the FLSI Program Team, the New Jersey Society of Fire Service Instructors (NJSFSI), and the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety, New Jersey now becomes the second state to have a completed CTBS\_EGH available to every fire department.

The heart of the CTBS-EGH program beats with an important message: Firefighters must have the courage to face a multitude of risks in order to save lives and protect their communities. Your courage, combined with your training and experience, allows you to willingly risk your own life so that others can be saved. But a different type of courage is required to stay safe in potentially dangerous situations, avoiding needless risks and tragic consequences. That different type of courage is at the core of the program, designed to change the culture of accepting the loss of our brothers and sisters as a normal occurrence. It graphically underscores the need for firefighters and officers to change fundamental attitudes and behaviors in order to prevent line of duty deaths, and promotes the courage to do the right thing to protect yourself and other firefighters so that “Everyone Goes Home” at the end of the day.

The spark for the project was a keynote address delivered by Chief Ron Siarnicki, Executive Director of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF), to members the NJSFSI meeting in June 2005. In that presentation, Chief Siarnicki spoke about an exciting new national Courage to Be Safe program that was then in the process of being adopted by the Pennsylvania fire service. Taking their queue, leaders of the New Jersey fire service began tailoring a CTBS-EGH program for their state, and in October 2005, NJSFSI members Bill Hopson, Assistant Chief (Beachwood NJ Fire Department), and Dr. Harry Carter, Battalion Chief (ret.), (Newark, NJ Fire Department), conducted a CTBS train-the-trainer session for 24 New Jersey fire instructors, representing nine of the state’s 21 counties.

“That was one of the best Train-the-Trainer sessions I have ever been involved with,” said Hopson. “We shaped the session so every instructor in the room had a direct impact on the final version of the program.” When asked about the potential impact of the program, Dr. Carter said, “It is time we took a hand in controlling our own destiny. If we don’t teach ourselves to be safe, who will?”

Dr. Carter was not alone in thinking the time is now for firefighters to become more directly involved in preventing line-of-duty deaths.

“I believe we must realize that if we’re not willing to help ourselves, no one is going to help us” said Ray VanMarter, the fire training coordinator for Ocean County, who was one of the initial instructors certified to deliver the program.

Steve Taylor from Burlington County became involved for a different reason. “When the program was first offered, I didn’t pay too much attention to it. However, after seeing Chief Siarnicki’s presentation and speaking with him about it, I became very motivated. It was important to me to go to the train-the-trainer session and help spread the word about this program.”

Spreading the word seemed to be a common theme with many of the other instructors who attended the Train-the-Trainer session and are now delivering the program.

“The biggest reason I’m involved with the program is because I’m tired of seeing 100 of our brothers die every year. I felt it was time to stop talking and time for us to start doing something about it,” said Charles Maria.

Vincent Adamkiewicz of the Monmouth County Fire Academy lamented the fact that heart attacks were once again the number one killer of firefighters in New Jersey who died in the line of duty. “I became involved to do my best to help spread the word. The information in this presentation is designed to save a brother firefighter’s life. Let’s work together to drop the LODD numbers.”

Every fire department in New Jersey can schedule this presentation. There are no out of pocket expenses for hosting the program. Presenters are certified instructors who have taken the train-the-trainer course. The presentation may be scheduled day or night and can be used as a company drill. The New Jersey Division of Fire Safety will award firefighters .50 technical continuing education credits for attending the program. In addition to individual fire department presentations, the Division of Fire Safety/Kean University is sponsoring two offerings in Spring 2006 and an additional train-the-trainer course in March 2006.

Chief Ron Siarnicki said, “We are extremely pleased that the New Jersey Fire Service has taken an aggressive approach to delivering this program for all their firefighters,” adding that the NFFF and the FLSI Team is committed to helping the United States Fire Administration achieve its goal of a 25 percent LODD reduction by 2009.

FLSI Program Director and NJSFSI Board Member Chief Richard Anderson, who developed the original CTBS-EGH along with Loveland-Symmes (OH) Battalion Chief Billy Goldfeder and FDNY Battalion Chief John Salka, said “I’m extremely proud that New Jersey, through the leadership of Bill Hopson, Harry Carter, and others, has seized the opportunity to make the Courage to Be Safe program available to fire departments throughout the state. Our goal is for the fire services in all 50 states to develop their own versions of the program, tailored to their specific circumstances and needs. Courage to Be Safe is an important tool for advocating the Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives.”

