

March 2011 Newsletter

Do You Remember When?

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The 'C-Word' and Firefighter Safety How to Empower Firefighters to Stop Unsafe Practices

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Attention First Responders: Free Lifesaver Heart Health Screening

Nearly half of all firefighter deaths are attributed to heart attack. It's time to sound the alarm. Firefighters, EMS, police and their spouses are invited to assess their heart health at our 'Lifesaver' Heart Health Screening.



National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Partners with IAFC and IAFF for Safety Week 2011

Safety, Health and Survival Week 2011, "Surviving the Fire Ground - Firefighter, Fire Officer & Command Preparedness," will take place June 19-25, 2011.

» Visit: www.iafc.org/safetyweek



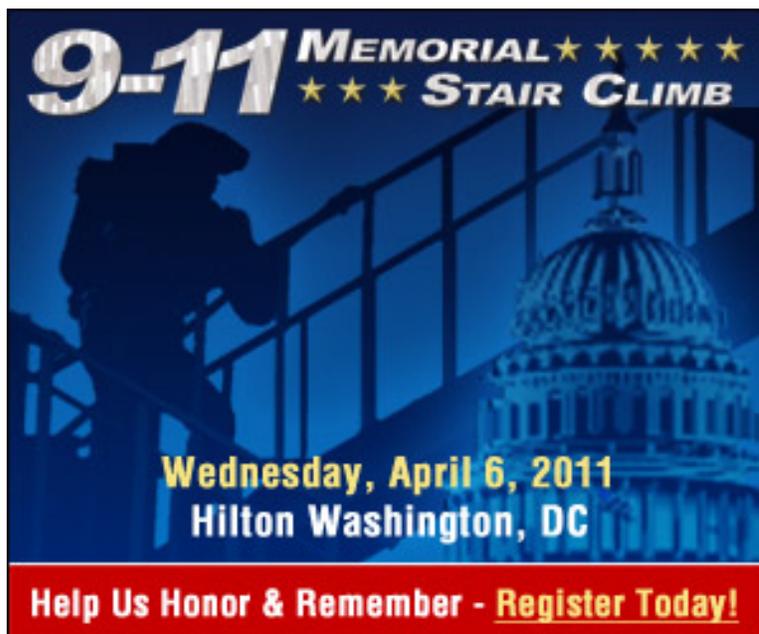
INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

Spotlighting one of the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives each month

Initiative #13 - Firefighters and their families must have access to counseling and psychological support.

- » [EveryoneGoesHome.com: Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives Research Database](#)
- » [USFA: NETC Learning Resource Center](#)

More Information: [16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives](#) | **Share a Resource:** editor@everyonegoeshome.com



FEATURED Events

[Courage to Be Safe® Training](#)

Venice, FL

March 30, 2011

Read More: » [About the Event](#)

[Courage to Be Safe® Training](#)

Argonne Fire Department - IL

March 30, 2011

Read More: » [About the Event](#)

[Courage to Be Safe® Training](#)

Passaic County Community College Public

Safety Academy - Wayne, NJ

April 6, 2011

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L.A.C.K. Training

Passaic County Community College Public
Safety Academy - Wayne, NJ

April 6, 2011

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Do you have an suggestion for the newsletter? Tell us about it! Please send your comments, articles, or news about what your department is doing to keep firefighters safe to editor@everyonegoeshome.com.

Do You Remember When?

Andy Marsh
Mt. Oliver Fire Department

As I read an email from one of my colleagues the other day, I thought back to when I first came into the fire service. I recalled the equipment and practices I was introduced to and how the fire service has changed since then.

I had the pleasure of meeting with Chief Hayes at last year's Safety Summit for the Everyone Goes Home® Program and the Courage to Be Safe® training. His message was simple: thanks for participating in such a great program that has, in fact, helped decrease the firefighter line-of-duty deaths nationwide.

