

# FIRE CHIEF'S HANDBOOK

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South Carolina State Firefighters' Association Executive Committee

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REVISED JULY 2023



The South Carolina State Firefighters' Association Fire Chief's Handbook is a living document that is intended to give state-specific advice to current and aspiring Chief officers on important management tasks and responsibilities for the rank. The contents are applicable to volunteer and career Chief officers equally.

The reader will notice many references and links that will supplement the information in this handbook with additional important details.

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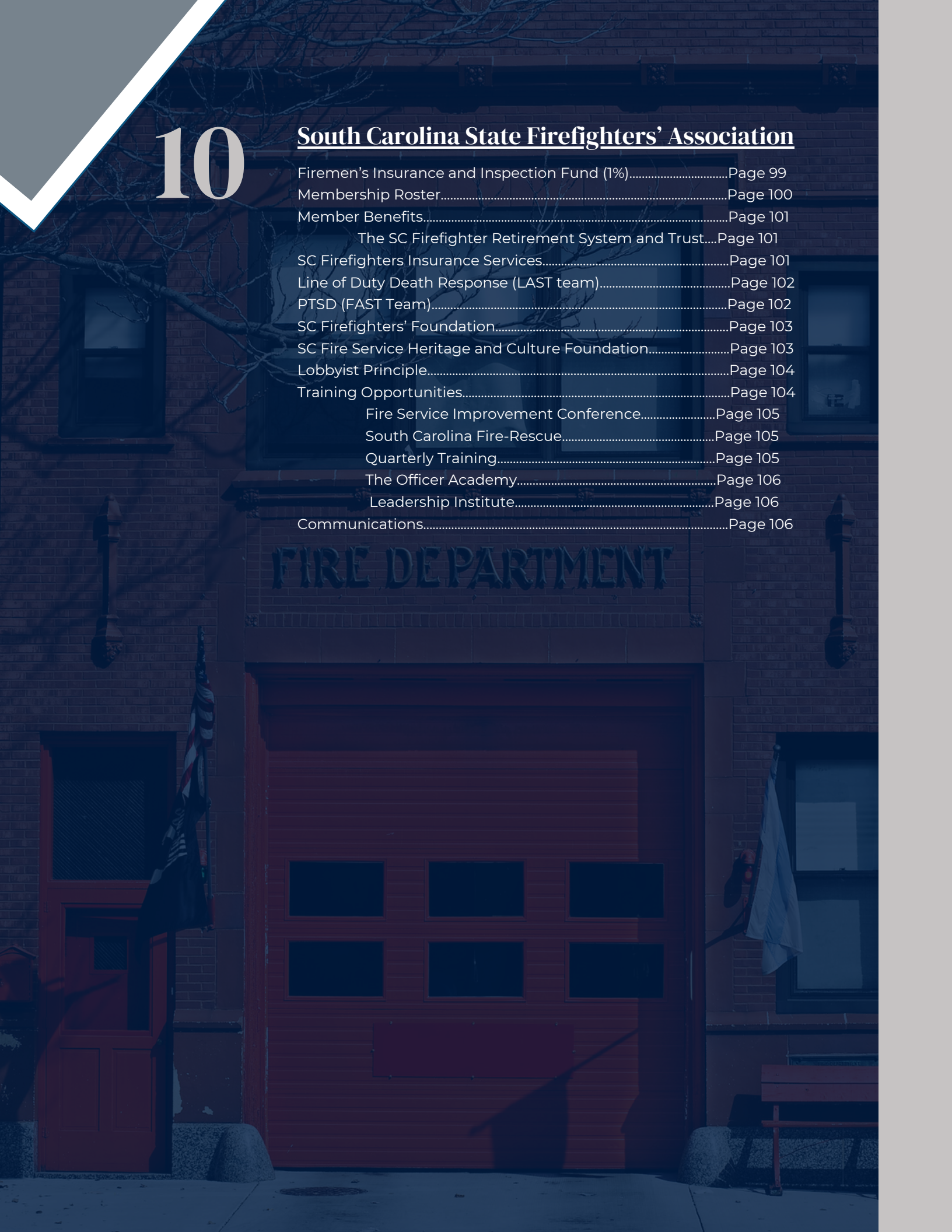
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FIRE DEPARTMENT



# Introduction

It is with great pleasure that the Executive Committee of the South Carolina State Firefighters' Association submit to you the South Carolina State Firefighters' Associations' Fire Chief's Handbook. It is our hope that this handbook will be used by all levels of our state's fire service as a reference to guide your decision-making process.

It continues to be the goal of the South Carolina State Firefighters' Association to educate, train, and inform our membership. This handbook is an attempt to do this. Some of the information found in this book is very dynamic and will frequently change. Because of this, the handbook will be available on the Association website. Here we will be updating the book as the information changes.

In this book you will find information to address some of the questions you may have while you are on your way to wearing or while wearing five bugles. This book was not prepared to give you the answers to all your questions but more of a road map of where to find the answer.

Giving thanks to those individuals who made this manual what you see before you would be difficult. Its many versions, additions, and changes have been made by many talented individuals who each contributed their own flare and thoughts. Suffice it to say that many Chiefs who have served before you have contributed their knowledge and were/are exemplary of what makes the South Carolina fire service great. Our thanks to each of you as contributors: Jack Abraham, Will Vaigneur, Keith Minick, Alan Sims, Joe Palmer, Kyle Minick, Randy Arant, Scott Loftis, Brent Lewis, Randy Osterman, and Josh Horton.

Be smart and be safe.

# *Chapter 1*

## **Government**

It is the responsibility of the government to protect the citizens of this country. The responsibility of fire protection has traditionally been the responsibility of local government. However, every level of government influences the way the fire service does business. As a Fire Chief, it is extremely important to understand the responsibilities of each level of government.

### **US Government**

US Senate. Each state has two Senators that serve in the US Senate. Our current Senators:

- Tim Scott – (R-SC)

104 Hart Senate Building, Washington DC 20510

(202) 224-6121

- Lindsey Graham – (R-SC)

290 Russell Senate Office Building Washington DC 20510

(202) 224-5972

### **US House of Representative. (HOB=House Office Building)**

- Nancy Mace (R) 1st District

212 Cannon HOB Washington, DC 20515

(202) 225-3176

- Joe Wilson (R) 2nd District

1436 Longworth HOB Washington, DC 20515

(202) 225-2452

- Jeff Duncan (R) 3rd District

2229 Rayburn HOB Washington, DC 20515

(202) 225-5301

- William Timmons (R) 4th District  
267 Cannon HOB Washington, DC 20515  
(202) 225-6030
- Ralph Norman (R) 5th District  
561 Cannon HOB Washington, DC 20515  
(202) 225-5501
- James Clyburn (D) 6th District  
274 Cannon HOB Washington, DC 20515  
(202) 225-3315
- Tom Rice (R) 7th District  
460 Cannon HOB Washington, DC 20515  
(202) 225-9895

## **State Government**

### **How a Bill Becomes a Law in South Carolina**

Bills and Resolutions can start in the General Assembly's Legislative Council, the Department responsible for the organization and operation of research, reference, and Bill drafting facilities. A member of General Assembly tells the Legislative Council attorney the type of Bill he wants to introduce, and it is put into legal form. After the member reads and checks the legislation, he gives it to the Clerk of the body of the General Assembly that he/she serves. A Bill or Joint Resolution cannot become law until it has been read three times on three separate days in the Senate and House of Representatives, has the Great Seal of the State put on it, and has been signed by the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House, and by the Governor.

Bills may be pre-filed before the beginning of a session. Pre-filed Bills are numbered,



dated, and referred to the committee which, in the view of the Chair of the body, best represents the interest of the subject matter of the bill. A list of pre-filed Bills is sent to the members. On the first day of the session, all pre-filed Bills are officially introduced and put into the record. If there are committee reports on any of the Bills, they are also put into the record. Bills received during the session are introduced and read the first time, given a number, and referred to the proper Legislative committee. The Constitution states that each Bill or Resolution must apply to only one subject, and the subject must appear in the title. Some Bills are placed on the Calendar (agenda) without being sent to a committee.

**Committees.** The work done by the General Assembly is during the formal legislative session when it meets three days a week. The formal legislative session begins on the second Tuesday of January. Many people do not realize that committees do the majority of legislative work and are the backbone of the legislative process. Before either body considers any Bill, many hours of work take place by the members of the standing committee to which the Bill is assigned. The Legislature relies on its committees to eliminate the less important measures and report only those deserving the attention of the entire House or Senate.

By working through standing committees, each body may have each Bill considered by members who have specialized knowledge in the subject of the Bill. Many members have expert knowledge of particular subjects, and these members are usually assigned to committees in order to utilize their specific knowledge and experience. Because of this, the Legislature often accepts the recommendations of the standing committees. This is not to say that the General Assembly is not aware of its responsibility to consider all pending Bills. Interim committees also do a great deal of work, or committees appointed to consider important subjects between the sessions of the Legislature.

There are 11 standing committees in the House and 15 standing committees in the Senate. Each considers Bills about a specific subject or area of legislation.

### **House Committees**

- Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs (18 members)
- Education and Public Works (18 members)
- Legislative Ethics (6 members)
- Interstate Cooperation (5 members)
- Invitations and Memorial Resolutions (5 members)
- \*Judiciary (25 members)
- \*Labor, Commerce, and Industry (18 members)
- \*Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs (18 members)
- Rules (15 members)
- \*Ways and Means (25 members)
- Operation and Management—advisory to the Speaker about personnel, administration, and management (7 members)

### **Senate Committees**

- Agriculture and Natural Resources (17 members)
- \*Banking and Insurance (17 members)
- Corrections and Penology (17 members)
- Education (17 members)
- Ethics (10 members)
- \*Finance (23 members)
- \*Fish, Game, and Forestry (17 members)
- General Committee (17 members)
- Interstate Cooperation (5 members)
- Invitations (11 members)

\*Judiciary (23 members)

\*Labor, Commerce, and Industry (17 members)

\*Medical Affairs (17 members)

Rules (17 members)

\*Transportation (17 members)

\*- Denotes those committees which frequently have a greater impact on the fire service

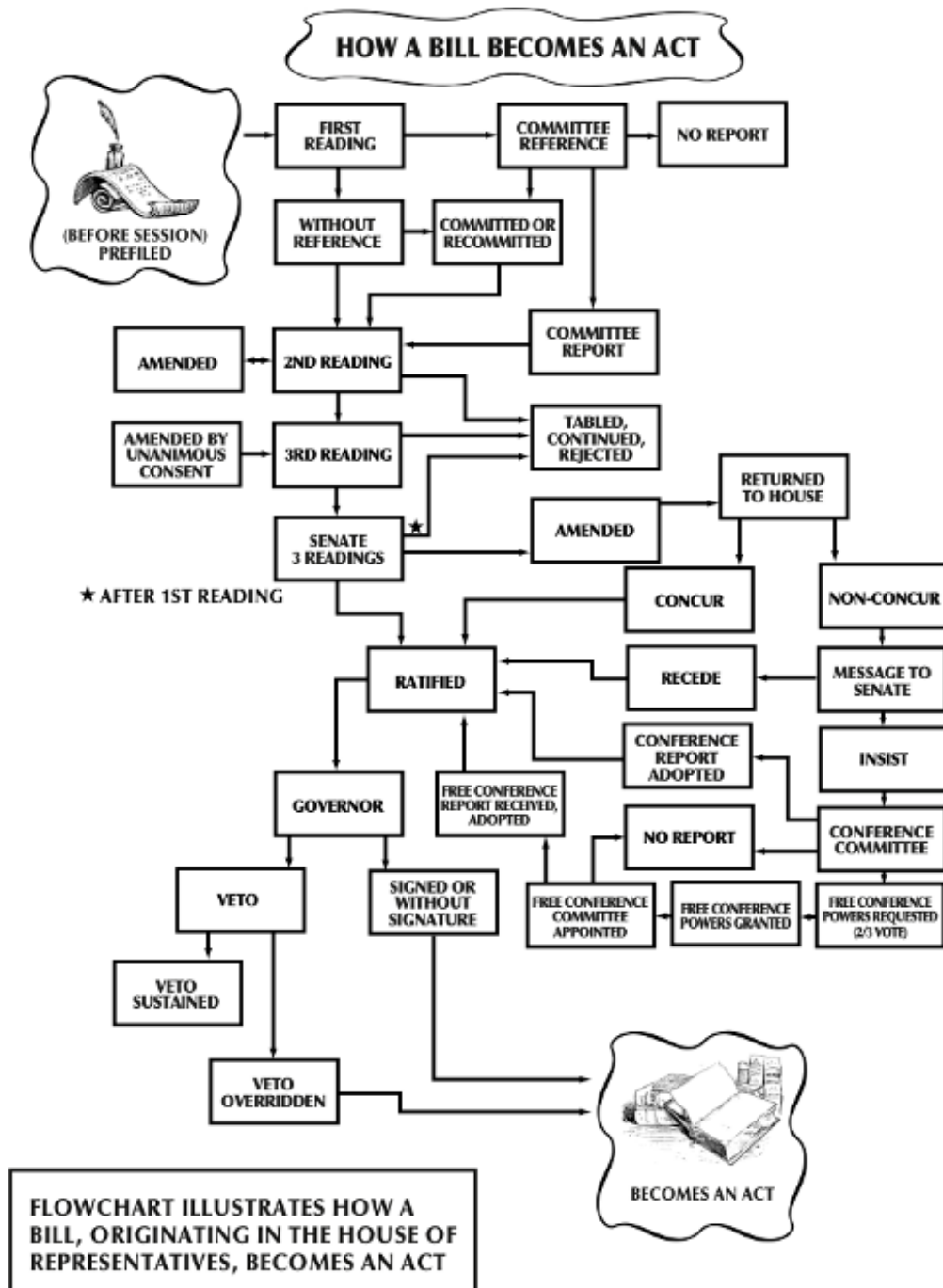
### **Following Legislation**

- The Association publishes a new legislative report each week and it is placed on the Association's web site for you to view. This update follows all bills of importance to the fire service and documents changes to those pieces of state legislation.
- The best method as an individual to follow SC specific bills is to download the state's app, [SC Legislature](#). This app is perfect for notifications on bill movement and activity.
- The best way to find legislation and to see the overall working bills and process is to use the website [State House website](#).

