



OCTOBER 5, 2023 | ISSUE 71

Rattle Watch

Proudly informing South Carolina firefighters.



Congratulations, Officer Academy 23-02

Twenty-five company officers graduated from the [Fire Officer Academy: The Company Officer](#) on Friday, October 6, 2023.

Acceptance into the in-person portion of the program was not easy; the initial application required a resume and cover letter, and students were then tasked with dozens of hours of online assessments that the Selection Committee used to make the final roster. From the start, competition was fierce. We received over 60 applications for OA 23-02 and the details in resumes, cover letters, and online assignment submissions were the difference makers.

Every aspect of the Officer Academy is intentional, beginning with the application. Students are told repeatedly throughout the week to *trust the process*; the cohesive intentionality of the program is made clear as the week progresses. It is something indescribable until experienced.

After spending the days going through classroom sessions and fieldwork, every afternoon concludes with an informal bay session. Here, these company officers are exposed to the best of the best of the South Carolina fire service. Legends like chiefs **Carter Jones, Dan Curia, Marquis Solomon, Jonah Smith, Billy Floyd, Bruce Kline, Will Vaigneur, Chris Kip, Mark Davis, and Joe Palmer** graciously spent time with OA 23-02 in an effort to foster the current different makers in the fire service - the company officer. Thank y'all for investing in this program and these company officers.

The instructor cadre is unique, and the majority is Officer Academy alumni. Special thank you to **Brad Kavteski, Scott King, Thomas Tardo, Andrew Morris, Ben Crenshaw, Dom Boyce, Jason Poole, Lauren McDaniel, Micah Rains** and cadre, **Nick Ray** and cadre, **Jonah Smith** and cadre, **Blake Cartee** and cadre, and **Chris Spradley**. The extensive list of instructors is close to 50 people in total; thank you to every individual who played a part in making sure this program continues to succeed. Your work is why company officers want to be a part of the Officer Academy.

Clemson University Fire and EMS provided medical coverage all week. Thank you, **Hayden Noordhuizen** and **Dante Magagnotti**, for making sure the cohort stayed safe and healthy all week. This is a physically demanding program and we are thankful for Hayden and Dante's presence last week.

The alumni network of the Officer Academy is an asset to every graduate and will continue to grow in significance as more programs are held. The Wednesday night bay session and dinner are set aside for alumni to join the current class, break bread, and offer words of encouragement as the final, toughest stretch of the week is ahead. Thank you to **North Myrtle Beach** and **West Columbia** for providing dinner on Wednesday and to every alumni who came into town.

We could not host the Officer Academy without total buy-in from our local partners. The **Fire Academy** allowed us to use their dorms, training facilities, and station bay all week. **Lexington County Fire Service** not only allowed us to use their apparatus and drivers, but also permitted us to use their training center. **Columbia Fire** provided equipment for Truck work. **Irmo Fire District** offered a special surprise during live burns on Friday by providing their tiller. We cannot say it enough – thank you for your strong partnership!

We prioritized capturing every angle of the Officer Academy. With 25 students and numerous instructors, it took a lot of manpower to photograph the week. Thank you to **Elizabeth Jones** with Irmo Fire, **FyeWorkz Photography**, and **Caleb Jacobs** for lending your time and talent. OA 23-02 will be able to relive the week thanks to your hard work. [View and download pictures.](#)

Departments represented in OA 23-02 include: South Greenville; Columbia; Bennettsville; Parker District; North Spartanburg; Beaufort/Port Royal; Colleton County; Anderson City; Hanahan; Lexington County; Florence; North Charleston; Lugoff; Jasper County; Greenwood City; Gantt District; Indian Land; Greenville City; Kershaw County; City of Rock Hill; Darlington County/Pageland; Summerville; Horry County; Clemson; and Hilton Head Island. Thank you to every fire chief who signed off on investing in their company officer.

The future of the South Carolina fire service experienced a seismic shift because of what these 25 company officers learned during the Officer Academy. Change starts small, and the seeds of change are now scattered throughout the state.

