



# Everyone Goes Home<sup>®</sup>

**FIREFIGHTER LIFE SAFETY INITIATIVES**

**AUGUST 2007 EDITION**

*Newsletter*

## **FIREFIGHTERS AT RISK FOR HEART ATTACKS**

Courtesy of NIOSH

### **Preventive Interventions Recommended**

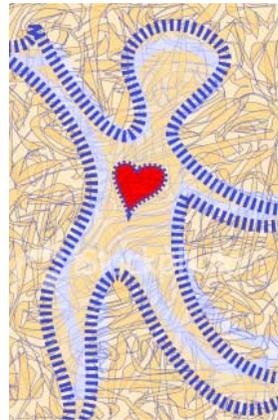
Firefighters are suffering fatal heart attacks and other cardiovascular conditions at work, but fire departments, fire service agencies, and firefighters themselves can prevent these deaths, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health said July 23.

Sudden cardiac death is the most common cause of on-duty firefighter deaths, NIOSH said, with about 45 fatalities annually.

The institute has published a document--NIOSH Alert: Preventing Fire Fighter Fatalities Due to Heart Attacks and Other Sudden Cardiovascular Events--that incorporates findings from 131 NIOSH investigations of sudden cardiac deaths in firefighters, outside literature, and a review from 12 experts in the fire service and occupational health community.

The document includes background information on firefighting and heart disease, five case reports that highlight important findings, summarized data from NIOSH cardiovascular disease fatality investigations, and recommendations to prevent similar deaths. For firefighters, the alert says, coronary artery disease and sudden cardiac death involve a combination of personal and work-related factors. Work-related factors include exposure to smoke, heavy physical exertion, and heat stress. Personal factors can include age, gender, family history, smoking, and obesity.

The institute's recommendations for fire departments to prevent sudden cardiovascular events include: providing medical evaluations to ensure that candidates and members are capable of performing job tasks; ensuring that physicians conducting medical evaluations are knowledgeable about the demands of firefighting; implementing a comprehensive wellness program for firefighters;



controlling exposure to carbon monoxide and other fire contaminants through proper fire scene management and use of respiratory protection; ensuring adequate staffing levels to prevent overexertion; and providing on-scene rehabilitation to monitor vital signs and cool and hydrate firefighters.

The alert also recommends that fire service agencies conduct research on the effectiveness of health promotion programs and the risk posed to firefighters' cardiovascular systems from occupational exposures.

The alert is available online at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2007-133/pdfs/2007-133.pdf>.

**This program is made possible through the efforts of the**



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**Homeland Security**



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## **“SAFETY THROUGH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY” - SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP WITH VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS AND WILDLAND FIRE AGENCIES**

Courtesy of Dr. JoEllen Kelly – Program Development Manager for the Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives Program and Project Manager for the Safety Through Leadership Program

It is widely recognized throughout the fire service that attitudes toward safe behaviors are greatly influenced by leadership—particularly at the company or station level. The Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives (FLSI) program was founded on the belief that a safer fire service will be the result of culture change brought about by the wide dissemination of training based on safe workplace practices.

The wildland community, a long-standing proponent of safety through effective leadership training, has demonstrated that training in this field is effective. The L-380 course (and the entire L-sequence on Fire Service Leadership), developed by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, is an exemplary model for fire service organizations interested in culture change at the company officer level. This model was recently applied and expanded by the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA) at its first-ever Safety Through Leadership Academy. The chief program developer for the Virginia Academy had attended an L-380 course in San Diego the previous December.

In Virginia, a coalition of state and national fire service organizations combined efforts to conduct the Academy at the University of Richmond (VA), June 16-20. Underwritten and supported by the Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives Program (via a Fire Act Grant), the Academy sought to improve the leadership skills of company officers, with a focus on encouraging them to develop a culture of safety in their respective departments.

More than 120 fire officers from across the state applied for the 34 seats available exclusively for Virginia students—six others were selected from other regions of the country (in the hopes they would become ambassadors for the program.) For Virginia, those selected to attend represented all geographic areas of the state, including metropolitan areas, rural

***“Every year in the United States, approximately 100 firefighters die in the line of duty,” said Spotsylvania County Fire Chief Chris Eudailey, president of the VFCA. “We recognize that a critical step in reversing that trend is to focus on leadership training for front-line officers, and that is what this academy is all about.”***

districts, and suburban communities. The students came from career, volunteer, and combination fire departments. All the students were lodged in student housing and were afforded all the privileges of the University of Richmond, including food services and library assistance.