### **Relationships**

It cannot be stressed enough to focus on relationships when it comes to your/our work in the legislature. You must know, on a first name basis, your elected delegation (at the local, state, and federal level). As a Chief Officer, it will be imperative for your success that you get politically involved, not with party affiliation, but with voting and being heard. It starts today with you inviting your elected official into your station for nothing more than a visit and photo op. Get them in, get to know them—when nothing is needed, and relationships can be built.

Your strength in getting legislation passed is your hometown connection and the voters in your system. Get involved and get on a personal level with them now. The Association will gladly help you with this relationship-building should you need it, just call. Conversely, when you have this relationship, the Association will be calling you for help during the session. Relationships are key, and you will be surprised; typically, the elected official wants that too!



## **The Building Codes Council.**

**The inclusion of this section, at this point, is to reflect a portion of state government which highly impacts the operations and compatibility of local fire prevention efforts and maintenance of existing buildings to nationally accepted codes and practices. This section offers definition to a highly divisive and often difficult process of code adoption for South Carolina.**

The Building Codes Council was originally created to oversee adoption of building codes by cities and counties in South Carolina and to assist in their use and interpretation when requested. The Council was charged with the responsibility to authorize amendments to building codes proposed by cities and counties throughout the state before they could be adopted or enforced.

Through subsequent statutory amendments, the Council was granted additional duties and responsibilities to:

1. Hear appeals or requests for variances associated with the South Carolina Energy Efficiency Standards;
2. Administer and enforce the Modular Buildings Construction Act and its related program;
3. Review and approve all editions of building codes before they can be adopted at the local level;
4. Monitor the code adoption process at the local level;
5. Assist in arranging contracts for building inspection services between two or more local jurisdictions or between private entities and local jurisdictions;
6. Administer the Codes Enforcement Registration Program;
7. Hear all appeals or requests for variances associated with the Modular Building Program;  
and
8. Administer the provisions of the Barrier Free Design Act.

In July of 2003, Act 83, which constituted a complete rewrite of the Building Codes Council's Practice Act, was signed into law by Governor Sanford. The new statutory language shifted the responsibility of adoption and implementation of the mandatory building codes, from the local jurisdictions to the Council. In addition, a mandatory, structured building code adoption and modification procedure was established.

### **County Government**

South Carolina is divided into 46 counties. Each of these counties has an elected council that governs the county. Counties in South Carolina vary on the number of council members. Find additional information about your county government.

### **Municipal Government**

Throughout the United States, many different forms of local government are implemented. Though all forms of municipal government may exercise the same basic power structure, there are a variety of different relationships between the legislative (alderman/trustee/councilman) and executive (mayor/president) branches, within these different forms of government.

Individual state constitutions allow for city charters to adopt a constitutional "home-rule" whereby, the citizens of a city may decide which form of municipal government they wish to implement. Some states may, however, impose certain restrictions. For example, a state may not allow a city with a population below 5,000 to perform any act or organize themselves in any fashion not expressly allowed by the state.

Two basic forms of Municipal Government:

#### 1. Council-Manager

The newest of the three major forms of city government, the council-manager form quickly gained acceptance among cities of all sizes and continues to be the most popular form

in American cities with a population of more than 10,000. In this form of home-rule, cities operate with a city council as a policy body and a city manager as the chief executive-administrative officer of city government. Today, most city managers have graduate degrees in public or business administration. In the council-manager form of government, the council is the governing body of the city elected by the public, and the manager is hired by council to carry out the policies it establishes. The council usually consists of five to nine members including a mayor (or council president) who is either selected by the council or elected by the people as defined in the city charter. The size of the council is generally smaller than that of a mayor-council municipality, and council elections are usually nonpartisan.

The council provides legislative direction while the manager is responsible for day-to-day administrative operation of the city based on the council's recommendations. The mayor and council, as a collegial body, are responsible for setting policy, approving the budget, and determining the tax rate. The manager serves as the council's chief advisor. Managers also serve at the pleasure of the council and are responsible for preparing the budget, directing day-to-day operations, and hiring and firing personnel. Typically, the mayor is recognized as the political head of the municipality but is a member of the council and does not have the power to veto legislative actions.

## 2. Mayor-Council

A mayor-council city government consists of a mayor and a number of council members or aldermen. The mayor is elected at large, and the aldermen may be elected at large, but generally are chosen from wards or aldermanic districts. The mayor presides at council meetings and is the chief executive officer of the city. He is properly the head of the police force and the budgetary officer of the city. The council is the legislative agent; the proposals and appointments of the mayor are or may be subject to its approval.

This form of city government has assumed two types. A mayor elected at large, and a council elected either by wards, at large, or by a combination of the two, characterizes both the weak mayor-council and the strong mayor-council. In the weak mayor-council type, the mayor is not a chief executive in the true sense. His powers are limited in appointments and removals, as well as veto, and there are a large number of elected officials and boards. Many legal powers of the council prevent him from effectively supervising city administration.

In the strong mayor-council form, the mayor has the power to appoint and remove most department heads, and only a few officials are elected. In addition, he prepares the budget for the council's consideration and has an effective veto power.

The mayor-council form of government is the form that most closely parallels the American federal government, with an elected legislature and a separately elected executive. The mayor or elected executive is designated as the head of the city or county government. The extent of his or her authority can range from purely ceremonial functions to full-scale responsibility for day-to-day operations. But the mayor's or elected executive's duties and powers generally include hiring and firing department heads, preparation and administration of the budget, and veto power (which may be overridden) over acts of the legislature.

The council has the following responsibilities: adoption of the budget, passage of resolutions with legislation, auditing the performance of the government, and adoption of general policy positions. In some communities the mayor or executive may assume a larger policy-making role, and responsibility for day-to-day operations is delegated to an administrator appointed by and responsible to the Mayor.

A great resource for further details about the South Carolina Municipal landscape can be found on the Municipal Association's [website](#).



## **Township**

Generally speaking, a township will consist of a Mayor and three to five elected committee members. The committee members will act as the legislative body and assume all legislative responsibilities not placed on the office of the mayor. The Township Committee may delegate, by ordinance, all or a portion of executive responsibilities to an appointed administrator.

## **Special Purpose District**

The Special Purpose Districts, the third form of local government, is a provider of services, which are tailored to address the special needs of citizens as they urbanize the rural communities of the state. There are over 500 Special Purpose Districts providing water, sewer, fire, recreation, health, and trash collection, natural gas, and airport services.

The creation of Special Purpose Districts allows the community to exercise the highest form of democracy by allowing citizens to choose leadership, which will address the community's service needs. The governing body of the Special Purpose Districts may be appointed or elected and has the authority to provide a needed service which user fees or tax assessments may fund.

To form a SPD, a petition must be filed with the clerk of court of the county in which such district is proposed to be located. This petition must have a majority of the resident landowners in the proposed district or by the owners of more than half the land and acreage, which will be affected by or assessed for the expense of the proposed improvements, as shown by the tax assessment rolls. A plat showing the proposed district's limits must also be submitted with the petition. When a proposed district is situated in two or more counties, the petition must be filed with the clerk of the court of each county the district is to be located. Currently there are over 500 SPDs in South Carolina. These organizations are governed by a

board or commission and are funded by ad valorem taxes (a tax based on the value of real estate or personal property), user fees, or a combination of taxes and fees.

Prior to 1997, SPD boards or commissions were levying taxes on the district that they served. These commissions were comprised of governor appointees and not of elected officials. In *Weaver v. Recreation Dist.*, 328 S.C. 83, 492 S.E.2d 79 (1997), the Supreme Court determined that unelected commissions levying taxes were in violation of the federal law of “taxation without representation.” This means that a SPD’s budget must go before a group of elected officials. You have the option of having the commission or board over the SPD be elected or you must put your budget before county or city council.

A great resource for SPDs in South Carolina can be found on the [Special Purpose District website](#).



# *Chapter 2*

## **Division of Fire and Life Safety**

The Division of Fire and Life Safety, or State Fire, is a division of the South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (LLR). It consists of the Office of the State Fire Marshal, the South Carolina Fire Academy, and the Emergency Response Task Force.

Chief Jonathan Jones, the State Fire Marshal, was appointed by Gov. Henry McMaster in 2017. Chief Jones is also appointed, by the Governor, to serve on the State Emergency Response Commission.

The Office of State Fire Marshal is comprised of Community Risk Reduction, Code Enforcement, and Engineering Services. Chief Nathan Ellis serves as assistant state fire marshal and manages these three sections.

The Fire Academy is operated for the express purpose of educating and training the state's paid, volunteer, and industrial fire service personnel. The Academy also provides leadership, guidance, and services to help the fire service carry out its responsibilities at the local level. Chief Jason Pope serves as its superintendent.

The role of The Emergency Response Task Force is to assist local, regional, and state governments in times of need by providing subject matter experts, guidance, and on-scene professional resources during disasters or emergencies that overwhelm local resources. In addition, it supports LLR's role in emergency support functions within the State Emergency Response Plans and day-to-day operations. The South Carolina Firefighter Mobilization serves as a statewide mutual aid assistance agreement utilizing the state's 46 counties. The system allows for firefighting and rescue resources to be effectively and efficiently moved throughout the state to assist during local, regional, and statewide disasters and emergencies. Chief Ken Kerber manages Emergency Response.

Lastly, State Fire operates an Incident Support Team (IST) designed to aid local authorities and responders in the completion of scene operation through technical assistance and strategic consultation. The team is not a management team and does not “take over” from any incident commander but is a valuable emergency response component. George Stapleton is the operations chief of this function of State Fire.

Components of State Fire and further details can be found in the details below and on the State Fire [website](#). These functions, and others, make up the Division of Fire and Life Safety, which is located on a 208-acre campus in Columbia at 141 Monticello Trail (off SC Hwy 215) in Columbia.

### **Inspections**

The Office of State Fire Marshal has regulatory responsibility to ensure compliance with state fire safety regulations. This is accomplished through inspection activities by Deputy State Fire Marshals in the field and code consultation and plans review services provided by the Engineering Services Section.

### **Resident State Fire Marshal**

State law 23-9-30 states, “(a) The chief of any organized fire department or county fire marshal is ex officio resident fire marshal. (b) All powers and duties vested in the State Fire Marshal may be exercised or discharged by any deputy state fire marshal, county fire marshal, or resident fire marshal within the area of his service, or any state or local governmental employee certified by the State Fire Marshal whose duties include inspection and enforcement of state or local fire safety codes and standards, acting under the authority of the State Fire Marshal.”

This law vesting the local Fire Chief as Resident State Fire Marshal has significant implications. These implications include the legal responsibility to implement the State Fire

Marshal's mission of preventing fires and being competent in International Fire Code and Fire Marshal Regulations. The local Fire Chief may delegate actual inspections to members of their fire department, but the statutory responsibility for local code enforcement rests with the Fire Chief.

The Office of State Fire marshal provides certified training. The Fire Chief and department members conducting inspections on the authority of the State Fire Marshal must take course 8507, S.C. Fire Marshal Certification. The Office of State Fire Marshal schedules quarterly fire marshal training that provides updates and supplemental information for local inspectors.

### **Community Risk Reduction**

The Public Fire Safety Education Section manages community risk reduction and fire prevention activities aimed at reducing the state's fire death rate. Activities include the distribution of smoke detectors, programs in the schools to educate youth and the dissemination of timely fire safety information to the public. A major part of this branch of operations in the Fire Safety SC campaign and programs that provide substantive participation and feedback in the form of data to the local community for response and prevention activities. Further details follow later in the document.

### **Fire Safe South Carolina**

Fire Safe South Carolina is a statewide community risk reduction program designed to be the focal point for fire prevention and life safety in our state with coordinated effort and consistent messaging.

#### **a. Mission**

Fire Safe South Carolina will unite fire service organizations to engage influential community stakeholders; together, we will support local fire departments to serve their citizens through strategic community risk reduction programs.

b. Goals and objectives

- Fire Safe South Carolina will result in a reduction of annual home fires in our state, decreasing risks for residents and firefighters.
- Increase fire service community risk reduction participation through increased training, partnerships, and opportunities.
- Fire Safe South Carolina will provide consistent fire prevention messages across South Carolina.
- Recruit community stakeholders and utilize various forms of mass communication, such as social media, to promote fire prevention messages.
- Fire Safe South Carolina will provide data-driven resources to enhance programming.
- Identify residents at the highest fire risk in participating communities, targeting home visits to those areas, and providing for the procurement and distribution of smoke alarms.
- Fire Safe South Carolina will improve fire data quality and use in our state.
- Provide targeted National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) training, integrating the use of geographic information systems (GIS) for targeted program delivery.

