



JULY 13, 2023 | ISSUE 58

Rattle Watch

Proudly informing South Carolina firefighters.



2023 Q2 Commentary from CCM is available

We've trusted **CCM Investment Advisors** for many years to grow our retirement account so that our members can enjoy life long after their tailboard firefighter days are behind them. CCM publishes a quarterly commentary to keep our members up-to-date on the market's performance.

With Q2 of 2023 behind us, [read how the market performed](#) in the second quarter of the year.

Association news



Time's ticking to order your SCFR23 t-shirt

Our friends at **Emerald Ink & Stitches** extended sales through Friday, July 21 on the garnet and red Fire-Rescue 2023 t-shirts. T-shirts are available in sizes S-4XL and are \$20/piece. Shipping is on the house. [Get yours](#) before it's too late!



First responders and suicide: What we know

The recent National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) newsletter included a letter from Director John Howard, M.D. on data behind first responder suicides. The letter is included below or you can read it and more in the [NIOSH newsletter](#).

First responders are key to protecting public safety and health. Law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency medical services clinicians respond to both emergency and nonemergency calls, often risking their own lives to help those in need. Public safety

telecommunicators (911 dispatchers) are the first to respond when someone calls 911 for help.

While protecting public safety is honorable, it comes with a cost. First responders have unique job stressors that may increase their risk for suicide. Suicides are a major public health problem according to [The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Implement the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention](#).

Stress can be acute (one specific incident) or chronic (a buildup of day-to-day issues). For first responders, stress is linked to an increased risk of mental health problems such as

- hopelessness
- anxiety
- depression
- post-traumatic stress
- suicidal behaviors (thinking or trying to kill oneself)

Based on [data analyzed](#) from the [National Violent Death Reporting System](#) (NVDRS), 61,579 suicides occurred during 2015–2017, from states providing data to NVDRS for this period. The analysis, coauthored by NIOSH researchers, provided a glimpse into some of the stressors first responders face. Below are some key takeaways:

- First responders accounted for 676 (or 1%) of reported suicides.
- Among first responders who died by suicide (for whom circumstances were known), the most frequent issues family members, friends, and employers reported were intimate partner, job, or physical health problems.
- Some common risk factors for suicide (history of suicidal thoughts, previous suicide attempt, substance use disorder) were significantly lower among first responders compared with non-first responders.

Information in NVDRS on the circumstances preceding suicide (e.g., job or personal stressors at the time of death) depends on the completeness and quality of reports the information is drawn from. To improve suicide prevention efforts, more research is needed to better understand these stressors and how they relate to suicide and suicidal behaviors among first responders.

To ensure information on suicides among first responders is as complete as possible, in 2020, Congress provided funding to CDC to create a Public Safety Officer Suicide Reporting Module within NVDRS. This new module is funded through the Helping Emergency Responders Overcome (HERO) Act. Implemented as part of the NVDRS data collection effort in January 2022, data from this new module is expected to be released in Fall 2024. The information collected through this expanded effort is expected to better understand suicide deaths among first responders and may inform prevention efforts.

First responders are crucial to ensuring public safety, public health, and national security. We must address the mental health needs of those who are often first to respond to the public's safety and health.

If you or someone you know is in suicidal crisis or emotional distress and needs support now, call or text 988 or go to [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org). They will connect you with a trained crisis counselor who can help. For more information, visit the [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#).



It's time to apply for LI 24-25

The Association's [Leadership Institute](#) is offered to individuals to improve and develop fire service leadership at the state level through networking and education pertaining to the many facets of the fire service profession. The program is designed to provide individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to become successful leaders in the fire service.

- LI's emphasis on open communication and project-based skills helps participants develop effective communication strategies and learn how to manage complex projects.
- The program is conducted in an executive-level environment, which provides participants with a unique opportunity to learn from experienced leaders in the fire service profession.
- Through networking and education, participants can gain new insights into the many facets of the fire service, including fire prevention, emergency response, and community outreach.

To be successful in Leadership Institute, candidates should have prior experience or knowledge of their department administration and

operations. In addition, they should have experience presenting to councils or commissions, be able to schedule work to allow for participation in all Leadership Institute functions and meetings, possess a strong desire to advance their personal skills, and be willing to speak in front of groups and peers.

[Apply](#) before the August 31 deadline.

Community event



Save the Date: Camden's Fire Fest is Sept. 30

Camden Fire Department hosts [Fire Fest](#) annually in September ahead of Fire Prevention Week in early October. The event features live burns, an apparatus cruise in, an Explorer competition, a kid's zone, and parade. **Fire Fest is on Saturday, September 30** at the Camden City Arena. The parade starts at 9 a.m. on Rutledge Street and will end at the City Arena. Admission to Fire Fest is free.



You're invited to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg DEI Conference

The City of Charlotte is hosting its 4th annual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Conference—themed "What you permit you promote"—November 5-8, 2023 at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Charlotte Ayrslley. The conference aims to "promote a multi-faceted discussion including recruitment, legal issues, cultural diversity, and human relations." [Register](#) for the conference.

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[Training Class: Lexington County](#)

- [August 24 - 1% Regional Training Class: Beaufort County](#)
- [October 1-6 - Fire Officer Academy: The Company Officer class 23-02](#)
- [October 17 - 1% Regional Training Class: York County](#)
- June 12-15, 2024 - Fire-Rescue



South Carolina State Firefighters' Association

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