Last year, I believe, the firefighter line-of-duty deaths were 85 and the year before that, it fell under 100. For myself, as an advocate, I am proud to have taken a part, supported and delivered these programs because of what they stand for.

If you will, please go back in time with me and recall where we came from, at least 30 years ago (and for some of you, even more). Do you remember when the breathing apparatus sat on your chest and you breathed your own recycled air? Do you remember when taking in some smoke initiated you and made you a "man"? Do you remember the steel cylinders we wore on our backs? Do you remember when you rode the back of the apparatus? (Some still do that.) Do you remember when seatbelt usage really wasn't an issue? Do you remember coming out of a structure fire and lighting a cigarette up or even smoking in the rig? Do you remember when we had plastic helmets, fireball gloves, rubber gear and the "snoopy" headgear to protect us? Do you remember when we didn't have to take an EMT or First Responder class? Do you remember when we didn't have to respond to medical calls? Do you remember not having to take an OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens class? Do you remember when we didn't use positive pressure ventilation? Do you remember when we didn't have professional certifications in firefighting? Do you remember open cab fire engines and ladder trucks? Do you remember when we didn't have automatic transmissions on our rigs? Do you remember when all you did at drill was squirt some water? Do you remember when training really didn't take precedence? Do you remember when we didn't have an accountability or a safety officer in place at all structure fires or otherwise large scale incidents? Do you remember not having a thermal imaging camera?

Oh boy! I know I could go on and on about things, issues or whatever that once was years ago and I know you could as well.

I remember Chief Kelvin Cochran's presentation on wood and the fire service and how inspiring that was. I remember when Pennsylvania State Fire Commissioner, Ed Mann, stated that he wants to envision a time when we have zero line-of-duty deaths. I will remember the line-of-duty funerals I have attended and I will remember to always pray for my fallen brothers and sisters in the emergency services.

Most everything I mentioned here has changed over the years. It has changed mostly because of safety concerns, line-of-duty deaths and injuries.

Changing the culture of the fire service has been the motto of what we are doing with the Everyone Goes Home® program and the Courage to Be Safe® training. We are in the business of saving lives. We need to place that task and onus on us and start with our own. Take the time to remember when, but remember the families and

continue to work towards reducing our injuries and line-of-duty deaths.

I shall bring this to a close by the following quote, "Coming together is a beginning. Staying together is progress. Working together is success!" As the Nation's fire service, we have been doing this and we are doing this!

Let's all remember to take care of ourselves and remember the 16 Life Safety Initiatives so that everyone indeed goes home!

Everyone Goes Home® Program - Partnership Success

Michael L. Petroff

The Fire Department Safety Officers Association (FDSOA) has collaborated with the Public Safety Education Network (PSEN) to deliver an online Incident Safety Officer course. The new online course is based on the second edition of the textbook Fire Department Incident Safety Officer by David Dodson. The new online course will assist the student in preparing for the FDSOA's Incident Safety Officer Certification exam. In addition, the FDSOA strongly recommends thorough reading and study of the textbook before testing. For information or enrollment in the online course, go to www.publicsafetyedu.com or contact Bob Colameta at bobc@publicsafetyedu.com. For information on the FDSOA certification process, contact Bob Finley, FDSOA Certification Coordinator at programs@fdsoa.org.

This course development is an example of how partnerships help each organization realize common goals. In September of 2009, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation's Everyone Goes Home® program sent several regional and state advocates to the Fire Department Safety Officers Conference. The advocates attended either the Incident Safety Officer Certification class or the Health and Safety Officer Certification class. Included in the advocate attendees of the ISO class was Bob Colameta, Public Safety Education Network. Also attending was Stephen Raynis Chief of Safety for the Fire Department City of New York. The FDSOA had discussion with Bob Colameta regarding the development of an on-line version of the safety officer classes. Chief Raynis was interested in certification of FDNY safety officers and discussed options with Bob Finley. The online course by PSEN was used by the FDNY safety officers to augment their preparation for the safety officer examination. Twenty-four officers from the FDNY took the safety officer examination and were certified as incident safety officers in January 2011.