More information on SC CRR can be found on the State Fire [website](#).

### **Firefighter Background Checks**

It is South Carolina state law that all firefighters must have a background check\*. The Office of the State Fire Marshal provides this service. This should not be used as a screening process for new hires. Background checks should be requested for firefighters that are going to be members of your department. All background checks are completed through the State Fire Portal. To start this process, you must gain access through State Fire to access and maintain your roster of personnel. This roster and subsequent background check requests are completed through the [website](#).

**\*The background checks mentioned above are only an in-state check, not an NCIC/federal level check. Persons which have recently moved in to SC, or reside outside the state, may not have any recorded events in this check. It is the intent of the Association at the writing of this document to pursue national background checks but as of July 2023, this is not the case\*\***

**\*\*Please note, you as Chief will maintain two; possibly three, separate databases/rosters for your efforts at the state level.**

**1. The State Fire Portal**

**2. The SC State Firefighters' Association roster/database**

**3. And possibly a roster for your supplemental Association retirement.**

**This is difficult to understand given modern compatibility, but the State's restrictions on data sharing—in light of security issues—precludes combining the databases. \*\***

### **Required Forms**

In order for a department to be eligible to receive Firemen's Insurance and Inspection Form {1%} money (further explained in Chapter 10 of this manual), they must have the required forms filled out and sent to the Office of the Fire Marshal. These forms are the Quarterly Inspection Forms and the Equipment Certification Form.

### **Quarterly Inspection Forms**

The Quarterly Inspection Forms tracks the information obtained by departments on inspections of commercial (public) structures. This information is reported to the State Fire Marshal quarterly. This form tracks the occupancy type, number of inspections, number of violations found, and the number of violations corrected in a quarter. The due dates for this paperwork are the first day of January, April, and July. The 4th quarter and yearly totals are due on the 1st day of October.

Derivation of this requirement is in state law, and contains archaic language, but has the above intent and states:

***SECTION 23-9-360. Fire inspector, fire inspections, and reports required; penalties for failure to comply.***

***Every incorporated city or town and every county in which is located any unincorporated community accepting the benefits of this article shall annually, by February first, designate some person as the fire inspector for the city, town, or county and this person shall quarterly, by the first day of April, July, October, and January, make an inspection of every public building and business establishment located within the city, town, or county. Whenever the fire inspector finds in any building or establishment any combustible material or inflammatory conditions dangerous to the safety of the building or premises, he shall order the material or conditions removed. Quarterly reports must be filed with the State Fire Marshal, and one of these quarterly reports is considered an annual report and shall show in detail any hazardous or inflammable condition in connection with the condition of every public building, business establishment, or residence in the city, town, or county. If the requirements of this section are not complied with, the city, town, or county fire department is considered to have waived its rights for that year to the benefits to be derived under this article, and the treasurer of each county is directed not to distribute any benefits under this article to any city, town, or county fire department which has waived its rights to the benefits.***

#### **Equipment Certification.**

The Equipment Certification form must be received by October 31st. This form tracks the number of fire department members, 1% fund balance, value of fire department equipment, number and type of apparatus, type of water supply, and the number of Trustees on your one percent fund's board. Though archaic in verbiage, the law reads as follows:

***SECTION 23-9-380. Annual certificate of existence of fire department; penalty for failure to file***  
***The clerk of any incorporated city or town and the treasurer of the county in which is located the greater part of any unincorporated community accepting the benefits of this article as required herein shall annually, by October thirty-first, make and file with the State Fire Marshal on a blank***



*to be furnished by the State Fire Marshal his certificate stating the existence of the department, the number of steam, hand, or other engines, hook and ladder trucks, and hose carts in actual use, the number of organized companies, and the system of water supply in use for the department, together with any other facts the State Fire Marshal requires. If the certificate required by this section is not filed with the State Fire Marshal by October thirty-first in any year, the city, town, or community failing to file the certificate is considered to have waived and relinquished its rights for that year to any benefits distributed under this article by the county treasurer.*

### **The South Carolina Fire Academy**

The Fire Academy is operated for the express purpose of educating and training the state's paid, volunteer, and industrial fire service personnel. The Academy also provides leadership, guidance, and services to help the fire service carry out its responsibilities at the local level. The Academy has a central campus which provides specialized or prop specific training needs and operates 5 regional offices to serve the training needs at a local level. The Academy provides IFSAC and ProBoard certification pathways for students. Each student is issued and can track, register, and print transcripts via a unique student ID number when the Chief adds the individual to the fire portal roster for their department. Further details about the Academy can be found on the State Fire [website](#).

### **South Carolina Firefighter Mobilization**

The South Carolina Firefighter Mobilization Oversight Committee (S.C.FMOC) has developed the South Carolina Firefighter Mobilization Plan (S.C.FMP). The S.C.FMP in no way takes the place of or affects any mutual aid agreements you have in place; it only enhances them by providing statewide assistance when requested. Please carefully review the SCFMP so you understand how to register your department's information, how the plan is activated and operates. The plan and other Mobilization concepts can be found on the State Fire [website](#).

The S.C.FMOC is made up of 11 senior emergency services professionals from around the state. The committee was formed by Statue 23-49, The Firefighter Mobilization Act of 2000. It was designed to create an intrastate mutual aid system for response to emergency events that exceed a local jurisdiction's capability. Additionally, this system also allows for an interstate response to assist neighboring states.

## **The Emergency Response Task Force**

### **Urban Search and Rescue**

South Carolina Task Force 1 is an Urban Search and Rescue team providing a coordinated response to disasters in urban environments. Emphasizing location and extrication of victims trapped in largely populated areas, the Task Force can respond to State and National disasters including earthquakes, hurricanes, widespread tornadoes, and man-made technological and terrorist events.

SC-TF1 is a multi-disciplinary organization that includes four areas of specialists:

- Search operations, including hazard assessment, physical search, canine search, and electronic search.
- Rescue operations, including wood, steel, and concrete structures (reinforced and un-reinforced)
- Medical treatment, including injured Task Force members and entrapped victims.
- Technical support for Task Force operations, including structural integrity assessment, HAZMAT assessment, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and liaison with heavy equipment operators.

SC-TF1 is comprised of personnel divided into three Task Force groups throughout the state. These personnel represent many emergency service organizations throughout the state. SC-TF1 is complemented and mirrored by regional type 3 teams jointly funded by state and local efforts. More information on SC USAR can be found on the State Fire [website](#).

## **SC HART**

The South Carolina Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team is a collaborative effort between the State Urban Search and Rescue Task Force (SC-TF1), the S.C. Emergency Management Division, and the Army National Guard Aviation Unit based at McEntire Air Base. SC-HART staffs trained professional rescuers from SC-TF1 and highly trained pilots and crew members from the Army National Guard that form a cohesive unit capable of performing helicopter rescue using the UH-60 Blackhawk and LUH 72 Lakota.

SC-HART has All Hazards Capabilities:

- Hoist Operations
- Land or Water Based
- Swift Water/Mountain
- Ambulatory/Non-Ambulatory

SC-HART is available 24/7 and responds at no cost (in state) to the requesting agency. Call the State Warning Point at 803-737-8500 to request this team.

### **Incident Support Team**

State Fire has a resource component for local jurisdictions in support of incidents big or small which may tax local efforts. The IST is not a management team and does not take over from local authorities, IST is however an effective tool for scene operations that can strongly support local capabilities. Please read more on the IST on the State Fire [website](#).

# *Chapter 3*

## **Grants**

A grant, as defined by Merriam-Webster, is “to consent to carry out for a person: allow fulfillment of,” or “to bestow or transfer formally.” In the realm of our public safety business, grants are typically a sum of money given to support an agency or organization, usually as a result of a formal decision-making process involving an application and review, to fulfill a specific portion of our mission. Grants are distinct from loans in that they are given outright, with no conditions for repayment and may be used for various purposes limited only by the scope of the grant. It is important for the recipient of a grant to clearly understand the “Grant Lifecycle” and any legal requirements of the grant.

The Grant Lifecycle is the grant process which follows a linear lifecycle that includes creating the funding opportunity, applying, making award decisions, and successfully implementing the award. The specific actions along the lifecycle are grouped into three main phases:

1. Pre-Award Phase - Funding Opportunities and Application Review
2. Award Phase - Award Decisions and Notifications
3. Post Award - Implementation, Reporting, and Closeout

For more in-depth information on the life cycle, visit the [Grants.gov website](https://www.Grants.gov).

A “Research grant” is a term generally covering any funding for scientific research, in the areas of both "hard" science and technology and social science.

A “block grant” is an unrestricted grant made by the United States Federal Government to state and local governments to be used at their discretion to pay especially for social services that were formally social services that were formerly paid for through specific federal programs. These funds from the central government can be allocate to state and

locals for a wide range of services. Grants from the Federal Government can assist with returning a community back to normal during times of distress, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and weak economies. That help often comes through emergency funding grants.

A “formula grant” is a US federal grant specifying a precise formula in the legislation creating the program. Formula Grants include quantifiable elements, such as population, amount of tax effort, proportion of population unemployed or below poverty level, density of housing, or rate of infant mortality. The specified formula is a rule that tells potential recipient governments precisely how they can calculate the quantity of aid to which they are entitled under the provisions of law, as long as the recipient qualifies for such assistance under the stipulations of the program. Usually, the elements in the formula are chosen to reflect characteristics related to the purpose of the aid. Some factors in the formula are also likely to have political significance. Since there is no such thing as a neutral formula, all formulas reward some states or localities more than others, depending on their relative standing given the formula specified.

Private funding for fire departments provide additional funding that does not entail public funds and may include both grants and gifts to purchase assets for their organization. These funds may be for a specific purpose, or fire departments may use their discretion to decide the best way to use the funds in their communities.

Examples of grant funding are listed below, and it should be noted that this is not an all-inclusive list.

- [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) provides a unified site for interaction between grant applicants and the US Federal agencies that manage grant funds.
- [FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program](#) includes the [Assistance to Firefighters \(AFG\)](#), [Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response \(SAFER\)](#), Fire Prevention and Safety (FPS), and the Station Construction Grant (SCG).

- The Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation is dedicated to easing the financial burden of fire departments by providing grants for life-saving equipment, as well as by offering scholarships to individuals who are interested in pursuing firefighting careers. Grants can also provide community education on fire safety, emergency services and preparation for natural disasters in the home and community. Contact information for Firehouse Subs

Foundation Grant:

Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation

Attn: Grant Request

3400 Kori Road

Jacksonville, FL 32257

- Department of Homeland Security Open for Business grants page lists a number of grant programs. These programs enhance the ability of states, local and tribal jurisdictions, and other regional authorities in the preparation, prevention, and response to terrorist attacks and other disasters, by distributing grant funds.

# *Chapter 4*

## **Training**

Training members of the fire service in South Carolina has been the source of much debate for many years. There are numerous Standards, Codes, and Regulations that exist. Many of these are vague to say the least, and often times may even seem to contradict each other. This section is provided to bring some insight, and at least send you to the correct sources to assist you and your department with your training needs. The bottom line is that the Fire Chief is ultimately responsible for ensuring that fire department personnel are trained competently for the tasks that they perform. This section is here to assist you with this task.

In this section, you will find information on the following organizations and their relationship to the training of firefighters in South Carolina:

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- Insurance Services Office (ISO)
- South Carolina Fire Academy (SCFA)

It is important that you realize the difference between an OSHA Regulation and a NFPA Standard. OSHA Regulations, as they relate to structural firefighting, will be found in Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations (29CFR). These are the General Industry Standards. OSHA Regulations are law. OSHA Regulations are penal in nature. NFPA Standards are not. NFPA Standards are a set of national consensus standards. It is viewed that the standards set forth by NFPA are the accepted practices in the Fire Service. While these standards are not law in South Carolina, they are a guide to how you may be judged in a court of law. These standards are punitive in nature.

If your department does not show the intent to meet the standard, you will more than likely have to justify why you did not do so. These standards may be referenced in both criminal and civil court proceedings.

## **NOTE**

OSHA Regulations listed under Title 29 CFR can be found [here](#); view NFPA standards [here](#).

### **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Fire Service Training**

As stated earlier, South Carolina is what is considered to be an OSHA State. In this section you will find some basic information on OSHA Standards. While the Fire Service must comply with all OSHA Regulations within the General Industry Standard (29 CFR), this section will discuss OSHA Regulations that have some relevance to fire department training. All of the following information can be found in more detail on the OSHA [website](#).

Listed below are some of the most important OSHA Regulations with regards to fire department training. To put it in the simplest of terms, you must train people for whatever tasks he or she has the potential to be assigned. People should only do tasks that they have been trained to do.

- OSHA 1910.120-Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response
- OSHA 1910.120 (Appendix E)-Training Curriculum Guidelines (Non-Mandatory)
- OSHA 1910.130-Bloodborne Pathogens
- OSHA 1910.132-Personal Protective Equipment
- OSHA 1910.134 -Respiratory Protection
- OSHA 1910.146-Permit Required Confined Spaces
- OSHA 1910.147-Lock Out/Tag Out
- OSHA 1910.156-Fire Brigades
- OSHA 1926.65-Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response
- OSHA 1926.65 (Appendix E)- Training Curriculum Guidelines (Non-Mandatory)



## **National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and Fire Service Training**

As stated in the introduction to this section, NFPA standards are national consensus standards and are accepted as best practices and industry standards. These standards are a guide as to what your practices are going to be compared to in a court of law. While all NFPA standards are relevant to the fire service, those listed below are training-related in nature. These standards can help you develop a quality training program that is in line with current national trends.