Every New Jersey fire department that wishes to play a role in reducing LODDs should schedule a presentation in 2006 by contacting Richard Anderson, Program Director, Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives Program, randerson@firehero.org, or calling 609-397-8254.

The 16 Life Safety Initiatives and other information can be found on the NFFF’s [www.everyonegoeshome.com](http://www.everyonegoeshome.com) website.



# DUMB QUESTIONS? BY DEPUTY CHIEF BILLY GOLDFEDER

*“...ask yourself if  
“with all that is  
going on, why  
aren’t we reducing  
these deaths  
quicker?” is a  
dumb question.*



## WORDS TO REMEMBER

A fire chief had this to say after he was hospitalized for burns at a fire in which a second firefighter was critically injured with burns and smoke inhalation: “I was kind of a little too laid back. It didn’t look too serious. But when we were inside, the fire turned on us.”

It’s also significant to note the firefighter and the chief constituted the only available attack team. “I’m not going to let my people go in by themselves,” said the chief.

Here are some related quotes, questions, and comments sent in (and heard) from our brothers and sisters from all parts of the USA. They may or may not relate to the issues of firefighter safety and survival. You decide. You can then make a value judgment on these questions or statements, and where it all fits in nationally, regionally, locally, and especially in your firehouse. Check out the below comments and then ask yourself if “with all that is going on, why aren’t we reducing these deaths quicker?” is a dumb question.

1. Why is everyone so concerned about radio interoperability when we can’t even use our radios to communicate clearly and easily with our own firefighters and companies on the fire-ground?
2. Why can’t we just always put that PPV fan in the doorway instead of climbing on the roof to cut the hole?
3. This training is crap! How many times do we have to practice stretching a line, searching or throwing ladders? This constant training on the basics is a waste—we know how to fight fires.
4. I simply CANNOT function when I have to wear these frick’n seatbelts.
5. Why do I have to wear all this bunker gear for such a lame call?
6. These gloves suck, I can’t operate my equipment with them on...and...helmet straps are uncomfortable and can choke a firefighter.
7. Why do I have to stop at red traffic lights and stop signs? After all, if they can’t hear us...
8. I hate when we are ordered to stretch a line when there is only light smoke showing!
9. I don’t know about you, but we don’t use ICS, accountability, or any of that crap unless it’s a really big call—we do just fine operating the way we have been.
10. The door handle on the rig is broken but that’s no reason to place the apparatus out of service.
11. We are hurting for firefighters; if we get too “tough” around here, we’ll lose more members.
12. Yes, he had a serious medical history of heart problems, but we need all the help we can get when we have a call.
13. Do not call for all those other companies until you get there and we decide if they’re really needed.
14. If that civilian doesn’t stop, I will personally stop them—this is a fire scene, dammit!
15. Tanker 12’s brakes seem mushy whenever we go on a code 3 call.
16. Hurry up and get to the railroad crossing before that frick’n train!
17. Sure I believe in the BROTHERHOOD but his wife is really cute.
18. Making us work out on duty is BS.
19. Truck, tool, and equipment checks? The equipment was just fine yesterday and all this work is a waste of my time.
20. It’s just another gas leak...Just go see what’s going on in there and let me know...and...We forgot the gas detector, here, use the CO monitor, they’ll never know.
21. Forget the SOPs...(and forget what you learned at the academy)...we don’t do it that way here.
22. Do they make XXXXL size bunker gear?
23. Our fire chief is really an administrator...his knowledge of fireground and emergency operations is greatly overstated and not really a priority...after all, we have so few fires.
24. Any of our probationary out-of-the-academy career firefighters will always outrank any part-timer or volunteer firefighters, no matter how long they’ve been here.
25. This is a volunteer fire department, we have career personnel but as far as we’re concerned, they’re really just our “paid maids.”
26. The list of new officers is a joke? Most of them have no experience...(or, the list of new officers is scary? Most of them have no training)...and besides, I should have been promoted