Congratulations, OA23-02. You persevered through adversity—because they come first. You pushed through the exhaustion—because they come first. You trusted the process—because they come first. You grew as officers, but you also grew as partners, friends, parents—because they come first. On Sunday, you were strangers; now, you are family.

Be proud of what you've accomplished. We most certainly are proud of you.

[Applications](#) for the March 3-8, 2024 Fire Officer Academy: The Company Officer close on October 31, 2023 at 11:59 p.m.



Quarterly is in less than 2 weeks!

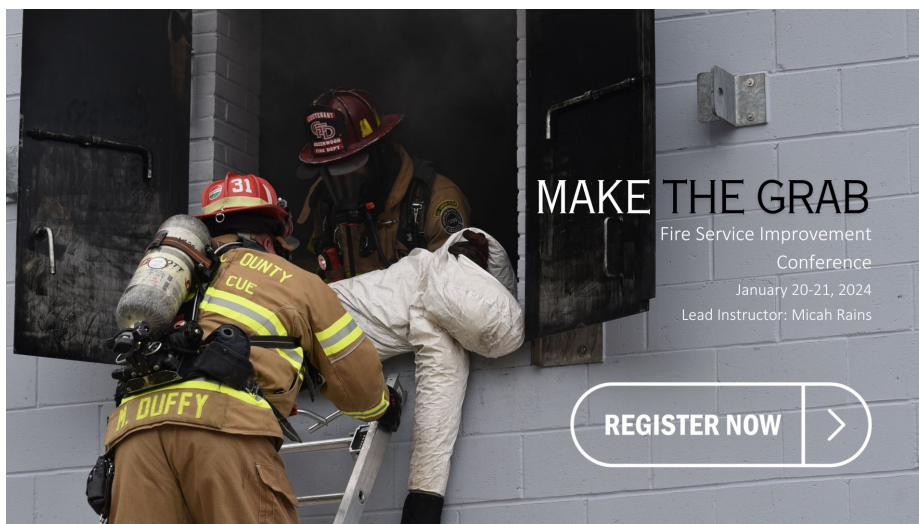
We would love for you to join us on October 25 in Charleston for our [Quarterly Training and Business Meeting](#). This is an incredible opportunity to connect with your peers and learn from our esteemed guest speakers.

We are thrilled to host **Dr. Candice McDonald**, Deputy CEO of the National Volunteer Fire Council, **Rebecca Harned**, data advisor for the U.S. Fire Administration and Chief Programs Officer for the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and **Chief Tom Jenkins**, senior advisor/research manager for the NERIS project.

Dr. McDonald is an expert in **recruitment and retention** in the fire service and will be providing valuable strategies for attracting and retaining high-quality people. Rebecca and Chief Jenkins will provide insight into the importance of data in the fire service, as well as the **transition from NFRIS to NERIS**.

We understand the importance of a dedicated and cohesive team, and we hope that what you learn at Quarterly will help strengthen your department. Lunch is provided; just [let us know if you plan to attend](#) so we can have a meal for you.

We can't wait to see you there!