Many, but not all, fire service training related NFPA Standards:

- NFPA 472—Standard on Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials / Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents
- NFPA 1001—Standard on Firefighter Professional Qualifications
- NFPA 1002—Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications
- NFPA 1003—Standard for Airport Firefighting Professional Qualifications
- NFPA 1005—Standard for Marine Firefighting for Land Based Firefighters
- NFPA 1006—Standard for Technical Rescuer Professional Qualifications
- NFPA 1010—Standard for Firefighting, Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator, Airport Firefighter, and Marine Firefighting for Land Based Firefighter Professional Qualifications \*\*Replaces the above 4 standards in the fall of 2023\*\*
- NFPA 1020—Standard for Fire Officer and Emergency Services Instructor Professional Qualifications \*\* Replaces 1021 and 1041 in 2024\*\*
- NFPA 1021—Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications
- NFPA 1026—Standard for Incident Management Professional Qualifications
- NFPA 1030—Standard for Fire Prevention Program Positions
- NFPA 1031—Standard for Fire Inspector and Plans Examiners
- NFPA 1033—Standard for Fire Investigator Professional Qualifications

- NFPA 1037—Standard for Fire Marshals
- NFPA 1041—Standard for Fire Service Instructor Professional Qualifications
- NFPA 1051—Standard for Wildland Firefighters Professional Qualifications
- NFPA 1061—Standard for Public Safety Telecommunication Personnel Professional Qualifications
- NFPA 1071—Standard for Emergency Vehicle Technicians Professional Qualifications
- NFPA 1072—Standard for Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Emergency Response Personnel Professional Qualifications
- NFPA 1091—Standard for Traffic Incident Management Personnel Professional Qualifications
- NFPA 1201—Standard on Providing Fire and Emergency Services to the Public
- NFPA 1250—Standard on Fire and Emergency Services Organization Risk Management
- NFPA 1401—Standard on Fire Protection Training Reports and Records
- NFPA 1402—Standard on Building Fire Service Training Centers
- NFPA 1403—Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions
- NFPA 1404—Standard on Fire Service Respiratory Protection Training
- NFPA 1407—Standard for Training Fire Service Rapid Intervention Crews
- NFPA 1408—Standard on Thermal Imaging Training
- NFPA 1410—Standard on Training for Initial Emergency Operations
- NFPA 1451—Standard on Fire Service Vehicle Operations Training Program
- NFPA 1452—Guide for Training Fire Department Personnel to Conduct Dwelling Fire Safety Surveys
- NFPA 1500—Standard on Fire Department Safety and Health Program
- NFPA 1521—Standard for Fire Department Safety Officer

- NFPA 1561—Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System
- NFPA 1581—Standard on Fire Department Infection Control Program
- NFPA 1582—Standard on Medical Programs for Fire Departments
- NFPA 1583—Standard on Health Related Fitness Programs for Fire Department Members
- NFPA 1584—Standard on Rehabilitation Process for Members during Emergency Operations and Training Exercises
- NFPA 1620—Standard for Pre-Incident Planning
- NFPA 1670—Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Operations
- NFPA 1700—Guide for Structural Firefighting
- NFPA 1710—Standard on Career Fire Department Organization and Deployment
- NFPA 1720—Standard on Volunteer Fire Department Organization and Deployment
- NFPA 1730—Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention and Code Enforcement

NFPA Standards can be a good source of information when drafting departmental guidelines. NFPA Standards are drafted with input from industry leaders, manufacturers, and Fire Service Professionals. All NFPA standards are revised and updated every three to five years, in revision cycles that begin twice each year. Normally a standard's cycle takes approximately two years to complete. Each revision cycle proceeds according to a published schedule which includes final dates for each stage in the standards development process. The four fundamental steps in the NFPA standards development process are:

1. Public Input
2. Public Comment

### 3. NFPA Technical Meeting (Tech Session)

### 4. Standards Council Action (Appeals and Issuance of Standard)

NFPA Technical Committees and Panels serve as the principal consensus bodies responsible for developing and updating all NFPA codes and standards. Further information can be found on the NFPA [website](#).

## **Insurance Services Office (ISO) and Fire Service Training**

The Insurance Service Office (ISO){Also rebranded and known as Verisk} is covered in greater detail in a later chapter of this document. In this section, only the training requirements of ISO will be discussed. It is important to study and learn this section. The fire department has the potential to score 105.5 points during the ISO review, with training accounting up to 50 points. ISO will send a representative to review your training records. The purpose of this section is to assist you with obtaining maximum credit for your training program which is the potential to receive 50 points in the training category. It is important to know that the ISO representative will expect to see clear and complete documentation on all trainings. It is helpful if you can maintain a complete set of records both for the individual, and each category listed in this section. Most NFIRS compliant reporting systems will have reports that can be used to obtain the total amount of training hours needed per category. The following items are what ISO will likely expect to see, and review. All of the information below is available in the ISO Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) as well as in the commentaries associated with each section located on the ISO [website](#),

### **Company Training**

Company Training is training that is conducted inside the organization, with the membership of that company in attendance. Company training at fire houses includes: streets, buildings, and open areas. Company Training should amount to sixteen (16) hours per

member per month. The training should be in accordance with NFPA 1001 firefighter standards.

### **Driver Operator Training**

The records given to ISO should show the names of all firefighters classified as driver/operators. Driver/Operators should be further classified as existing or new, depending on documented training. New Driver/Operators will be considered as such time as they complete the training requirements as listed below. All driver/operators should receive a minimum of the following training annually:

1. Driver/Operator (Existing) – Twelve (12) hours per year. This training should be in accordance with NFPA 1002, Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications and NFPA 1451, Standard for Fire Service Vehicle Operations Training Program.
2. New Driver/Operator – Sixty (60) hours (or certification) of specialized training, including both classroom and practical skills development with testing. This training should be in accordance with NFPA 1002, Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications and NFPA 1451, Standard for Fire Service Vehicle Operations Training Program.

### **Officer Training and Certification Program**

Officer Certification – Certification of each current officer with fire suppression responsibilities should be in accordance with the general criteria of NFPA 1021, Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications.

Officer Training – Continuing education for officer training on or off site is twelve (12) hours per year for each officer. Training should be in accordance with the general criteria of NFPA 1021, Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications; NFPA 1521, Standard for

Fire Department Safety Officer; NFPA 1561, Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System.

**NOTE**

The records for these items should show the firefighters that are eligible to receive officer training as well as a description of the training received.

Recruit Training — All new members, or recruits, of the department should receive a minimum of 240 hours of introductory training per NFPA 1001 (Firefighter Professional Qualifications). These training hours should count as the members first year of employment or tenure. Your departmental Operating Guide (SOG/SOP) should outline the requirements for a recruit firefighter that details the subject matter and hourly requirements for each subject. A department may also simply refer to any local or state programs required to meet the 240 hours.

**NOTE**

These records should show all firefighters that are considered to be recruits and a description of the training received. If the department should decide to recognize training from another organization, the records should reflect the training. If the total hours are less than the 240 required, in-house training should be provided so that all recruits receive a minimum of 240 hours of recruit training.

Hazardous Materials Training — All officers and firefighters should receive a minimum of six (6) hours of Hazardous Materials, Radiological, and Hazardous Materials training that includes a performance examination. Records should reflect each firefighter or line officer and the details of the training. This training should be in accordance with NFPA 472, Standard for Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents.

Pre-fire planning Inspections — Fire Departments should conduct pre-fire planning of each commercial, industrial, and institutional site, and others, except one and two-story family

dwellings. To receive full credit for pre-planning these structures will need to be reviewed once a year. A record of each pre-fire planned site should be maintained for review. These Pre-Fire Planning Inspections should be done in accordance with NFPA Standard 1620, Recommended Practice for Pre-Incident Planning.

#### **NOTE**

Pre-plans are not only a valuable tool for training, but pre-plans also provide insight for tactical operations. Pre-plans also provide firefighters the chance to see a building and its contents outside of fire conditions. Pre-plans also give the fire department a chance to educate businesses on fire-friendly housekeeping.

Training Records — Training records should be maintained and kept up to date. There are many programs available to assist with records management. The purpose of these training records is to be able to substantiate that the training was held, and that certain members attended. In order to provide reasonable evidence that qualified training did in fact occur, as a minimum the records should include the following information:

1. Date of training
2. Location of training
3. Subject of the training
4. List of attendees
5. Signatures of attendees
6. ISO Category of training (Officer, Driver, Haz-Mat, etc.)
7. Instructor information

#### **The South Carolina Fire Academy**

#### **SC Fire Portal**

The Fire Portal is a SC State Fire database that serves as a "one-stop shop" for users to perform a variety of functions.

These include adding a new member to the roster (depending on assigned permissions), registering for classes, viewing grades and VIP reports, paying department invoices, and submitting mandatory reports and grants. Each South Carolina fire department has at least one Administrator designated to maintain the information in their department's database. Access the [Fire Portal](#).

To elaborate, the Fire Portal allows a Fire Chief (or designated Administrator) to add personnel to their roster in compliance with the Firefighter Registration law. After a firefighter has been added to the department roster, the firefighter's Fire Academy transcript can be viewed/printed and their status and details (paid, volunteer, rank, address, etc.) can be updated. In addition to data management relating to a department's personnel, the Fire Portal allows for the filing of required forms and reports, such as annual Equipment Certification, Quarterly Inspections, and any V-SAFE-related grant material.

### **South Carolina Fire Academy**

Located in Columbia, SC, the SC Fire Academy (SCFA) provides the vast majority of fire service-related training. It is part of the Fire and Life Safety Division of the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (LLR).

For 30 years, since 1993, the SCFA has been accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC). Most recently, in 2015, it was accredited by The Pro Board®.

This accreditation certifies emergency service responders in accordance with the National Professional Qualifications System Standards. The National Fire Protection Association promulgates these standards. The Pro Board® or IFSAC does not accredit training methods, programs, nor curriculum. Their focus is on the testing process. The aim of IFSAC is to provide and administer a high-quality, internationally recognized, standards-based accrediting



program to enhance and increase professionalism in fire and emergency services.

Additionally, IFSAC only accredits the certification process, not the course content. The objective of the Pro Board® is to create a globally recognized method of recognizing professional success in the fire service and related professions. Find more information on [IFSAC](#) and [The Pro Board](#).

SCFA accreditation ensures candidates and governing bodies that students who complete authorized programs have reached the highest performance standards for that certification level. Accreditation guarantees that qualifications are uniform, allowing students to advance their careers in other accredited states. Find more information on [SCFA accredited programs](#).

### **South Carolina Fire Academy Courses**

Currently, the SCFA offers five different course types described below. They include:

- Regional Catalog Courses
- Resident/On Campus Catalog Courses
- Training-In-House Courses
- Request Courses
- Instructor Courses

### **Regional Catalog Courses**

Regional SCFA courses are taught off campus or “in the field” in seven [training regions](#) around the state. Courses are scheduled by the SCFA Regional Coordinator at the request of the local (or “host”) fire department.

These courses are listed in the SCFA’s training catalog, published bi-annually. The dates are organized by fiscal year (July to December/January to June). These courses are taught by SCFA adjunct instructors. Host departments are guaranteed 10 seats in the class. Once those 10 seats are filled, registrations are taken on a first-come, first-served basis.

## **Resident Catalog Courses**

The Public Fire Service Course Dates Catalog lists the dates for these courses, which are held at the SCFA campus in Columbia. These classes are taught by full-time faculty and part-time SCFA instructors. The SCFA offers special weekend programs and seminars in addition to the courses mentioned in the catalog. Students can choose to remain on site during the training. Additional fees may apply for dorm room accommodations and on-site food.

## **Training-In-House Courses**

These courses are scheduled through the SCFA Regional Coordinator and taught by a SCFA-credentialed instructor from the local fire department. The course schedule accommodates the local fire department. These courses are subject to SCFA policies and are taught using the SCFA lesson plan. As a result, SCFA certificates are issued, and SCFA credit is granted to participants.

In order for a department to conduct training-in-house, the local department must submit a written request to the appropriate SCFA Regional Coordinator 30 days prior to the requested start date.

Additionally, the SCFA course may have a minimum number of required students for safety reasons. The practical evaluation of classes may be combined with another class.

The local department must also provide all of the required facilities needed to conduct a particular SCFA course. For certain programs, the SCFA has basic equipment available to assist in the delivery.

## **Request Courses**

If a local department has needs that cannot be met through the use of catalog courses and does not have the instructor resources to conduct a course as training-in-house, the SCFA Regional Coordinator will make every effort to deliver the requested training. The fulfillment of these courses is dependent on the availability of SCFA resources.

Request Courses are another method of acquiring training and fulfill unique local training needs. They will not replace the existing catalog or in-house training courses, but rather supplement them. This approach allows staff to maintain comprehensive, standard training while responding to specific needs of the local fire department.

If the resources are available, local departments have to meet the following conditions:

- A written request to conduct the course as training-in-house and received by the SCFA Regional Coordinator 30 days prior to the requested start date.
- Submit student registration prior to the assigned cut-off date (usually 14 days, 30 days for those requiring pre-course assignments). Late registrations/walk-ins are only permitted with the regional coordinator's prior approval.
- SCFA courses may have a minimum number of required participants. The minimum number of students varies. If a department does not meet the minimum number of participants, SCFA will review each instance and may work with departments to ensure training needs are met.
- The local department must be able to provide the required facilities needed to conduct a particular SCFA course. For certain programs, the SCFA has basic equipment available to assist in the delivery.