The certification of safety officers is a primary function of the FDSOA and an example of the implementation of Firefighter Life Safety Initiative #5 regarding firefighter certification and continuing education. The FDSOA has also partnered with the Firefighter Near-miss Reporting System to help implement firefighter life safety initiative #9 regarding review of near-miss incidents. The FDSOA awards continuing education credits for written review of the FFNMRS Report of the Week. Because of the partnership between the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, the FDSOA and because of the work of Bob Colameta, training and certification of safety officers continues to grow.

Testing and certification is only part of the training and education necessary to serve as an Incident Safety Officer. Continuing education and recertification are part of the FDSOA process and a component of Firefighter life Safety initiative #5.

Michael Petroff is a retired battalion chief from the Ferguson Fire Department of St. Louis County, Missouri. Battalion Chief Petroff served for more than 32 years, progressing through the ranks. He served on the St. Louis County Overhead Response Team, and is an instructor for national, state and local fire agencies. BC Petroff serves as Vice-Chairman of the Fire Department Safety Officers Association, is a member of the National Fire Protection Association 1021 Committee, and is the Advocate Outreach Program Coordinator for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Everyone Goes Home® Life Safety Initiatives Program.

For additional information, contact AOP coordinator Michael Petroff: michaelpetroff@sbcglobal.net

The 'C-Word' and Firefighter Safety - How to Empower Firefighters to Stop Unsafe Practices

Everyone Goes Home® Program Eastern Advocate Manager, Billy Hayes

Courtesy of FireRescue1.com

"I knew they shouldn't have been in there. I guess I should have spoken up." I recall this statement being made by a surviving firefighter when I was participating in a firefighter line-of-duty death review. I struggled with it and asked myself, "Why didn't you speak up? How could you not?" The reality of it is that I knew the answer already and it was simple. The "c- word," the one that I hate the most: Culture!

Our illustrious long tradition of doing what we're told and not asking questions has led to more trouble than we can account for. You can imagine the above statement has been made countless times over the years when one of our brother or sister firefighters were injured or lost in the line of duty. But if we care so much about each other, then why do we let this continuously happen and what does culture have to do with it? We never hesitate in asking why we have to do station duties and other less attractive activities - but often fail to ask the serious questions when we know something is going wrong on the emergency scene.

In one scene in the movie "Gettysburg," based on the novel "The Killer Angels," Union Colonel Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain has an interesting discussion with his younger brother, Thomas. He focuses on the obedience and recognition of rank, of not calling him Joshua and favoritism among the ranks. When Thomas says that General Meade's son was an aide, Colonel Chamberlain responds by saying there that is nothing as close to God on earth as a general on the battlefield.

In my observations, doesn't that kind of apply to a chief or incident commander on the fireground? We trust they have the best decision-making skills and experience of anyone on scene. However, I haven't met any chief or IC yet that has more than one set of eyes or more than one brain.

Questioning authority

This column focuses on Life Safety Initiative #4: All firefighters must be empowered to stop unsafe practices. If firefighters follow this Initiative, I know some folks will take it personally. "They are questioning my authority," they may say.

Absolutely not! Look at it this way: they are questioning the conditions and actions that they are seeing that the incident commander may not be. I guess the best way I can describe this Initiative is comparing it to football. The coach sends in the play, but if a player sees something different in the offensive or defensive schemes of their opponent, they may call an audible to make sure they can adjust accordingly or at least discuss it on the sideline before the next series of plays.

In the fire service, don't we call this risk management? The difference in football is that the players and coordinators are empowered to adjust the plan for success of the team. And I know not every time the play may work, but the players are at least allowed the freedom to engage in the decision-making process. However, the

fire service has a much different hierarchy that discourages firefighters to question company officers or even company officers to question the incident commander.

