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Rattle Watch

Proudly informing South Carolina firefighters.



Now available: Dr. McDonald's Quarterly presentation

We had the pleasure of hosting **National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)** Deputy CEO **Dr. Candice McDonald** at Quarterly last month in Charleston. Dr. McDonald, an expert in recruitment and retention, provided valuable insights on the challenges and opportunities fire departments face in 2023. With her extensive experience and expertise in the field, Dr. McDonald offers practical strategies and best practices that can help fire departments attract and retain the next generation of firefighters.

Watch [Dr. McDonald's full presentation](#) on our YouTube channel.



Public comment period open for NFPA 1020

The **NFPA** is [seeking public comments](#) on the current draft of **NFPA 1020**, tentatively titled *Standard for Fire and Emergency Services Instructor, Fire Officer, and Emergency Medical Services Officer Professional Qualifications*. This standard is the result of the NFPA's consolidation project to streamline existing standards and to create the much-requested EMS Officer professional qualifications. Under NFPA 1020, separate chapters have been added for EMS Officers. These additional chapters eliminate previous concerns about creating an undue burden on Fire Officers by adding EMS language in the existing NFPA 1041. Charleston Fire Department Battalion Chief **Julie McCabe** sits on the task group charged with writing the chapters for EMS Officers and Association Training and Education Coordinator **Rick Dunn** is on the NFPA 1020 committee.



Legislative Day is April 17, 2024

As a South Carolina firefighter, it is essential that your voice is heard by state lawmakers. **Legislative Day** is your opportunity to meet with representatives at the State House and discuss the issues that matter most to your community and department. By attending Legislative Day, you can help shape the policies that will impact your work and the safety of your community.

Your presence at Legislative Day shows your community that you are willing, ready, and able to take an active role in shaping the policies that impact how you operate. This is your opportunity to show your dedication to the fire service and your desire to make a difference.

An additional benefit of attending Legislative Day is the chance to make

connections with other firefighters from across the state. You will be able to share your experiences and learn from others who are facing similar challenges, expanding your network by building relationships that will last throughout your career.

Attending Legislative Day is a valuable learning experience for seasoned and new firefighters. You will have the opportunity to mingle with members of the legislature and see how the Association's grassroots efforts are working for you. This knowledge and experience can help you become a more informed and effective advocate for your department and community.

Mark your calendars and make plans to attend [Legislative Day](#) on April 17 at the State House- ***your voice matters!***



From the web



PRESS RELEASE: FSRI launches lithium-ion battery public safety campaign

Full release found on [PR News Wire](#)

Fires from lithium-ion battery-powered devices are increasing at an alarming rate. Recently the [UL's Fire Safety Research Institute \(FSRI\)](#) launched the [Take C.H.A.R.G.E. of Battery Safety](#) campaign with a [new PSA](#) and tips to educate people about safer use of lithium-ion battery powered devices. The campaign is being launched in collaboration with The Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY), U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and with the support of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

With new technology comes new safety risks. Lithium-ion batteries are powering our lives in more ways than ever before and can be found in cell phones, laptops, power tools and e-mobility devices like wheelchairs, lawnmowers and electric bikes, scooters, and vehicles. Although they offer many advantages, a significant safety concern is the potential for these batteries to catch fire and cause explosions.

Research from FSRI demonstrates that fires in modern homes

with [synthetic furnishings](#) can have an escape time that's less than three minutes from the time the fire starts. A fire from a larger device with an unregulated lithium-ion battery, like an e-bike or e-scooter, can reduce that escape time to less than one minute.

In addition, since 2017, micromobility injuries [have increased every year](#) by an average of 23% per year according to the CPSC. In New York City alone between 2021 and 2023, there has been a significant increase of lithium-ion battery device fires (1,500%), injuries (686%) and deaths (2,675%). According to research provided by [UL Solutions](#), in 2023 there have been at least 445 incidents, 214 injuries and 38 fatalities related to lithium-ion battery fires throughout North America.

"Even when the initial cause of a fire is not a lithium-ion battery, their involvement can increase the intensity and speed of the fire," said Steve Kerber, FSRI vice president and executive director. "Lithium-ion battery powered devices aren't going anywhere and will likely be part of our society for years to come. Our goal right now is to better understand how these batteries impact fire behavior and help people safely use this technology."