### **Instructor Courses**

These courses include instructor training and certification courses, Professional Skills Development, and Instructor Orientation Workshops (IOW's). These programs may be available as resident and regional programs, as well as online. These programs must also meet pre-registration and minimum number requirements.

### **Student Eligibility**

Course prerequisites are listed in the SCFA Curriculum Catalog. Prior to registration, each

student must meet any prerequisites for a course. With regards to local fire departments, students must be at least 18 years old and a bona fide member of a career or volunteer fire department.

An exception can be made for 16- and 17-year-old participants of the Explorer Learning for Life Exploring Program or a Junior Member participating under the Future Volunteer Firefighters Act of South Carolina in accordance with the SCFA AG-007 Guideline. These students must use the registration form located in the SCFA AG-007 Guideline.

### **Equivalency / Reciprocity**

Reciprocity is the awarding of certification, without any required testing, to those who have been certified at an occupational level by an IFSAC or Pro Board accredited entity. Reciprocal transcript credit is given to those individuals who have completed training from the National Fire Academy (NFA) or the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as identified and approved by the SCFA. Reciprocity may be granted to an applicant who:

1. Is an active member of a South Carolina fire department.
2. Submits an application for Reciprocity.
3. Submits a certificate (original or verifiable) from an entity that grants IFSAC or Pro Board certification with a legible seal number.

Except in the following circumstances, reciprocity cannot be granted for SCFA courses not currently accredited by IFSAC or Pro Board. Reciprocal transcript credit may be awarded for:

- Technical Rescuer and Hazardous Materials Technician to cease upon Accreditation of the SCFA to these levels.
- Hazardous Materials Awareness (HMA) and Hazardous Materials Operations (HMO) when an applicant provides IFSAC and/or Pro Board Firefighter I.
- Auto-Extrication when an applicant provides IFSAC and/or Pro Board Firefighter II.

- Emergency Vehicle Driver Training (EVDT) when an applicant provides IFSAC and/or Pro Board for a Driver Operator Series course (Pumper, Aerial, Airport Rescue Firefighter, Mobile Water Supply).

## **NOTE**

Transcripts may be substituted for certificates if they are original and verifiable from an agency that grants IFSAC or The Pro Board certification and the seal number is legible. The Accreditation Coordinator or an authorized designee shall analyze the Application for Reciprocity, make a reciprocity determination, update SCFA firefighter records, and notify the applicant of the decision. Visit the State Fire [website](#) for more information.

## **Training Resources for Fire Departments**

The following links are provided to assist you with obtaining training for your members. While the South Carolina Fire Academy provides a quality training program, there are other resources available to assist you with obtaining training that is specific to your departmental needs. Many of these programs are online in format but are in no way intended to be a substitute for an established fire department training program. These resources are meant to compliment your training program.

- [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\)](#).

There are numerous FEMA Training Agencies. You can access the following through the link above:

1. Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP)
  - a. At the resident campus in Anniston, responders can receive training on incident management, mass casualty response, and emergency response to a catastrophic natural disaster or terrorism.
2. Emergency Management Institute (EMI)

a. The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) provides emergency management training to responders to minimize the impact of disasters.

3. National Training and Education Division (NTED)

a. The National Training and Education Division (NTED) provides more than 125 training courses to effectively function during mass consequence events.

4. National Fire Academy (NFA)

a. The National Fire Academy (NFA) serves as the training division of the United States Fire Administration (USFA)

Additionally, training resources exist at:

- LSU Fire and Emergency Training Institute
- Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX)

There are many other training resources available. This is only a small sample of what is available to assist you with obtaining quality training to improve your department's response capabilities.



# *Chapter 5*

## **National Fire Protection Association**

The National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) is an international nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property, and economic loss due to fire, electrical, and related hazards. This is accomplished by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education. Founded on November 6, 1896, and headquarter in Quincy, Massachusetts, NFPA publishes more than 300 consensus codes and standards that are intended to minimize the possibility and effects of fire and other risks. The codes and standards are administered by more than 250 technical committees, consisting of approximately 8,000 volunteers to over 50,000 members.

The NFPA standards development process encourages public participation in the development of standards. All NFPA standards are revised and updated every three to five years, in revision cycles that begin twice each year. Normally a standard cycle takes approximately two years to complete. Each revision cycle proceeds according to a published schedule which includes final dates for each stage in the standards development process. The four-fundamental steps in the NFPA standards development process are:

1. Public Input
2. Public Comment
3. NFPA Technical Meetings (Tech Session)
4. Standard Council Action (Appeals and Issuance of Standard).

The list of standards below is only a sample of those published by NFPA that a Chief of Department should be familiar. Fire Departments or individuals should purchase a copy of the most up to date standard applicable to the equipment, training, or apparatus they are either purchasing or providing to their personnel.

Chapter 1 of each NFPA is the Administration section of the standard. This will provide the scope, title, purpose, and application of the standard as well as other pertinent information.

### **Safety**

Two of the most important NFPA standards designed to keep our firefighters safe is NFPA 1500: Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program, 2021 Edition and NFPA 1582: Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments, 2022 Edition. NFPA 1500 is designed to provide our employees a workplace that is free of know hazards which will prolong the employee's tenure as an active member of the fire service. Chapters within 1500 touch on training and education; fire apparatus, equipment, and drivers; protective clothing and equipment; traffic incident management; facility safety; behavioral health; and occupational exposures to contaminants and traumatic events. NFPA 1582 contains descriptive requirements for a comprehensive occupational medical program for fire departments.

### **Staffing**

Organized fire departments are staffed with either career or volunteer firefighters. Some organizations are considered combination if they employ full time staff who supplement volunteers in carrying out fire suppression activities. Depending on the makeup of the fire department, staffing will dictate which NFPA standard will be referenced for deployment and response by an agency. NFPA 1710: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments, 2020 Edition; and NFPA 1720: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments, 2020 Edition, are standards that contains the minimum requirements relating to the organization and deployment of fire



suppression operations, emergency medical operations, and special operations to the public by either a career or volunteer and combination fire departments. The purpose of these standards are to specify the minimum criteria addressing the effectiveness and efficiency of either the career or the volunteer and combination public fire suppression operations, emergency medical service, and special operations delivery in protecting the citizens of the jurisdiction.

## **Training**

Fire department's training and qualifications are outlined through various NFPA standards. Each of the below listed standards will assist in ensuring your firefighters, drivers, and officers are trained to a minimum level of competency to perform the tasks associated with their positions. The standards define Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) which are a written statement that describes a specific job task, lists the items necessary to complete the task, and defines measurable or observable outcomes and evaluation areas for the specific task. NFPA 1001: Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications, 2019 Edition governs Firefighter I and II; NFPA 1002: Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications, 2017 Edition governs our drivers; NFPA 1021: Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications, 2020 Edition governs our engine, ladder, and tender drivers; while NFPA 1037: Standard on Fire Marshal Professional Qualifications, 2016 Edition governs our Fire Marshals.

## **Data**

To assist in data collections, NFPA 901: Standard Classifications for Fire and Emergency Services Incident Reporting, 2021 Edition was written. This standard describes and defines data elements and classifications used by fire departments in the United States and other countries to describe fire damage during incidents. This document provides a common language for the collection of pre-incident information, fire and other emergency incident data, and post-incident damage assessments.

This standard defines numeric classifications for various data elements that describe fire protection and fire service information. This standard applies to the preliminary reports of fire or emergency services agencies. This standard does not apply to reports for fire or explosion investigation. It does not provide guidelines for a reporting system or related forms. There are many companies out there that offer a fire reporting system. Fire Chiefs and members of the organization should perform careful research on a reporting system that meets all of their internal and external needs before expending funds.

## **Equipment**

NFPA standards on fire equipment designed, testing, and application is designed to keep our firefighters safe in the performance of their duties. The list of standards below are only guidelines of the equipment that is listed in the NFPA standard, and you must purchase the most current edition of the standard for the equipment you are researching.

- NFPA 1801: Standard on Thermal Imagers for the Fire Service, 2021 Edition
  - This standard specifies the design, performance, testing, and certification requirements for thermal imagers used by fire service personnel during emergency incident operations. This standard also specifies requirements for new thermal imagers for the fire service.
- NFPA 1901: Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus, 2016 Edition
  - This standard defines the requirements for new automotive fire apparatus and trailers designed to be used under emergency conditions to transport personnel and equipment and to support the suppression of fires and mitigation of other hazardous situations. This standard specifies the minimum requirements for new automotive fire apparatus and trailers.

- NFPA 1906: Standard for Wildland Fire Apparatus, 2016 Edition
  - This standard defines the minimum requirements for the design, performance, and testing of new automotive fire apparatus that are designed primarily to support wildland fire suppression activities.
- NFPA 1931: Standard for Manufacturer's Design of Fire Department Ground Ladders, 2020 Edition
  - This standard specifies the requirements for the design of fire department ground ladders and for the design verification tests that are to be conducted by the ground ladder manufacturer. This standard provides the manufacturer of fire department ground ladders with a set of performance requirements against which ladders are to be certified to ensure that the ground ladders are reliable and safe to use.
- NFPA 1936: Standard on Rescue Tools, 2020 Edition
  - This standard specifies the minimum requirements for the design, performance, testing, and product conformance verification of rescue tools and components thereof. This standard specifies the requirements for spreader, ram, cutter, and combination powered rescue tools. The purpose of this standard is to establish minimum performance requirements for powered rescue tools and components that are utilized by emergency services personnel to facilitate the extrication of victims from entrapment.
- NFPA 1961: Standard on Fire Hose, 2020 Edition
  - This standard defines the design and construction requirements for new fire hose, the testing required to verify the design and construction, and the inspection and testing required of all new fire hose. The purpose of this standard is to provide minimum performance requirements for fire-fighting spray nozzles to assure purchasers or authorities having jurisdiction that nozzles that comply with this standard are suitable for fire suppression use.

- NFPA 1965: Standard for Fire Hose Appliances, 2014 Edition
  - This standard covers the requirements for fire hose appliances up to and including 6 in. (150 mm) nominal dimension designed for connection to fire hose, fire apparatus, and fire hydrants and intended for general fire service use in controlling or conveying water. The purpose of this standard is to provide minimum performance and operational requirements for fire hose appliances and to specify the design verification tests for fire hose appliances. Fire hose appliances include the following: Portable valves, including gate valves, ball valves, piston valves, butterfly valves, clapper valves, and pressure relief valves; Portable monitors, ladder pipes, and break-apart monitors, miscellaneous hose appliances, including wyes, Siamese's, elbows, water curtains, water thieves, and manifolds.
- NFPA 1971: Standard on Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting 2018 Edition
  - This standard specifies the minimum design, performance, testing, and certification requirements for structural firefighting protective ensembles and ensemble elements that include coats, trousers, coveralls, helmets, gloves, footwear, and interface components. The purpose of this standard is to establish minimum levels of protection for firefighting personnel assigned to fire department operations including but not limited to structural firefighting, proximity firefighting, rescue, emergency medical, and other emergency first responder functions.
  - Of note and of importance in this standard are the usable lifespans for PPE
- NFPA 1981: Standard on Open-Circuit Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) for Emergency Services, 2019 Edition
  - This standard specifies the minimum requirements for the design, performance,

testing, and certification of new compressed breathing air open-circuit self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and compressed breathing air combination open-circuit self-contained breathing apparatus and supplied air respirators (SCBA/SARs) and for the replacement parts, components, and accessories for these respirators. The purpose of this standard is to establish minimum levels of protection for emergency services personnel from atmospheres that are categorized as immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH) atmospheres.

- Of note in this standard are maximum usable timelines for equipment.
- NFPA 1983: Standard on Life Safety Rope and Equipment for Emergency Services, 2017 Edition
  - This standard specifies minimum design, performance, testing, and certifications requirements for life safety rope, escape rope, water rescue throw lines, life safety harnesses, belts, and auxiliary equipment for emergency services personnel. The purpose of this standard is to establish minimum levels of performance for life safety rope, escape rope, water rescue throw lines, life safety harnesses, belts, and auxiliary equipment for emergency services personnel.
- NFPA 1999: Standard on Protective Clothing and Ensembles for Emergency Medical Operations, 2018 Edition
  - This standard specifies the minimum design, performance, testing, documentation, and certification requirements for new single-use and new multiple-use emergency medical operations protective clothing, including garments, helmets, gloves, footwear, and face protection devices, used by emergency medical responders prior to arrival at medical care facilities, used by medical first receivers at medical care facilities during emergency medical operations, and used by healthcare workers

providing medical and supportive care. The purpose of this standard is to establish a minimum level of protection from contact with blood and body fluid-borne pathogens for personnel performing patient care during emergency medical operations.

### **Other standards**

As we continue to respond to more incidents surrounding violence, especially those with active shooters, NFPA 3000: Standard for an Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (ASHER) Program, 2021 Edition was published. This standard is limited to the necessary functions and actions related to preparedness, response, and recovery from an active shooter/hostile event response (ASHER). The purpose of this standard is to identify the program elements necessary to develop, plan, coordinate, evaluate, revise, and sustain an ASHER program. Determining specific policies, tactics, and protocols shall be the responsibility of the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ).