When I used this analogy once in a presentation I was giving, one participant said, "Yeah, but football is a game, and firefighting is a matter of life and death." My response was simple. "Doesn't that make it all the more important to use every aspect of data and knowledge?"

A good leader empowers his or her crew to observe and utilize data for a successful outcome - you need to get over the fear that your leadership or authority will be questioned.

Our SOPs and/or SOGs, as well as the incident commander, drive our operations. However, understanding that not every incident may be the same, and to adjust accordingly within the provisions of our plans, is acceptable. Coming to terms with the fact that a good leader fosters and cultures an environment where decision-making is shared is critical.

Modifying actions

Where could this Initiative come into play? First, for example, heavy smoke conditions on side C of the structure, which isn't so obvious on the A side where the incident commander may be located, prompts you to consider modifying the course of action you've been directed to follow.

That observation and/or any modification must be communicated to the IC or the entire operation could be compromised. If you're hesitant in making that decision, perhaps communicate your findings with the Safety Officer for their evaluation. This is an example of Initiative #4.

Of course, it can also be applied to something as simple as telling the driver of the fire apparatus not to pull out of the station if everyone is not buckled up. True leaders will recognize that this is for safety and not out of insubordination.

To the other extreme, this doesn't mean that firefighters should question every single decision that the company officer or incident commander is making. And I know where this has the potential to go astray. There must be a balance and understanding that when an individual on the fireground sees an unsafe practice, they step up and say something.

During presentations, I often ask this question: How many safety officers are there on an emergency scene? Until I hear, "everyone," I keep asking the question. Essentially that is exactly what this is. Training and empowering your personnel to be observant and vocal when needed. The key to the success of Initiative #4 is having communication and trust between you and your crew.

So now that I have taken us on a whirlwind tour, I'll give you a final thought in terms of Gettysburg. It has been well-documented that Confederate General James Longstreet questioned General Robert E. Lee about the decision to stay and fight at Gettysburg. General Longstreet had a relationship with General Lee where he could do that.

However, Lee's pride and previous success distorted his decision-making, which cost the Confederate Army. Incident commanders have every responsibility to listen to their company officers and deviate from what their inclinations may be if a better outcome is desired.

How many times have we felt there was a better way to have done things on the fireground but were afraid to step up out of fear of repercussion. Or, how many times has someone spoken up to you, only to brush it off because "you" are in charge and changing your decision may be a sign of weakness? Communicate, trust, empower, and check your ego at the door so Everyone Goes Home!

About the author

Billy D. Hayes is the Eastern Advocate Program Manager for the Everyone Goes Home® campaign through the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, where he has served as a State and Region IV Advocate. He is the Director of Military, Corporate and Special Programs for Columbia Southern University, where he additionally oversees the Alan Brunacini Fire-Rescue Leadership Institute. Billy has served as the Director of Public Information and Community Affairs for the District of Columbia Fire and EMS Department and as the Chief of Fire Services for the City of Riverdale, Ga., and is a past-president of the Metro Atlanta Fire Chiefs Association. He is a graduate of Georgia Military College and the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. Billy frequently writes and speaks on the topics of firefighter safety and fire prevention. In this column series, he will be outlining the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives - and what they mean for you and your department. He can be contacted via e-mail at Billy.Hayes@firerescue1.com.

Attention First Responders: Free Lifesaver Heart Health Screening

Courtesy of the Level I Heart Attack Program of the Pearsall Heart Hospital at Geisinger Wyoming Valley. Wright Township Fire Department 477 South Main Road Mountaintop

Saturday, April 9, 2011 - 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Nearly half of all firefighter deaths are attributed to heart attack. It's time to sound the alarm. Firefighters, EMS, police and their spouses are invited to assess their heart health at our 'Lifesaver' Heart Health Screening. Participants will receive a Lipid profile (8 hour fast suggested), blood pressure exams, BMI, risk factor education and more.

Registration is not necessary for this event. For more information, please call 800.275.6401 and ask for "CareLink."