The Safety Through Leadership Academy began with an intensive day of leadership training provided by Chief Cecil “Buddy” Martinette, former Fire Chief of the Lynchburg (VA) Fire Department. Chief Martinette, who currently serves as an Assistant County Administrator for Hanover County (VA), provided the students with an excellent overview of leadership dynamics, as well as a tutorial on how fire departments “work” in the real world of local politics. All of Chief Martinette’s examples regarding leadership were tailored to fire department situations at the company level. Chief Martinette was assisted by Training Chief Tim Sendelbach.

Over the next three days, the students were given opportunities to hear from some of the most progressive leaders and safety proponents in the US fire service. These included District Chief John Sullivan (Worcester MA) who gave a seminar on the Worcester Cold Storage Fire, Battalion Chief John Salka (FDNY) who spoke to the issues involving safety management systems on a large scale, and



## **“SAFETY THROUGH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY” - SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP WITH VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS AND WILDLAND FIRE AGENCIES (Continued from Page 2)**

Assistant Chief Paul LeSage who introduced the concept of crew resource management. Evenings were supplemented with presenters who reinforced the day's learning, including a poignant presentation by the Cathy Hedrick of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation who described what it's like to experience a line of duty death. Her son, Kenny, died fighting a house fire in 1992.

The implementation of the 16 Life Safety Initiatives was an ever-present theme throughout the Academy. The Charleston tragedy on June 19th came in the middle of the Academy. This unspeakable event left everyone recommitted to the elimination of preventable firefighter injuries and deaths. Many of the Virginia students were still grieving the loss of Firefighter Kyle Wilson (Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue) who had died the previous month while searching for victims at a house fire. During the entire Academy, at every event, a chair was reserved for Kyle—the missing man from Virginia.

“The Safety Through Leadership Academy has been identified by the Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives Program as a way to fulfill the need for providing company officers with the skills and knowledge to perform their critical role as first line supervisor safely and effectively” said Chief Richard Anderson, Director of the Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives Program. “There are many approaches to Leadership training the STL program embodies the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives and focuses on safety and making Everyone Goes Home part of the primary mission. It is our vision training organizations across the country will take the STL program and use it in their leadership program,” said Anderson.

Chief Chris Eudailey, President of the Virginia Fire Chief's Association: “Our goal is to give front-line managers the leadership tools they need in order to make a real difference,” he said. “We want them to go back to their communities and spread what they

have learned. We want them to save [firefighter] lives through leadership.”

At the conclusion of the Academy, a formal graduation ceremony was held which included leaders from across the state of Virginia, major fire service organizations, and recently appointed US Fire Administrator Greg Cade. During the ceremony, each student was required to describe their personal commitment to safety and how this will affect the men and women whose safety they will greatly influence.

The Everyone Goes Home program is currently seeking Fire Service leaders who would be interested in working on development of the train-the-trainer program for the STL program. In addition Company Officers who are also certified instructors who are interested in attending the train-the-trainer should send an e-mail to [info@everyonegoeshome.com](mailto:info@everyonegoeshome.com) with STL TTT in the subject line.



## NIST BEGINS TECHNICAL STUDY OF S.C. WAREHOUSE FIRE

### Courtesy of NIST

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has announced that it is beginning a technical study of the June 18, 2007, fire at the Super Sofa Store furniture store/warehouse in Charleston, S.C., that killed nine firefighters.

Within 36 hours of the fire, NIST had a reconnaissance team of fire experts on site to assess the situation and gather data about the fire as well as the subsequent collapse of the Super Sofa Store building. Based on that reconnaissance, NIST has determined that additional study is warranted.

The NIST team of fire experts has also participated, at the invitation of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), in interviews of the Charleston Fire Department personnel who witnessed the fire. The NIST team will use the interview data to establish a timeline for reconstructing the fire in a computer simulation, both for NIOSH's use and for further NIST research.