Continued on page 5



**DUMB QUESTIONS?**  
**BY DEPUTY CHIEF BILLY GOLDFEDER**

- 27. Customer service details suck.
- 28. The frick'n taxpayers voted down our budget.
- 29. Anything in writing is admissible in court...so write as little as possible, and that, *by the way*, is why we don't have so many SOP's...they'll just get you in trouble.
- 30. We need to recruit and hire more \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in sex, color, sexual orientation, religion, etc.) people to become firefighters.
- 31. We should get paid overtime for any pub ed or community related details we are asked to handle after 8:00 pm when we are on duty.
- 32. We are volunteers and if it takes us that long to get a truck on the road, that's just the way it is...they ought to be glad that we even respond.
- 33. We had a choice of making more money or hiring more firefighters.
- 34. We have done just fine with two firefighters as our first-alarm assignment. Besides, more staffing can mean more problems.
- 35. How did they get a SAFER-staffing grant when there are four other fire companies within a mile or two of their firehouse?
- 36. How did they get a third Fire Act Grant when there are so many other fire departments that have little to nothing?
- 37. No one, *absolutely no one*, is going to tell us who to call for mutual aid.
- 38. I don't care—we're *not* missing this...(or, This is a waste...FEMA has us doing "non-hazardous" customer service work when there are lives to be saved down here).
- 39. Only three firefighters were killed when their apparatus backed over them last year! Chief, that's hardly a reason to change our backing policy...those people were just not careful.
- 40. Chrome spinners on our new apparatus wheels will improve morale—trust me.
- 41. You may have joined this VFD to fight fires, but we can't survive if you're not also willing to do our fund raising.
- 42. We have 40-50 members running 90% of our calls, but nearly 300 members get to vote on who our fire officers are going to be.
- 43. If we can go to Alabama and other places to get free WMD and terrorism training, why can't we get structural fire and flash-over type training just as easily.
- 44. I will not risk my life using an automatic nozzle...(or, I will not risk my life using a smooth bore nozzle.)
- 45. High-pressure fog caused a lot less water damage and we had a lot less hose to pack, back then.
- 46. If we tell our firefighters they cannot use lights and sirens, they just won't respond!
- 47. We look like total morons with these traffic vests on! And we already have stripes on our bunker gear.
- 48. Why do we all still have different thread connections than the other towns?
- 49. Those chiefs do not understand what it is like out here in "the real world."
- 50. This firefighter safety stuff is great and everything, but you just have to understand that firefighters die and most of these deaths were just meant to be.

Maybe some of these sound familiar? Did any make you go Hmmmmm? Like it or not, it's us saying it. It's the stuff "overheard in the firehouse" that is really the barometer to determine how fast we're going to lower the numbers of us who die every year. After all, some firefighter deaths in 2005 were absolutely heroic and were clearly not avoidable. But again, in 2005, so many of the firefighter deaths were avoidable. That doesn't mean that they weren't wonderful people who heroically served—and gave their lives. They all were. Ask those who worked with them, loved them, kissed them good-night. Are they now missed? Nightmarishly missed? Dumb question.

**TEXAS  
 RELEASES  
 LODD  
 INVESTIGATION**

Investigators probing the death of a Texas Firefighter who fell from a moving vehicle last year have determined that the safety belt monitoring system on the Quint was not working, and at least one sensor had been disabled.

The Texas Fire Marshal's Office also found that officers and the victim, Christopher Brian Hunton, 27, violated Amarillo Fire Department policy that requires everyone to be buckled up.

Investigators also discovered a faulty door latch on the vehicle, and suggested routine inspections be conducted. They also suggested emergency vehicles be placed out of service until repairs are made.

The Quint was en route to a reported structure fire on April 23, 2005. Hunton was donning his SCBA when the left rear passenger door opened, and he fell to the street and struck his head, according to the fire marshal's report.

He was rushed to a hospital with severe head injuries, but never regained consciousness. The firefighter, who had been with the department for a year, died two days later. An autopsy showed his skull was fractured in several places.

**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](mailto:everyonegoeshome@firehero.org).**

**If you have an article or news item related to firefighter safety that you would like to share with our readers, please submit to Bill Manning at: [williamanning@comcast.net](mailto:williamanning@comcast.net)**



# NFFF SUMMIT TACKLES APPARATUS SAFETY

This article appeared on [Firehouse.Com News](#), written by Susan Nicol Kyle

Until there's a change in culture in the nation's fire service, the number of firefighter funerals won't be reduced. And, while bringing about a new philosophy won't be easy, officials believe it is possible. But it will take everyone's help.

That message was repeated frequently this past weekend during a mini-summit in Orlando. The gathering gave firefighters an opportunity to identify and prioritize issues that coincide with the 16 Life Safety Initiatives compiled by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and fire service personnel from around the world.

Mandatory seat belt use was listed as a priority issue by personnel who participated at the summit prior to the annual symposium of the Fire Department Safety Officers Association. Yet, all agreed that nothing will change unless a penalty is assessed for someone who doesn't buckle up.