To help people enjoy their many lithium-ion battery powered devices safely, FSRI's new safety campaign offers consumers easy steps to Take C.H.A.R.G.E.:

1. **Choose Certified Products:** [Only 25% of respondents to a recent survey said they check to see if the products they purchase meet lithium-ion battery standards.](#) When purchasing lithium-ion battery-powered devices, look for products that are listed or safety certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory to ensure they meet important safety requirements.
2. **Handle Lithium-Ion Battery Powered Devices with Care:** Follow the manufacturer's instructions and only use the charging equipment that comes with the product. Do not modify batteries or chargers. Store and charge batteries away from extreme temperatures, direct sunlight, exits, and anything flammable. Charge larger devices (such as e-bikes) away from your exit path, behind a closed door, away from your sleeping area and/or outside your home, if possible. Do not charge larger devices overnight.
3. **Always Stay Alert for Warning Signs:** Check battery-powered devices often for damage or abuse such as swelling or punctures. Listen for unusual hissing or popping sounds. Watch out for excessive heat or a strange odor. If you notice any of these warning signs, stop using the lithium-ion battery powered device immediately. White or gray wispy smoke indicates there is immediate danger of fire.
4. **Recycle Devices and Batteries Properly:** Responsibly dispose of old or damaged batteries and devices by taking them to the nearest battery recycling center. Never discard batteries, chargers, or battery-powered devices in regular trash bins.
5. **Get Out Quickly If There's a Fire:** Know the warning signs to look and listen for and get out if you see – or hear – them. Follow your home fire escape plan to leave immediately, closing doors behind you as your exit, and **call 9-1-1.**
6. **Educate Others on Safe Practices:** Help protect your friends and loved ones by sharing how they can **Take C.H.A.R.G.E. of Battery Safety.**

"Lithium-ion batteries have quickly become one of the leading causes of fatal fires in New York City. We cannot stress enough the importance of

safe usage of these devices; it will save lives. We are grateful to partner with FSRI, USFA, CPSC and ATF to raise public awareness, and address a problem we know is not going away," said FDNY Commissioner Laura Kavanagh.

To learn more about lithium-ion battery safety and FSRI's work to advance fire safety knowledge, and watch the new PSA, visit BatteryFireSafety.org.

Community event



MEN OF N MARK YOUR CALENDAR - FEBRUARY 8
2024 SPORTSMEN'S BANQUET
FACING THE FIRE
COURAGE AND GRACE TO STAND FEATURING **KELVIN COCHRAN**
The Faith That Brought "America's Fire Chief" Through the Flames of Persecution
AN EVENING TO HONOR FIRST RESPONDERS
SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE!
Contact **DEREK CUNNINGHAM** at derek.cunningham1212@gmail.com for more information.

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Men of N hosting Sportsmen's Banquet in February

Lexington's **Northside Baptist Church's** men's group, **Men of N**, is hosting its Sportsmen's Banquet on February 8, 2024, featuring Chief **Kelvin Cochran**. Former City of Atlanta Fire Chief and administrator for the United States Fire Administration, Chief Cochran is presenting "Facing the Fire: Courage and Grace to Stand" in an evening organized to honor first responders. Tickets will be available in the new year.

Member spotlight



Photo credits: Oconee County Sheriff's Office via WYFF

Friendship Fire volunteer survives shooting

It's not a stretch of the imagination to say Oconee County Sheriff Cpl. and Friendship Fire Department volunteer **Lucas Watts** is [living miracle](#). Cpl. Watts was conducting a traffic stop on November 16 when the suspect shot Cpl. Watts in the head. The latest updates on Cpl. Watts are that he

is in stable but critical condition. The Watts family expanded in September when Lucas and his wife, Haley, welcomed their first child. [Serve & Connect](#) is collecting donations in support of Cpl. Watts and his family. Please join us in prayers for full healing for Cpl. Watts.

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



- [January 18-21 - Fire Service Improvement Conference](#)
- [January 29 - 1% Regional Training, Calhoun County](#)
- February 3 - Firefighter Memorial Service
- March 3-8 - Fire Officer Academy: The Company Officer 24-01
- April 17 - Legislative Day
- [April 30 - 1% Regional Training, Union County](#)
- [June 12-15 - Fire-Rescue](#)



South Carolina State Firefighters' Association

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