Northeast PA State Advocates Chris Krout(left) and Dave Pettit (right) are with the Wright Township Volunteer Fire Department, in Mountain Top, PA. Please visit our website of www.WTVFD.com to help with additional info and directions.



Safety Week 2011: "Surviving the Fire Ground - Firefighter, Fire Officer & Command Preparedness"

Safety, Health and Survival Week 2011 Is Scheduled for June 19-25

The [IAFC](http://www.iafc.org) and the [International Association of Fire Fighters \(IAFF\)](http://www.iaff.org) have announced the theme for the June 19-25 Safety, Health and Survival Week: Surviving the Fire Ground - Firefighter, Fire Officer & Command Preparedness.

[Safety, Health and Survival Week \(Safety Week\)](#) is a collaborative program sponsored by the IAFC and the IAFF, coordinated by the [IAFC's Safety, Health and Survival Section](#) and the [IAFF's Division of Occupational Health, Safety and Medicine](#), in partnership with more than 20 national fire and emergency service organizations.

Fire departments are encouraged to suspend all nonemergency activity during Safety Week and instead focus entirely on survival training and education until all shifts and personnel have taken part. An entire week is provided to ensure each shift and duty crew can spend one day focusing on these critical issues.

Mayday: Not If-When

With so many changes-budget cuts, staffing reductions, reduced training and so on-in so many fire departments, it's critical for fire fighters to focus on their own survival on the fire ground. There's no other call more challenging to fire ground operations than a mayday call-the unthinkable moment when a fire fighter's personal safety is in imminent danger.

Fire fighter fatality data compiled by the U.S. Fire Administration have shown that fire fighters "becoming trapped and disoriented represent the largest portion of structural fire ground fatalities." The incidents in which fire fighters have lost their lives or lived to tell about it, have a consistent theme-inadequate situational awareness put them at risk.

Fire fighters don't plan to be lost, disoriented, injured or trapped during a structure fire or emergency incident. But fires are unpredictable and volatile, and they won't always go according to plan. What a fire fighter knows about a fire before entering a blazing building may radically change within minutes once inside the structure. Smoke, low visibility, lack of oxygen, structural instability and an unpredictable fire ground can cause even the most seasoned fire fighter to be overwhelmed in an instant.

The [IAFF Fire Ground Survival Program \(FGS\)](#) is the most comprehensive survival-skills and mayday-prevention program currently available and is open to all members of the fire service. Incorporating federal regulations,

proven incident-management best practices and survival techniques from leaders in the field, and real case studies from experienced fire fighters, FGS aims to educate all fire fighters to be prepared if the unfortunate happens.

The program will provide participating fire departments with the skills they need to improve situational awareness and prevent a mayday. Topics covered include:

- **Preventing the Mayday:** situational awareness, planning, size up, air management, fitness for survival, defensive operations.
- **Being Ready for the Mayday:** personal safety equipment, communications, accountability systems. Self-Survival Procedures: avoiding panic, mnemonic learning aid "GRAB LIVES" - actions a fire fighter must take to improve survivability, emergency breathing.
- **Self-Survival Skills:** SCBA familiarization, emergency procedures, disentanglement, upper floor escape techniques.
- **Firefighter Expectations of Command:** command-level mayday training, pre-mayday, mayday and rescue, post-rescue, expanding the incident-command system, communications.

This year's Safety Week will focus on delivering the online FGS awareness training course to all fire departments. Other planning tools and resources will be available on the [Safety Week website](#).

Keep watching the website and the [IAFC's Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages for continuing updates to this year's program and planning resources. Remember to visit the [SHS Section's website](#) for more information on health and safety issues and the [IAFF's Health, Safety and Medicine's website](#) for more information on health, wellness and safety programs. You may also contact the IAFF by email at safety@iaff.org for additional resources.

Related:

» [Safety, Health and Survival Week \(Safety Week\) Website](#)