"It's time to make firefighters accountable for their actions," said J. Gordon Routley, project director of the Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives Program.

More than 100 firefighters die in the United States annually, and what's more astounding is that the majority of the deaths were preventable, Routley said.

Statistics show 26 firefighters were killed in crashes last year. Of those, five involved water tankers, five passenger vehicles and four pumpers. Personnel also died while on ATVs, a boat and aircrafts.

The life safety initiatives were adopted in 2004 to address and curtail firefighter deaths. Now, the NFFF is conducting mini-summits to develop strategies to implement these initiatives. The sessions, being held throughout the country in conjunction with major conferences, are funded through a \$750,000 FIRE Act grant and the Fireman's Fund Insurance Company, which donated \$329,000.

To date, summits have been held to discuss structural firefighting, training, wildland firefighting, and most recently, vehicle safety. A session addressing fitness and health will be held at Firehouse World in San Diego next month, and one on prevention and public education has not yet been scheduled.

Reports from each summit will be reviewed, and NFFF officials will determine priorities, and identify the measures that need to be implemented.

FDNY Lt. Mike Wilbur said he's tired of honoring firefighters who die after making conscious, stupid decisions such as not wearing a seat belt. When he started writing about the issue in the '70s, he didn't get much response. But he kept at it.

Wilbur said he's pleased that the seat belt issue is finally at the forefront. But, change won't occur overnight.

Although the FDSOA members were divided into four work groups to discuss emergency vehicle driving, policies and procedures, incident safety and vehicle design, all returned with the same priority issue—seat belt use. But, none had any quick fix solutions.

Changes won't occur, they said, until the fire service gets away from its macho attitude or "it can't happen to me" philosophy.

Less than 48 hours later, a guest speaker at the conference told the FDSOA members that a seat belt was the first line of defense for firefighters, not apparatus design upgrades. "Airbags are only auxiliary devices. A seatbelt is the primary safety device," said Sean Kilcarr, senior editor of *Fleet Owner* magazine.

Emergency vehicle operation was another priority issue listed by the group. "While you have to have a special license to drive a cab or a garbage truck, none is needed to drive a fire truck," said Matt Tobia, a facilitator with the NFFF and captain in Anne Arundel County, MD fire department.

The firefighters suggested a national drivers' license be designed, and that each state's adoption be tied to federal highway money. Without the monetary sanction, they felt some jurisdictions would balk at the requirement.

"The lack of training puts both firefighters and civilians at risk," said Aaron Feldman, a retired firefighter from Vancouver and a vice president in the Canadian Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

Firefighters also said departments need to take a serious look at the number of tankers that are dispatched. Statistics show tankers are involved in several fatal crashes annually. And, as the number of those killed in personal vehicles also is on the rise, decisions need to be made regarding those responses as well.

In addition to making drug and alcohol testing mandatory after all crashes, the group said the screenings also should be conducted in line of duty deaths. The family of a firefighter determined to be under the influence would not receive monetary benefits.

Another avenue that needs to be studied is scene safety. There was varied discussion about apparatus positioning, lights and traffic control devices.

"We also have to educate the public about what to do when they see an emergency vehicle approaching," said Dr. Harry R. Carter, a retired battalion chief from New Jersey and now, a fire protection consultant and columnist with *Firehouse.com*. "I really don't think they know what they're supposed to do."

Safety in the fire service isn't something that just surfaced either. It's an issue that's been addressed for many years, said Mary F. McCormack, FDSOA executive director.

"For years there has been concern about people overloading equipment. Manufacturers and firefighters are both concerned about safety," she said, adding that she was pleased with the turnout of nearly 400 for the 18th annual symposium.

Among the seminars offered are changes in truck braking, design issues and improvements, how to write specifications and safety concerns. Manufacturers also will unveil new equipment and innovative technology.

But, Ms. McCormack stressed that it's an educational seminar, not an equipment show. "You won't find a display of fire trucks in the parking lot. That's not what we're all about."



# THE FIRE SERVICE OATH OF HONOR AND SAFETY

Firefighters and Fire Service members protect lives and property. Members agree to endure great risk and hardship, under sometimes extreme conditions. They do this for their community, family, and for each other. It is a noble calling to be a firefighter. It is a culture that both inspires and empowers members and also endangers them. Members must have the "Courage to be Safe" to practice safe acts so that "Everyone Goes Home."