# *Chapter 6*

## **Fire Department Administration**

In no way can we comprehensively offer to you how to manage your department. This is not an attempt to do so. But it is a quick reference guide to help get you started and directed appropriately. Read, do your homework, take classes, and network (ask peers questions).

Doing this will give you a great start.

When reading, get a copy of “Managing Fire and Emergency Services” from ICMA. Please read it, you can get no better start and have it as a reference book on your desk. And too, though you may be volunteer or paid, the premises found herein are the same.

**Professionalism is a quality not dependent on a paycheck – show it!**

### **Purchasing**

It is important that we be considered good stewards of public money and that we bid and award our purchases fairly. Purchasing must be conducted legally and ethically in line with your organizational procedures. Examples of important questions that you want to ask are the following:

1. Is there a limit set before having to receive multiple bids on the purchase(s) (\$500, \$1,000, etc.)?
2. Prior to awarding the bid, who has the authority to approve the purchase?
3. Is the person conducting the purchase following all guidelines set by the department, city, county, Special Purpose District (SPD), etc. In addition to following your organization’s guidelines to the bid process, some other guidelines you may need to reference for guidance with your purchasing of certain equipment may be listed in the ISO (Insurance Service Office) and the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) website and/or manual.

Important questions to ask prior to the purchase include:

1. Does the purchase meet the department needs and not wants? Developing a committee to evaluate the needs of the department may help keep you focused on departmental needs when spending public funds. A well-designed committee can research a product and save time before going to bid.
2. Is the purchase within budget?
3. Have you secured all necessary approvals for obligating funds prior to obligating your organization?

Contact the person who oversees the finances for your organization to get a better understanding of the procedures that need to be followed. This person can help you make for a smoother transition by offering information when it comes time for those larger purchasing items.

Purchasing care is not solely a paid organization's concern. Purchasing in a volunteer organization can have its concerns as well due to the perception of it being the group's money to allocate and not solely at the discretion of a purchasing agent or Chief. Bottom line: purchase wisely and with need in mind and remove any opportunity for bias or fiscal irresponsibility.

## **Insurance**

Along with insurance types mentioned in this guide, two important insurances dealing with the fire department are Property/Casualty (P&C) and Worker's Compensation (WC).

- **Property/Casualty**

ISO defines property/casualty insurance as insurance on homes, cars, and businesses. Technically, property insurance protects a person or business with an interest in physical property against its loss or the loss of its income-producing abilities. Casualty insurance



mainly protects a person or business against legal liability for losses caused by injury to other people or damage to the property of others. This and other information can be obtained online.

The Association can provide property/casualty insurance to member departments in areas such as:

1. Commercial auto
2. General liability
3. Excess liability
4. Property
5. Portable and mobile equipment
6. Crime
7. Management liability
8. Cyber liability

- **Worker's Compensation**

According to the Workers' Compensation in South Carolina website, Workers' Compensation laws are designed to provide a satisfactory means of handling occupational disabilities. Six basic objectives underlie the workers' compensation laws:

1. Provide sure, prompt, and reasonable income and medical benefits to work-related accident victims, or income benefits to their dependents, regardless of fault;
2. Provides a single remedy and reduce court delays, costs, and judicial workloads arising out of personal injury litigation;
3. Relieve public and private charities of financial demands incident to uncompensated occupational accidents;
4. Minimize payment of fees to lawyers and witnesses as well as time-consuming trials and court appeals;

5. Encourage maximum employer interest in safety and rehabilitation through an appropriate experience-rating mechanism; and,
6. Promote frank study of the causes of accidents (rather than the concealment of fault) in an effort to reduce preventable accidents and human suffering.

Read more about workers' compensation from [Investopedia](#), the [CDC](#), and the [Workers' Compensation Commission](#).

The history of workers compensation and the variance afforded South Carolina workers dates to the mid to late 20th century. The balance between our state being a “Right to Work” state and WC coverage was a general assembly compromise and creation to ensure safety but preserve the heritage of the non-unionized workforce. The appeals process for South Carolina WC coverage precludes quick presumptive care laws being overtly effective. More historical information and an overview can be found on the [Workers' Compensation Commission website](#).

### **Developing Policies and Procedures**

All departments, regardless of their staffing models, need and should have standards of operation. Safety, and continuity depend on standardization.

Depending on the definition adopted by the authority having jurisdiction, the document may be called standard operating procedures (SOPs), standard operating guidelines (SOGs), policies and procedures manual (PPM), or general orders (GOs). These documents contain the mission statements, responsibilities, and authority of the organization and each of its branches and functional positions. Important questions to ask include the following:

- Does the department currently have policies and procedures?
- If so, when was the last time they were reviewed, updated and/or changed? Policy and procedure documents should be an ongoing process for the organization.

- Do you have buy-in from the members of the organization and are they giving information feedback for the betterment of the department?
- Does the policy(s) meet the organization's current operations? Example; is the response policy for fire alarms the same as car fires? Has the district you serve installed hydrants recently? Make sure your policies and procedures are reflecting everyday practice. Having no policy may be bad, but having a policy that you do not follow is even worse. Sample SOP's can be found at the touch of any internet search device. However, a good resource for ready-made policies are the [NETC Library](#) and [SOP Center](#).

### **Budget Justifications**

Justifying a budget request requires valid documentation and supporting evidence. Accurate research and internal records maintenance provide support for the request. Some effective budget justification requires the following:

1. Review and understand the history, status, uses and relationship to all department accounts.
2. Conduct research studies dealing with salaries, benefits, and personnel.
3. Establish and serve as a strong advocate for department budget priorities in consultation with funding administration.
4. Use of in-house records dealing with run reports, maintenance cost, operational changes due to services provided. ISO requirements may justify needs.
5. Automatic/mutual aid agreements or any other contractual requirements.

### **Equipment Maintenance and Compliance**

1. Does the department equipment meet the needs of the service provided?
2. Prioritize
3. Review standards to seek guidance for safety (ISO, NFPA)
4. State Contract

## **Strategic Planning**

In "Strategic Planning: Development and Implementation," Bonita Melcher and Harold Kerzner say that “strategic planning is the process of formulating and implementing decisions about an organization’s future direction.” Strategic planning can be based off of four fundamental questions asked on an organizational basis:

1. Where are we now?
2. Where are we going?
3. How do we get there?
4. How do we measure our progress?

The benefits of strategic planning are that it provides a destination, identifies strategy, recognizes the risks, determines the needed resources, builds flexibility, and provides the change needed to create your ideal future. The department may set one-year and five-year departmental goals with the members.

Listed below are two of many reference materials used and can be used to improve strategic planning.

- Reference book: [Applied Strategic Planning by Nolan, L. Goodstein & J Goodstein](#)
- [Serving the American Public: Best Practices in Customer-Driven Strategic Planning](#)

## **Managing Citizens and Personnel**

### **Citizens**

Create an environment where your employees will take some risk to provide quality customer service. The environment should require the risk to be within the scope of the department policy and procedures yet allow the employee to go the extra mile in delivering customer service and feeling the ownership and pride of going that extra mile. The employee must be creative in the ways they serve the public and always seek excellence in the services provided.

Refer to Alan Brunacinni's book "The Essentials of Fire Department Customer Service."

### **Personnel**

Develop shared goals with your employees/volunteers. This means using all the knowledge you have in your organization from top to bottom. By sharing ideas, dreams and concerns the organization can set forth the goals, visions, and outcomes it desires. Developing the plan will have strong support and buy in from the organization to move in the right direction.

### **Health and Fitness**

Health and Fitness in the organization is your concern and legal responsibility. A great resource to get started is Everyone Goes Home. This is a huge topic within itself as health issues plague the fire service, but simply put, health = safety. No matter your staffing model, if you don't PPE, your health must be at the best level you can afford. Your citizens expect it. Get annual NFPA physicals. Encourage fitness in every way you can – and model it.

### **Discipline**

Firefighters are responsible adults and should be treated as such. Remember, discipline in private and reward in public. When an employee does something good for you, you should thank him/her. Get to be best friends with your HR department or get help in your volunteer system. Typically, you will find emergency scene management easier than the land mines you will face in personnel matters (volunteer or paid).

### **Accreditation**

Accreditation is a process of agency self-assessment. Self-assessment is an excellent way of coping with the rise of performance-based budgeting. This type of budgeting requires measuring, benchmarking, and analysis, all of which are in the CFAI model. Government accountability has also been an emerging trend for the last few decades. Self-assessment

provides a reliable response to increased oversight by managers and elected officials and potential criticism from the community.

Accreditation is also an international recognition of achievement. It shows to your community that your agency continually self-assesses, looks for opportunities for improvement beyond those your agency may have identified.

Agency accreditation is a voluntary process. Some agencies seek a dollar for dollar return on investment before pursuing accreditation, the true investment is agency staff time and learning what you do not know about your organization. Accreditation will benefit your agency internally by fostering pride amongst your members, community leaders, and citizens, and will also benefit you externally through the support of and networking with other accredited agencies.

Visit the Center for Public Safety Excellence [website](#) for more information on the accreditation process.

### **The Fair Labor Standards Act**

An entire book could be written about the intricacies and interwoven fire service component of the FLSA. Suffice it to say, out of 500 departments in SC, probably 300 distinct interpretations exist with each agency convinced of the validity of their methodology.

Fundamentally, the fire service was carved out of standard federal FLSA laws due to shift work administration. This carving out was done without great specificity and has required numerous legal and interpretive opportunities. The best a Chief can do is to:

1. stay in constant communications with the human resources department of your parent organization especially before making any changes to work hours and pay;
2. coordinate and communicate with other systems as to their application of the standard;
3. utilize documents such as the ones given below in applying best practices; and

4. realize that a give and take fundamentally exists that precludes exorbitant development of unique applications in a vacuum without legal assistance.

Definitions are important to the application of FLSA. To achieve that, we recommend several excellent resources.

- [Managing Volunteer Firefighters for FLSA Compliance by the IAFC](#)
- [US Department of Labor](#)
- [FLSA](#)
- [The University of Tennessee](#)



# *Chapter 7*

## **Ceremonies**

### **Author's Note**

This is one of the many individual items covered in this Handbook that, while there may be a department standard in place, it certainly should be a standard that is in line with accepted practices across the fire service. With that in mind please review the following pages and realize that while it may not be written word for word for your department, the goal here is to take this “accepted practice,” refine it for your needs and develop something that is workable for your department. Whatever the end product is, please keep it in line with these standards.

The following materials were secured from a variety of sources and reconstructed here to assist the members of the South Carolina Firefighters' Association with information, resources, and guidance. No part of these guidelines are presented as original work nor are they intended to confine, direct, or otherwise restrict a Fire Chief from directing and organizing their department's response to situations discussed. There is no intent or desire to affect the copyrighted works of published authors. To the contrary, we have cited at the end of this chapter several pieces of work that we highly recommend you get and read — our thanks to those conducting this ground laying work.

### **Uniforms**

- Class D, the daily work uniform for the company level generally consists of a t- shirt or collared shirt, duty pants, belt, and polished boots.
- Class C uniform should be short sleeved dress shirts with appropriate hardware and software with pressed, non-faded duty pants, belt, and polished boots.



- Class B uniform consist of long-sleeved dress shirt with appropriate hardware and software, tie, dress type slacks, belt, and shined oxford shoes.
- Class A or Full Dress is the same as Class B with the addition of a jacket with appropriate hardware and software, and a Dress Hat of the appropriate color and hardware for the rank of the wearer.

Hardware consists of badge, nameplates, collar insignias and department authorized pins.

Software consists of any patch or sewn emblem that is not removable but authorized by the department.

## **U.S. Flag Etiquette**

### **Standards of Respect**

The United States Flag Code, which formalizes and unifies the traditional ways in which we give respect to the flag, also contains specific instructions on how the flag is not to be used. They are:

- The flag should never be dipped to any person or thing. It is flown upside down only as a distress signal.
- The flag should not be used as a drapery, or for covering a speaker's desk, draping a platform, or for any decoration in general. Bunting of blue, white, and red stripes is available for these purposes. The blue stripe of the bunting should be on the top.
- The flag should never be used for any advertising purpose. It should not be embroidered, printed, or otherwise impressed on such articles as cushions, handkerchiefs, napkins, boxes, or anything intended to be discarded after temporary use. Advertising signs should not be attached to the staff or halyard.
- The flag should not be used as part of a costume or athletic uniform, except that a flag patch may be used on the uniform of military personnel, firemen, policemen, and members of patriotic organizations.

- The flag should never have placed on it, or attached to it, any mark, insignia, letter, word, number, figure, or drawing of any kind.
- The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying, or delivering anything.
- When the flag is lowered, no part of it should touch the ground or any other object; it should be received by waiting hands and arms.
- To store the flag, it should be folded neatly and ceremoniously.
- The flag should be cleaned and mended when necessary.
- When a flag is so worn that it is no longer fit to serve as a symbol of our country, it should be destroyed by burning in a dignified manner.

#### **NOTE**

Most American Legion Posts regularly conduct a dignified flag burning ceremony, often on Flag Day, June 14th. Many Cub Scout Packs, Boy Scout Troops, and Girl Scout Troops retire flags regularly as well. Contact your local American Legion Hall or Scout Troop to inquire about the availability of this service.