Other activities for the team could include:

- determining the conditions in the building prior to the initiating event (geometry, materials of construction and contents; location and conditions of doors, windows and ventilation; installed fire protection systems);
- determining why and how the fire spread so quickly and, if necessary based on further evaluation, why and how the building collapsed so quickly; and
- using computer simulations to study the impact



on human survivability (referred to by researchers as "tenability") in the Charleston fire if an installed sprinkler system had been in place.

A fire such as the one that occurred in Charleston raises a number of questions that, if answered, might serve as the basis for:

- improvements in how buildings are designed, constructed, maintained and used;
- improved tools and guidance for the fire service and building owners;
- recommended revisions to current model codes, standards and practices; and
- improved public safety.

For example, NIST's study of a 1999 townhouse fire in Washington, D.C., resulted in a computer model that determined the cause of the rapid burst of flames up a stairway that claimed the lives of two firefighters. Based on the finding, District of Columbia Fire Department operating procedures were changed and the computer simulation is now used as a training tool nationwide.

NIST has more than 30 years of experience studying and investigating structural failures, including those as a result of fire, earthquakes and wind. For more information on these efforts, go to [www.nist.gov/public\\_affairs/factsheet/bfrlinvestigations.htm](http://www.nist.gov/public_affairs/factsheet/bfrlinvestigations.htm).

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## THE GREENAWALDS FIRE COMPANY

Courtesy of Chief Dennis J. Smith, Greenawalds Fire/Rescue

The Greenawalds Fire Company highly recommends to everyone, the Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives Program be endorsed within the company as we have. Our support of the program includes dedicated safety officers to constantly inspect equipment and evaluate personnel. The Safety Officers are tasked to oversee all training and operations and act as the watchdog for safe operating practices and are empowered to terminate any operation and or remove any person from a situation they deem to be operating in an unsafe manner.

We strongly recommend our members to remain in a physically capable condition to perform the task required as a firefighter and placed exercise equipment in the station for their use at any time.

In addition, we constantly evaluate our training to meet the needs and demands of the job as well as refine it to meet the specific needs of the members.



*Make everyday a training day....new online courses are making this easier then ever before. The more we train....the safer we are. Train to stay alive.*



## USFA ANNOUNCES NEW WEB-BASED ONLINE TRAINING SYSTEM

Courtesy of the U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Academy

News Release Date: June 25, 2007

EMMITSBURG, MD. - The U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Academy is pleased to announce the launch of a new Web-based online training system - NFAOnline. NFAOnline provides an easy, one-stop Web site where fire and emergency services personnel, first responders, emergency management personnel, and the general public will find free training and education programs that they can complete at their own pace.

"Now is the time for us to embrace the future and improve our education through distance learning," said NFA Superintendent, Dr. Denis Onieal.

"NFAOnline provides another option to help further the professionalism of the nation's fire and emergency services and strengthen their ability to combat all hazard emergencies."

NFAOnline provides a user-friendly, state-of-the art training system with technical support and the ability for the student to immediately print a certificate and transcript. The primary effort of NFAOnline is to make avail-

able training and materials for the fire service, particularly those unable to attend resident courses in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

There are currently eight courses available on the new NFAOnline.

Additional courses are in development and will be added in coming weeks.

Course subjects include fire prevention, fire service supervision, incident management (ICS 100 and ICS 200), emergency response to terrorist incidents, and emergency medical services.

To enroll in NFAOnline, visit [www.nfaonline.dhs.gov](http://www.nfaonline.dhs.gov) and select New Students.

U.S. Fire  
Administration



FEMA



## NORTH DAKOTA FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION TAKES THE PLEDGE

### Courtesy of Brooks Martin, Region VIII Advocate for the Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives Program

Over 600 firefighters signed the seat pledge at the North Dakota Firefighters Association State Fire School, held every year at the end of February in Bismarck, ND. The school brings in 1100 participants on average. The idea was to get as many signatures as possible over the 4 day event. An overview of the seatbelt pledge program was giving by the instructors and the pledge sheet was passed out during all 43. Executive Director for NDFFA Lois Hartman stated that the instructors just keep coming back for more sheets for people to sign. Dr. Burton Clark was presented these signatures at the 2nd National LODD Summit in Novato,