The affirmation of an Oath of Honor and Safety is a powerful fire service tool demonstrating leadership, accountability, commitment, and personal responsibility. To be successful, it must enhance the organizational and personal accountability, as well as health and safety in the fire service. Leaders must ensure the oath is recited, published and displayed throughout the organization, at the same time enforcing the ideals consistent with the Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives.

Before any fire service member takes this Fire Service Oath of Honor and Safety, it is important that he/she understands what it means. An oath is a solemn pledge someone makes when he/she sincerely intends to do what he/she says.

Below is *The Fire Service Oath of Honor and Safety*. We hope that you can present this oath to your department and use as a tool to implement the 16 initiatives within your department and ensure that *Everyone Goes Home*.

*"I have a responsibility; I have a Vision; Now it's time for action."*

Greg Collier, Battalion Chief  
Mount Laurel, NJ Fire Department

## THE FIRE SERVICE OATH OF HONOR AND SAFETY

On my honor,  
I will be loyal to the fire service, my community,  
and my family. I will not betray my integrity,  
or my character.

**We are our brothers and sisters keepers.**

It will be my duty to have the courage to hold myself  
and others accountable and responsible for  
health, safety, training, fitness, and leadership.

I will display:

***The Courage to be Safe.***

I will uphold the Laws, rules and regulations  
of the agency I serve.

It is strongly recommended that all fire service organizations adopt the Fire Service Oath of Honor and Safety. Having members take an oath will affirm the commitment to health and safety by incorporating the Sixteen Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives.

The Fire Service Oath of Honor and Safety can be adjusted as appropriate for any fire service organization by inserting the appropriate terms. **Change is acceptable!** [This is all about a cultural change within the fire service.](#)

Greg Collier, Battalion Chief, Mount Laurel (NJ) Fire Department, after attending the New Jersey class of Courage to Be Safe, suggests a Fire Service Oath of Honor and Safety as a way of implementing the Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives.

Please read his proposal and adopt this oath to your fire department so Everyone Goes Home.

**The Fire Service Oath of Honor should be referred to and reinforced during conversations and ceremonies. In addition, it can also be:**

- Referred to by fire service officers while communicating with others;
- Placed on the back of all fire academy students' name cards, ensuring that they are looking at it all day;
- Strategically and visibly placed in all fire stations, training facilities, fire service buildings;
- Signed by each incumbent member and academy student, framed and hung on the wall;
- Given at all official fire service ceremonies and gatherings;
- Printed on labels that are placed on equipment; and
- Used as a backdrop at public meetings, fire prevention presentations and news media events.



**FIREFIGHTER LIFE SAFETY INITIATIVES PROGRAM - CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Feb. 10

Courage to Be Safe Program, Montour Falls (NY) Fire Department , 600 College Ave., 8:00 am—4:30 pm

Feb. 20

Mini-Summit—Health & Fitness—Firehouse World, San Diego (CA)

Feb. 24-25

Seminar on Implementation of the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives, Virginia Fire Chiefs Association  
2006 Mid-Atlantic Expo & Symposium, Virginia Beach Convention Center

**SEAL OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM**

The *Everyone Goes Home* Life Safety Initiative Team is putting together a "SEAL of EXCELLENCE" awards/recognition program. This program is to identify and recognize those who have taken the "EVERYONE GOES HOME" theme to heart. During the first quarter of 2006 we will recognize and award a Seal of Excellence Awareness presentation to the firefighter, department, and organization that has taken seriously the objective of the LIFE SAFETY INITIATIVES and moved from seeing to believing that we can make a difference.

We want to recognize those who have taken the program from talking to walking, from showing to telling, and from hearing about it to implementing it. If you have done something that reflects the "EVERYONE GOES HOME" campaign as a means of endorsement, please tell us your story so that we might share it...

**WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO ASSURE  
"EVERYONE GOES HOME?"**

We are looking for those who have initiated a personal, department, organizational or community program that includes and endorses the 16 FIREFIGHTER LIFE SAFETY INITIATIVES.

*The purpose of this program is to recognize those who have taken the Fire Firefighter Life Safety Initiative Program's 16 Initiatives and the slogan, "EVERYONE GOES HOME," to the next level - that of implementation.*

If you, or a department you know, has incorporated the Firefighter Life Safety Initiative Program's 16 Initiatives and the slogan, "EVERYONE GOES HOME," we want to hear from you.

Send a description (samples, pictures, and program) of your implementation to:

[everyonegoeshome@firehero.org](mailto:everyonegoeshome@firehero.org)

