



SEPTEMBER 1, 2022 | ISSUE 16

Rattle Watch

Proudly informing South Carolina firefighters.



Forestry Commission accepting VFA applications

South Carolina Forestry Commission is accepting applications for its Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grant. The application period closes October 15, 2022.

According to the Forestry Commission's website, "The VFA program offers 50/50 matching-fund grants to local fire departments that want to increase their firefighting capacity, especially for those departments serving communities in the wildland-urban interface (WUI). Fire departments serving rural communities with a population of 10,000 or fewer residents are eligible for VFA grants.

Through financial assistance in purchasing wildland firefighting equipment and making necessary training available, rural volunteer fire departments can more effectively and safely assist the Forestry Commission in dealing with wildland fires that threaten the rural developments and communities they serve."

[Apply for a VFA grant.](#)

Association event

Next 1% Regional Training is Sept. 19

Our next [1% Regional Training](#) is on Monday, September 19, 6-8:30 p.m. in Williamsburg County at the Kingstree Fire Department. Join us and find out what you need to know to keep and best use your 1% money. A meal will be provided.

Contact [Jeff Oswald](#) to schedule a 1% Regional Training in your area.



Blast from the past: Past Presidents timeline

Take a stroll down memory lane and browse our new [Past Presidents timeline](#)! It is interesting to note that the current 1-year term limit was not in place for many Association Presidents and a few served several years. Association 'founding father' **Louis Behrens** was the Association's longest serving president, and passed the gavel after nearly 3 decades at the helm.



NFPA releases report on firefighter fatalities

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recently released its [Firefighter Fatalities in the U.S. in 2021](#) report, detailing "a growing body of research and data showing the contributions that job-related exposures have in chronic illnesses, such as cancer and heart disease, and in behavioral health issues that may end in suicide" in addition to incident-specific deaths and injuries that occur while on-duty. The report takes a close look at the 70 (non-COVID) firefighter on-duty deaths and illustrates the importance of concern over firefighter safety.



September is Suicide Prevention Month

You experience more trauma on a regular basis as a first responder than the average person may see in their lifetime. The [CDC claims](#) firefighters are more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty and suspects "these deaths... are likely underreported." **September is Suicide Prevention Month** and [South Carolina First Responder Assistance and Support Team \(SC FAST\)](#) offers support for first responders in crisis. SC FAST offers a [Suicide Awareness Training](#) to educate first responders to an awareness level understanding of suicide. Education is key in preventing first responder suicides.

Please take care of yourself. We're thankful you're here and that you choose to serve your community and the state of South Carolina.

If you are having suicidal thoughts, please contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255.



- September 16-18 - SCFAST Clinicians Weekend
- [September 19 - 1% Regional Training: Williamsburg County](#)
- [October 12 - Quarterly Training + Business Meeting](#)



South Carolina State Firefighters' Association

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