FSIC course spotlight: Make the Grab

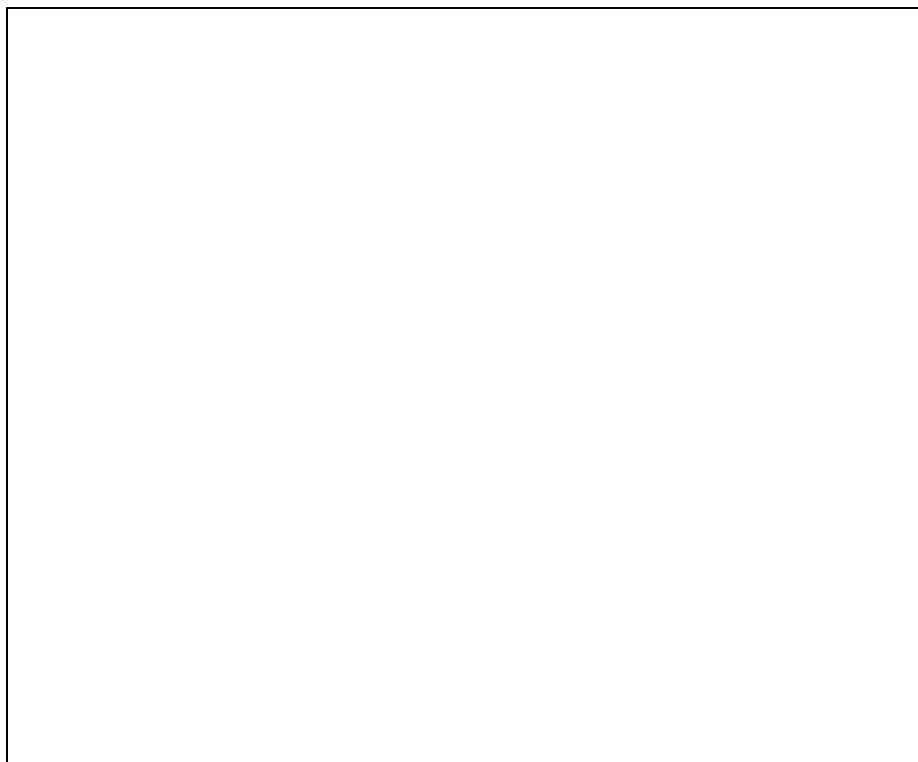
One of the top priorities during fire emergencies *must be aggressive search*.

Firefighters and company officers have a duty to enter the premises, conduct a thorough search, rescue the victim, and ensure their safety. While the topic of searching is a hot topic, training on how to search effectively is limited.

This class delves into tactics and search methods that can improve speed and efficiency on the fire ground. Topics include victim drags, carries, and other removal techniques that are not typically covered in training. Additional skills covered include large area search, ground ladders, oriented search, VES, locating victims with the TIC, and searching with the water can.

This class goes beyond the basics and emphasizes how the fire service can uphold its oath to prioritize saving lives and search with a sense of purpose.

[View](#) all Fire Service Improvement Conference offerings and reserve your spot in **Make the Grab** with Greenville City Fire Lt. **Micah Rains**, January 20-21, 2024.





HEALTH & SAFETY BINGO

Mark each space with X when you've completed the task.

Clean/wash flashhood weekly	Perform/schedule annual wellness check	Prepare & cook a healthy meal	Wear seatbelt while in fire apparatus	Wash hands after call and before eating
Properly wear SCBA	Review/create fire incident rehab policy	Create and/or participate in a workout program	Use a spotter when backing	Take proper BSI precautions
Inspect/clean turnout gear	Don't use tobacco products/enroll in cessation program	FREE Upload a pic/video on social media of you completing a bingo card task & tag @scfirefighters	Review your department's Safety Policy	Wear gloves, eye & ear protection while using hose/equipment
Review II Best Practices to Reduce FF Cancer-IAFC	Read/review NIOSH report	Properly hydrate (8 glasses of water per day)	Conduct/participate in company fire-ground training	Wear high-visibility traffic vest while working in roadway
Perform self-check exam: testicular/breast	Review CDC's Heart Health Risk for Firefighters	Limit caffeine/energy drink intake	Perform apparatus/equipment checks to ensure safe working order	Watch SC FAST "About Us" Video

Name: _____ Department: _____

Rank: _____ Date completed: _____

Submit your completed bingo card to healthsafety@scfirefighters.org by January 1, 2024 to be entered into a prize drawing (limit 1 per person).

How to play along with Health + Safety bingo

The Health and Safety bingo card is the perfect way to keep you and your crew engaged while also promoting a safe work environment. And, as an added bonus for completing your card, you'll be entered to win a giveaway!

Playing along is easy - simply [print out the bingo card](#) and start marking off the safety measures you're following. From using proper PPE to cooking health meals, each box is filled with important actions that promote your overall health and safety.

Please note that these instructions deviate from the traditional rules of bingo; the entire card must be filled out for Health and Safety bingo, not just one row or column.