It is unfortunate that we continue to see this trend continue because of a culture that accepts that not wearing your seat belt is OK. In speaking with Dr. Clark at the 2nd National LODD Summit he brought up the point of taking the seatbelts out of the trucks of the departments that did not have mandatory seat belt policies. Can you imagine the up roar that would follow? Articles would hit the local news papers about how the safety equipment was being

taken away and how the department does not care about their safety. In reality those local papers should be running articles about the firefighters not wearing one of the most important pieces of safety equipment available to them. If we are to reduce LODD by 25% in 5 years seat-belt use must become mandatory for all fire fighters not only in the big red trucks, but in their POV's responding to and returning from the fire station. Recently in Wahpeton, ND Chief Don Klovstad has established an SOP on seatbelt use that requires anyone responding to an alarm to wear their seat belts in their POV while en route to the station, while in fire department vehicles, and then on the way home after the alarm is complete. Recently a lot of attention has been placed in the national media about PASS alarms, maybe it is time one of the most underused pieces of safety equipment be looked into. Have you taken the pledge, and can you department say that it has 100% compliance? The next training session that you are a part of or have any influence over; local, state, or national please give everyone a seatbelt pledge sheet to sign and one to take home.

For more information on the seat belt pledge please visit <http://www.trainingdivision.com/seatbeltpledge.asp>.

## IT BEGINS WITH THE PERSON IN THE MIRROR.



### Written by Robert J. Colameta – Region I Advocate for the Life Safety Initiatives Program

There has never been a more important time than right now to look into the mirror and decide what commitment you can make to help reduce line-of-duty deaths to firefighters across the nation. Look in the mirror. What does that have to do with it? We are a reflection of what we see. Do we see a person willing to recognize that our fairly traditional fire service culture needs to be retired so that the new generation of men and women joining the service are exposed to the role that a heart healthy life style has toward longevity in this dangerous business? Do we

see a person willing to recognize the importance of physical endurance; musculoskeletal strength, flexibility and regular medical examinations? In both cases we recognize that these are personal attributes worth following, however, easier said than done.

Health, wellness, and adopting a heart healthy lifestyle can be as difficult as it is to stop smoking. We may need to find a support network to help make that transition. We need to make stopping at all intersections mandatory when driving apparatus. Wearing seat belts must become the norm rather than the exception. Changing the seat belt culture reminds me of the fire service in the early eighties, when firefighters did not don SCBA on every call, when three quarter boots were a normal part of personal PPE, when standing up in open cabs waving to the kids was normal and no-smoking policies were not a prerequisite to being hired.



## **IT BEGINS WITH THE PERSON IN THE MIRROR. (Continued from Page 6)**

Can we succeed? Can we reduce line-of-duty deaths by twenty five percent by 2009 and fifty percent by 2014? With seventy firefighter line-of-duty deaths through July 2007 (up twenty from the same time period last year) some might think we may not. But it has been one year since we launched the Everyone Goes Home campaign in the field. The program visited ten key states, trained hundreds of new instructors and delivered many Courage To Be Safe (CTBS) training programs to large, medium and small fire departments. The national Whistlestop Tour crossed the country visiting twenty states over a forty day period; stopping and teaching the 16 Life Safety Initiatives to hundreds more. The tour volunteers, the survivors of fallen firefighters, and the national dignitaries all spoke out about the importance of the Courage To Be Safe 16 Life Safety Initiatives campaign and advocated the need for each one of us to find the personal COURAGE to be safe and begin to modify our lifestyle so others think about doing the same. The one immediate change you can make today is wearing your seat belt. You are one click away from reducing preventable line-of-duty deaths from vehicle accidents. One click!

Pennsylvania Fire Commissioner Ed Mann says in his video in the CTBS program that we may have the courage to go into a burning building but why do we find it difficult to have the courage to tell someone riding on the apparatus to buckle up. If every company officer, if every firefighter took a few minutes to talk about the need to buckle up and "just did it" that simple gesture would save lives....our lives. Please contact [info@everyonegoeshome.com](mailto:info@everyonegoeshome.com) for more information about bringing the program to your department today.