#### **Displaying the Flag Outdoors**

- When the flag is displayed from a staff projecting from a window, balcony, or a building, the union should be at the peak of the staff unless the flag is at half-staff.
- When it is displayed from the same flagpole with another flag - of a state, community, society, or Scout unit - the flag of the United States must always be at the top except that the church pennant may be flown above the flag during church services for Navy personnel when conducted by a Naval chaplain on a ship at sea.
- When the flag is displayed over a street, it should be hung vertically, with the union (stars) to the north or east. If the flag is suspended over a sidewalk, the flag's union should be farthest from the building.

- When flown with flags of states, communities, or societies on separate flag poles which are of the same height and in a straight line, the flag of the United States is always placed in the position of honor - to its own right.
- The other flags may be smaller, but none may be larger.
- No other flag ever should be placed above it.
- The flag of the United States is always the first flag raised and the last to be lowered.
- When flown with the national banner of other countries, each flag must be displayed from a separate pole of the same height. Each flag should be the same size. They should be raised and lowered simultaneously. The flag of one nation may not be displayed above that of another nation.

### **Raising and Lowering the Flag**

The flag should be raised briskly and lowered slowly and ceremoniously. Ordinarily, it should be displayed only between sunrise and sunset. It should be illuminated if displayed at night. The flag of the United States of America is saluted as it is hoisted and lowered. The salute is held until the flag is unsnapped from the halyard or through the last note of music, whichever is the longest.

### **Displaying the Flag Indoors**

- When on display, the flag is accorded the place of honor, always positioned to its own right. Place it to the right of the speaker or staging area or sanctuary. Other flags should be to the left.
- The flag of the United States of America should be at the center and at the highest point of the group when a number of flags of states, localities, or societies are grouped for display.
- When one flag is used with the flag of the United States of America and the staffs are crossed, the flag of the United States is placed on its own right with its staff in front of the other flag.

- When displaying the flag against a wall, vertically or horizontally, the flag's union should be at the top, to the flag's own right, and to the observer's left.

### **Parading and Saluting the Flag**

- When carried in a procession, the flag should be to the right of the marchers.
- When other flags are carried, the flag of the United States may be centered in front of the others or carried to their right.
- When the flag passes in a procession, or when it is hoisted or lowered, all should face the flag and salute.

### **The Salute**

To salute, all persons come to attention. Those in uniform give the appropriate formal salute. Citizens not in uniform salute by placing their right hand over the heart and men with head cover should remove it and hold it to the left shoulder, hand over the heart. Members of organizations in formation salute upon command of the person in charge. The hand salute dates back to medieval times when knights passed each other on horseback they would lift their visor on their helmet to show respect. Only uniformed personnel with Dress Hats render a hand salute, all others should place their right hand over their heart.

### **The Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem**

- The pledge of allegiance should be rendered by standing at attention, facing the flag, and saluting.
- When the national anthem is played or sung, citizens should stand at attention and salute at the first note and hold the salute through the last note.
- The salute is directed to the flag, if displayed, otherwise to the music.

### **The Flag in Mourning**

- To place the flag at half-staff, hoist it to the peak for an instant and lower it to a position halfway between the top and bottom of the staff.

- The flag is to be raised again to the peak for a moment before it is lowered. On Memorial Day the flag is displayed at half-staff until noon and at full staff from noon to sunset. The flag is to be flown at half-staff in mourning for designated, principal government leaders and upon presidential or gubernatorial order.
- When used to cover a casket, the flag should be placed with the union at the head and over the left shoulder. It should not be lowered into the grave.

## **Promotions**

Promotion should be the highlighted moments in a Firefighter's career, special moments that should be shared with family, coworkers, and friends. It is a good idea to hold a promotion ceremony at least once a year to maintain and foster esprit-de-corps, the sharing of a sense of pride, honor, and positive morale. This should be a formal ceremony that includes elected officials as guests and other members of the community. For truly memorable promotion ceremonies consider the following:

- PLAN AHEAD! Give everyone ample notice and opportunity to attend or to make arrangements to have out of town family to attend.
- Choose a venue that will accommodate everyone comfortably.
- Allow the members being promoted to have one or two persons they choose to do the pinning of the hardware. This could be family members, friends, or mentors.
- Adopt an "Oath of Office," this is also a great opportunity to "swear" in newly hired Firefighters, if you have not already done so and make that the last item of the ceremony. This is where you could ask the elected official to do the swearing in of the newly promoted.
- It would add a level of importance to the ceremony and could never hurt to improve relations between Government Leaders and the Fire Service.
- Have a reception immediately following with or without light refreshments.

## **Retirement**

Retirement ceremonies should signify the pinnacle of a firefighter's career. It is the time that most of us look forward to and it is an opportunity for everyone to recall the time that the member has put into the organization. Members of the department, rookies to seniors, can and should participate in this celebration.

All the pomp and circumstance available should be mustered for this joyous and at the same time a very sad and somber occasion. For it is a time when the department can truly materialize the fact that it is a living, breathing, and growing creature. We should relish the fact that the Department is actually in a natural life cycle and should embrace just that. It is also a time when there is great opportunity to have a profound effect on future generations of Firefighters.

There are a number of parts that can be customized into a retirement ceremony. Offered are a few of a list this is essentially endless:

- Allowing a retiring officer, a final inspection of the personnel under their command.
- Presenting the retiring member with the flag that flew over their station on their last day of duty.
- Assigning an escort detail to the family of the retiring member.
- On a pre-notification basis, allowing members of the department to share stories and have a chance to speak. If the number wishing to speak is excessive, institute a time limit if necessary.
- Present the retiring member with their helmet as a memory and keepsake.
- Present any additional awards.
- Give the retiring member the opportunity to say a few words.

## **Funerals**

These guidelines are presented for fire departments throughout South Carolina who may have to face the difficult task of being involved in an official funeral for one or more of its members. One of the most difficult questions facing a department will be what types of honor are appropriate for their situation.

Primary considerations when deciding are the feelings and desires of the family first, then department members. If a department provides the highest honors for an active Officer who died in a non-line-of-duty circumstance, then offering less than full honors for another active Firefighter who also died in a non-line-of-duty circumstance may result in long lasting resentment harbored by family and department members.

This guideline is intended to assist departments in providing consistency within the department, as well as the State of South Carolina, in paying final respects and honors to fallen Firefighters. Please refer to the Association's chapter of this handbook under Member Benefits in the South Carolina Firefighters Association.

This guideline will define different levels of honor and the options and variations that are available. It is recommended that departments and agencies adopt such a plan prior to the need in order to establish consistency for years to come. Before any plans can be made, the family must be consulted and agree on the participation of the agency. It is the surviving family's wishes that are paramount in funeral planning.

### **Definitions**

- Line-of-Duty Death (LODD). The death must be the result of a traumatic injury suffered in the line-of-duty.
- Job Related Traumatic Injury. A blow to the body by an outside force, i.e., crushing injuries suffered in a building collapse, apparatus accident or fall. Burns, smoke

inhalation and such climatic injuries as heat stroke or frostbite are considered traumatic injuries.

- Job Related Non-Traumatic Injuries. A non-traumatic injury that is strongly believed or has been proven to be attributable to the job. Examples: Stress, heart attack, cancer, stroke, disease, and mental illness (suicide).
- Non-Job-Related Death-Deaths. This category comprises the natural and traumatic deaths that are not Fire/EMS duty related causes of death for active or non-active and retired members.
- Active Member. A full-time member or volunteer member of Fire or EMS services in an active capacity.
- Inactive Member. A retired, former, or pensioned member of a Fire or EMS service.
- Affiliate Members. An individual that has served in some capacity with the department, such as a Commissioner, Trustee, Dispatcher etc.

### **Honors and Descriptions**

- American Flag. Any active or honorably discharged member of the United States Armed Forces should have the American Flag draped or displayed on the casket. At time of interment, the American Flag will be folded and presented to the surviving family "On Behalf of a grateful nation." Representatives from the Armed Forces, VFW, American Legion, etc., shall have first right of folding and presentation to the family. If unable to obtain members from these groups, the fire department should undertake this responsibility.
- Badge Shrouds. Black elastic or tape is used to cover a horizontal portion of the uniform badge as a reflection of "in mourning."
- Bagpipers. Used in traditional fire service ceremonies. "Pipers" accompany and play music during movement of the casket and, if desired, during the service.



- Bell Service. This bell service consists of a portable fire department bell that is traditionally tolled at the conclusion of the religious ceremony. One member reads a statement regarding the deceased's last alarm. A second member tolls the bell at the conclusion.
- Bugler. The final taps can be one or two personnel playing trumpets sounding the traditional military taps at the interment site.
- Chaplain. Clergy who are officially members of a department should officiate.
- Crossed Ladders. The use of two aerial trucks crossing extended ladders or booms (with the American Flag hanging from the apex) located at or en-route to the cemetery. When the flag is displayed over the middle of the street it should be suspended vertically with the union to the north on an east and west street or to the east on a north and south street.
- Eulogy. Fire service member(s) speaking in remembrance as part of the funeral service.
- Color Guards. A formally trained unit of members carrying the national and local flag in accordance with accepted standards. Color guards participate in all marching processions.
- Fire Engine Caisson. The use of a fire department pumper for carrying the casket.
- Fire Service Flag/American Flag. A flag that will be sent from the South Carolina Firefighter's Association to adorn the casket at the wake and funeral service.
- Flower Unit. The use of a fire department vehicle for the transportation of flowers during the procession.
- Funeral Director. The organization selected by the family to make the appropriate arrangements and who must be involved in all planning or providing funeral honors.
- Hearse. Vehicle provided by the funeral director for carrying a casket.
- Honor Guards. One or two uniformed members of the fire service standing guard at the casket during the wake.

- Honor Detail. Non-detailed uniformed department members and visiting department members present to pay tribute.
- Pallbearers.
  - Active: Uniformed members assigned to carry the casket.
  - Honorary: Uniformed members not assigned to carrying the casket; however, they are planned in an honorary position leading this casket.
- Station Bunting. Mourning drapes that are placed on the outside of public buildings and fire stations.
- Vehicle Bunting. Mourning drapes that are used to decorate fire vehicles participating in caisson or flower unit details.
- Walk Through. A predetermined time during the wake when uniformed members and dignitaries enter for a unified tribute.

### **Types of Services**

- Level One: Death as a result of line-of-duty or job related. This may include an inactive member whose death has stemmed from an injury sustained during active duty.
- Level Two: Death of an active member, non-job related.
- Level Three: Death of an inactive member, non-job related or the death of an affiliate member.

### **Suggested Options**

- Level One. American Flag / Badge Shrouds / Bagpipers / Bell Service / Bugler / Color Guards / Crossed Ladders / Eulogy / Fire Engine Caisson / Fire Service Flag / Flower Unit / Honor Guards / Honor Detail / Pallbearers / Station Bunting / Vehicle Bunting / Walk Through

- Level Two. American Flag / Badge Shrouds / Bell Service / Eulogy / Hearse / Fire Service Flag / Flower Unit / Honor Guards / Honor Detail / Pallbearers / Station Bunting / Vehicle Bunting / Walk through
- Level Three. American Flag / Badge Shrouds / Bell Service / Hearse / Fire Service Flag / Honor Guards / Pallbearers / Station Bunting / Walk Through

## References

- Chamber of Commerce flag etiquette
- Lasky, R. (2006) *Pride and Ownership: A Firefighter's Love of the Job*
- Ceremonies that stoke the flames of tradition 9 137-142
- Lewisville FD, SOP 1.31, Line of Duty Death



# *Chapter 8*

## **Insurance Services Office**

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) {Verisk} is an independent for-profit organization that primarily serves insurance companies, insurance regulators, and others by providing information about a fire department, water supply for firefighting, and the system for receiving and handling fire alarms. In order to do this, ISO collects and analyzes information on fire departments and assigns a Public Protection Classification. This is a number rating ranging from Class 1 to Class 10. Many U.S. property insurers use the ISO classification to some extent when determining insurance rates for a given property in a given area.

Your ISO rating for your department is important to the taxpayers that you serve. As you evaluate your department, you must consider the expense of the taxpayers to maintain or lower a classification against the savings that they would receive because of a lower classification. This section is in no way intended to fully explain the complex rating system utilized by ISO in determining a department's Public Protection Classification. In 2011, ISO adjusted their rating schedule and many departments have lowered their ratings because of this new schedule. As the chief of your department, you should know what is required by ISO, how points are awarded for each category, and the impact that it will have on the people that you serve. You can find the complete Fire Suppression Rating Schedule [online](#).

This summary is designed to provide a brief overview of the ISO program for fire departments. Before a department can go about planning for a specific ISO classification, they must understand that the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) utilized by ISO should not be used as the only planning tool for the department. The fire department must also consider its financial capabilities, protected risks within the response district, policies created by elected

bodies, etc. Although every fire department desires to obtain the best (lowest) rating, it is seldom practical. Because of this, departments must determine what level of service is best for their communities' current situations. ISO, and its Public Protection Classification, is only one tool to utilize when considering a department's service delivery plan. The Fire Chief has an important responsibility to accurately represent what ISO ratings mean to his / her immediate supervisor(s) and elected official.

The FSRS is the manual ISO uses in reviewing the fire suppression capabilities of a department. This manual primarily addresses three primary elements of the department. Those elements are:

1. Fire alarm and communications, including telephone systems, telephone lines, staffing, and dispatching systems.
2. Fire Department, including equipment, staffing, training, and geographic distribution of fire companies.
3. The water supply system, including condition and maintenance of hydrants and an evaluation of the available water when compared to needed fire flows for identified properties.