Not only will playing along keep you and your team on track with important safety measures, but it's also a fun way to boost morale and teamwork. Encourage friendly competition amongst your crew and see who can clear their bingo card first!

[Print out](#) your Health and Safety Bingo card today and get started on the path to a safer work environment.

Cards must be submitted to healthsafety@scfirefighters.org by January 1, 2024. A second round of bingo will start in the new year.

Good luck!



Community events



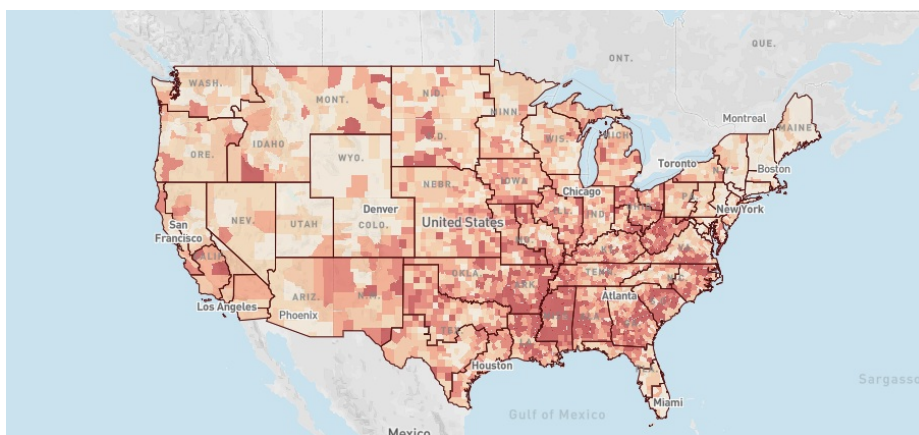
Photo courtesy of Slater-Marietta Auxiliary Facebook page

Upstate friends: Slater-Marietta Fire Fest is Oct. 21

The **Slater-Marietta Fire Fest** is on Saturday, October 21 from 11-4p.m. at Marietta First Baptist! This festival is a great way to celebrate the first responders who our communities safe, and learn about ways you can participate in community risk reduction. There will be plenty of activities for everyone to enjoy, including a kids area, local vendors, live music, \$10

BBQ plates, and trucks from nearby fire departments. You can also look forward to a sprinkler demonstration at 3 p.m., which is sure to be both fun and informative. This is the perfect opportunity to come out and show your support for your local firefighters while having a great time with your family and friends. Don't miss out on this unforgettable event!

From the web



From the Red Cross: Home Fire Risk Map

The Home Fire Risk Map from the American Red Cross is getting an update soon.

This data visualization supports the Home Fire Campaign in an effort to reduce the number of deaths and injuries caused by home fires. The current map, built by DataKind DC in 2016, helped the Red Cross and local fire departments target high-risk communities for fire safety education and free smoke alarm installations.

The *About* section reads in part: This project uses machine learning techniques that leverage data from the U.S. Census, the American Red Cross and the National Fire Incident Reporting System to predict aggregate neighborhood home fire risk based on the following criteria:

- Risk - No Smoke Alarm: The increased likelihood that homes within a census tract lack functioning smoke alarms.
- Risk - Home Fire: The prevalence of home fires in a census tract over a 5-year period.
- Risk - Fire-Related Injury: The increased likelihood that a home fire could result in an injury or death.

Bookmark the [Home Fire Risk Map](#) and check back next week for updates.

Was this email forwarded to you? Subscribe to receive Rattle Watch every Thursday.



- [October 17 - 1% Regional Training Class: York County](#)
- [October 25 - Quarterly Training + Business Meeting](#)
- [January 18-21 - Fire Service Improvement Conference](#)
- February 3, 2024 - Firefighter Memorial Service

- [March 3-8, 2024 - Fire Officer Academy: The Company Officer 24-01](#)
- [June 12-15, 2024 - Fire-Rescue](#)



South Carolina State Firefighters' Association

Westpark Boulevard 111, 29210, Columbia

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