Each element has an assigned weight and grading criteria following the FSRS. Each category is briefly described here.

### **Fire Alarms**

Ten percent of the overall grading is based on how well the fire department receives fire alarms and dispatches its firefighting resources. The National Fire Protection Association Standard (NFPA) 1221: Installation, Maintenance and Use of Public Fire Service Communication Systems, is the reference for this category.

Telephone service is considered the primary means for the public to report fire incidents to the fire department.

ISO has determined the following schedule for the required number of phone lines based upon population:

Population Served	Emergency Lines	Non-Emergency Lines
Up to 40,000	1	1
40,001 to 125,000	2	2
125,001 to 300,000	3	3
Over 300,000	4	4

The number of telephone lines required is based upon the population served by the communications center and not the individual fire department. County-wide communications centers must meet the requirements based upon the county population in order for the fire department to receive full credit. In addition, when emergency calls for other than fire are received, it is necessary to double of needed reserve fire lines. ISO also requires the publishing of the fire department’s phone number(s) in the local telephone directory and “911” for emergency reporting. A recording device should also be provided to record all emergency and non-emergency calls received on the reserved lines as indicated above.

The ISO also examines the number of operators on duty to receive reports of fire incidents. This standard is taken directly from NFPA 1221. The number of operators is based upon the number of alarms received annually by the department. The department should review NFPA 1221 to determine the appropriate number of operators.

NFPA 1221 and ISO require a specific number of “dispatch circuits,” also based upon the number of alarms received annually. A dispatch circuit is the method utilized to alert fire companies and to dispatch emergency responders to the location of the emergency.

Two separate dispatch circuits are required for all departments receiving more than 600 alarms per year. There are a multitude of methods that may be utilized to meet this requirement and departments should consult NFPA 1221 to determine the best method for their individual department.

### **Fire Department**

Fifty percent of the overall grading is based on the number of engine companies a community needs to fight a fire. ISO reviews the fire company distribution throughout the area and reviews that the fire department tests its pumps and ladders regularly and inventories each engine company's nozzles, hoses, breathing apparatus and other equipment. ISO also reviews records to determine the type and extent of training provided, the number of firefighters participating in the training, and the number of firefighters responding to emergencies. Minimum fire department requirements are identified in Harry Hickey's Fire Suppression Rating Schedule Handbook and is recommended for reading and preparation.

### **Fire Department Organization**

A fire department must be organized on a permanent basis under applicable state or local ordinances. A fire department shall document that a single individual is responsible for the overall operation of the fire department. The fire department must serve an area within a defined set of boundaries. ISO will exam and grade a map depicting the fire alarm response area for the department being evaluated. If more than one fire station serves the department's boundaries, each station shall be identified.

### **Fire Department Membership**

A fire suppression operation depends on firefighters to effectively control and extinguish a fire. The fire department being graded must have sufficient membership to ensure the response of a minimum of four members to a structure fire. The FSRS evaluates the number of firefighters available at all times to respond on alarms to building fires.

For career departments, this is identified as the average number of firefighters available on duty. For volunteer and combination departments this means the average number of firefighters responding to building fires. Personnel is the most important item in the Fire Department section as it relates to obtaining ISO points.

### **Fire Suppression Training**

Fire Department training accounts for 9% of the total grading by ISO. Training is primarily divided into three sections. These sections include training facilities and their use, training programs and pre-fire planning. For the breakdown of required training by ISO, please see the training section of this handbook.

### **Pre-Fire Planning**

ISO also examines pre-fire planning within the training category. It is important for fire personnel to conduct and review pre-fire inspections to identify hazards and to establish tactical plans for each commercial, industrial, and institutional risk within the department's jurisdiction. ISO requires that pre-fire inspections be conducted twice a year to earn full credit.

### **Fire Apparatus**

For any fire department, there should be at least one piece of fire apparatus that meets the general criteria as identified in NFPA 1901. The total number of engine companies required for a given department is primarily based upon the basic required fire flow, first-due response distance, companies needed for distribution throughout the district and number of companies responding on the first alarm. Utilizing specific hazards in a fire department's jurisdiction, ISO determines that department's basic fire flow. The maximum basic fire flow for a department is 3,500 gpm. Based on fire flow needs, the number of engine companies is identified as:



Basic Fire Flow (GPM)	Number of Engines Required
500-1000	1
1250-2500	2
3000-3500	3

When examining distance, each built-upon area of the community should have a first due Engine Company within 1.5 road-miles. Distance is measured based upon the route of travel that would be taken from the fire station to the identified area. The pump capacity of the required engine companies must equal the needed fire flow determined for buildings within the department's jurisdiction.

Aerial ladders are necessary to access upper floors and/or roofs for fire suppression and salvage work, as well as delivering water from elevated stream devices. ISO considers the need for ladder companies based upon building heights and any building with a needed fire flow greater than 3,500 GPM. The specific criteria for evaluating needed ladder company response are:

- Response areas with five buildings that are three stories or 35 feet or more in height.
- Response areas with five buildings that have a needed fire flow greater than 3,500 GPM.
- Any combination of five buildings that meet the height and fire flow requirements as listed above.

When any of the above are met, a minimum of one ladder company is required. In addition to identifying the number of fire apparatus required for a given department, ISO also examines the equipment carried on each piece of apparatus.

Specific required inventory lists have been developed for engine and ladder/service companies. These inventory lists can be obtained from ISO and should be utilized to ensure the department obtains maximum points in this specific area. The equipment lists are relatively basic and meet the minimum needs of the apparatus. Finally, ISO requires that all fire apparatus be housed to provide protection from weather. It is recommended that the minimum temperature in the enclosure be 420F.

### **Water Supply**

Forty percent of the grading is based on the community's water supply. This part of the evaluation considers whether the community has sufficient water supply for fire suppression outside of that which is required for daily use within the community. ISO considers three primary elements when evaluating a community's water supply.

1. The capacity of the supply is considered. Primarily examination is conducted to determine if the water system is capable of supplying the needed fire flow for each selected site within the community. Basically, ISO is determining if the required amount of water can be produced and utilized by the fire department being graded while still maintaining sufficient supply for community consumption. This not only includes providing the needed fire flow but providing the fire flow for a period of time up to 4 hours for sufficient firefighting operations.
2. ISO examines the water main capacity within the community. Here the water supply system is being evaluated to ensure that the amount of water required and being produced can be delivered to the area where it is needed for firefighting operations. Water mains are evaluated to ensure they are properly sized and sufficient enough to provide firefighting water.
3. ISO evaluates fire hydrant distribution and maintenance. Fire hydrants must be distributed to allow fire departments to utilize the water being produced and

delivered within the community. Additionally, these hydrants must be maintained in working condition. ISO requires departments to ensure hydrants are tested twice a year.

### **Final Grade and Rating**

Once ISO has completed its evaluation of a department a final grade between 0-100 is received by the department. This grade is correlated to a PPC classification for that department. The correlation is as follows:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	90.00 or more
2	80.00 to 89.99
3	70.00 to 79.99
4	60.00 to 69.99
5	50.00 to 59.99
6	40.00 to 49.99
7	30.00 to 39.99
8	20.00 to 29.99
9	10.00 to 19.99
10	0 to 9.99

It should be noted that the ISO grading scale and process is complex and cannot be fully explained in this short overview. For additional information, departments are urged to contact their local ISO representative for assistance and direction.

# *Chapter 9*

## **Line of Duty Death Plan**

### **LODD Processes**

Very little can prepare the Chief, or department, for the aftermath and events surrounding a LODD. Immediately reach out, get help. The Association staff is trained and available to activate resources to get you started. But from whomever, get assistance; you will need it. It is noble to say, “We will take care of our own” but you can’t and will soon realize it is beyond your scope of normal operations. Staffing, trauma care of both physical and mental natures, decision making, liaison responsibilities — will quickly outweigh your capabilities. Get incident support started early. It is not a sign of weakness that you weren’t prepared — but to the contrary that you did have a plan and knew to get help. Your staff will appreciate it and suffer less due to that initial call. Institute this call/move into your department plan/SOP’s pre-incident.

### **Terminology**

To ensure that common definition is given to events and occurrences, we provide the following terminology.

- **Line-of-Duty Death (LODD)**—The death must be the result of a traumatic injury suffered in the line-of-duty.
- **Job Related Traumatic Injury**—A blow to the body by an outside force, i. e., crushing injuries suffered in a building collapse, apparatus accident or fall. Burns, smoke inhalation and such climactic injuries as heatstroke or frostbite are considered traumatic injuries.
- **Job Related Non-Traumatic Injuries**—A non-traumatic injury that is strongly believed or has been proven to be attributable to the job. Examples: Stress, heart attack, cancer, stroke, disease, and mental illness (suicide).

- Non-Job-Related Death-Deaths—This category comprises the natural and traumatic that are not Fire/EMS duty related causes of death for active or non-active and retired members.
- Active Member—A full-time member or volunteer member of Fire or EMS services in an active capacity.
- Inactive Member—A retired, former, or pensioned member of a Fire or EMS service.
- Affiliate Members—An individual that has served in some capacity with the department, such as a Commissioner, Trustee, Dispatcher etc.

### **State Benefits**

In May 2023, The State of South Carolina General Assembly passed bill number S 108, which posted dated a death benefit program until May 11, 2023. As the bill altered many references in state statute, the below content is offered in full for future reference.

Fundamentally, the state now offers a \$75,000 line of duty death, doubled to \$150,000 if the death is deemed an accident (and other).

#### **Preretirement death benefits under the South Carolina Retirement System**

**SECTION 1. Section 9-1-1770(D) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:**

***(D)(1) For the purposes of this subsection, a first responder is defined by Section 42-7-90(3)(a) who is an active member of the retirement system. Nothing in this subsection may be construed to expand the eligibility requirements for membership in the system.***

***(2) Upon receipt by the system of the satisfactory proof of death of a member of the system whose employer participates in the Preretirement Death Benefit Program and whose death was a natural and proximate result of an injury by external accident or violence incurred while undergoing a hazard peculiar to the member's employment as a first responder while in the actual performance of his duty, provided that his death is not the result of the member's willful negligence, suicide, or intentionally self-inflicted bodily injury, there must be paid to the member's designated beneficiary a one-time, lump sum benefit payment of seventy-five thousand dollars.***

**(3) The amount of the benefit provided for in item (2) is increased to a total of one hundred fifty thousand dollars if the member is killed in the line of duty as defined above and the member's death is either:**

**(a) the result of an unlawful and intentional act of another person; or**

**(b) the result of an accident that occurs:**

**(i) as a result of the member's response to fresh pursuit, defined as the pursuit of a person who has committed or is reasonably suspected of having committed a felony, misdemeanor, traffic infraction, or violation of a county or municipal ordinance;**

**(ii) as a result of the member's response to what is reasonably believed to be an emergency;**

**(iii) at the scene of a traffic accident to which the member has responded; or**

**(iv) while the member is enforcing what is reasonably believed to be a traffic law or ordinance.**

**(4) Payments made pursuant to this subsection must be paid to the beneficiary designated for this benefit by the member in writing and filed with the system during the member's lifetime. If no designation is made, then the payment must be paid to the member's surviving spouse. If there is no surviving spouse, the payment must be paid to the member's surviving children in equal portions. If there is no surviving spouse or child, the benefit is payable to the member's surviving parents in equal portions. If a beneficiary is not designated and there is no surviving child, spouse, or parent, then the sum must be paid to the member's estate. The payments required by this subsection are in addition to any other benefit set forth in this chapter or otherwise in law, including worker's compensation, and are exempt from the claims and demands of creditors of the member.**

**(5) Payments made pursuant to this subsection must be paid from the contributions made by participating employers to the Preretirement Death Benefit Program. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the board may adjust the required contributions to the Preretirement Death Benefit Program as necessary to fund these benefits on the basis of the program's actual experience and the recommendation of the system's actuary.**

**(6) Any benefits paid pursuant to this subsection are not subject to subrogation, assignment, set-off, or lien claimed pursuant to Section 42-1-560.**

**Preretirement death benefits under the Police Officers Retirement System**

**SECTION 2. Section 9-11-120(E) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:**

**(E)(1) For the purposes of this subsection, a first responder is defined by Section 42-7-90(3)(a) who is an active member of the retirement system. Nothing in this subsection may be construed to expand the eligibility requirements for membership in the system.**

**(2) Upon receipt by the system of the satisfactory proof of death of a member of the system whose employer participates in the Preretirement Death Benefit Program and whose death was a natural and proximate result of an injury by external accident or violence incurred while undergoing a hazard peculiar to the member's employment as a first responder while in the actual performance of his duty, provided that his death is not the result of the member's willful negligence, suicide, or intentionally self-inflicted bodily injury, there must be paid to the member's designated beneficiary a one-time, lump sum benefit payment of seventy-five thousand dollars.**

**(3) The amount of the benefit provided for in item (2) is increased to a total of one hundred fifty thousand dollars if the member is killed in the line of duty as defined above and the member's death is either:**

**(a) the result of an unlawful and intentional act of another person; or**

**(b) the result of an accident that occurs:**

**(i) as a result of the member's response to fresh pursuit, defined as the pursuit of a person who has committed or is reasonably suspected of having committed a felony, misdemeanor, traffic infraction, or violation of a county or municipal ordinance;**

**(ii) as a result of the member's response to what is reasonably believed to be an emergency;**

**(iii) at the scene of a traffic accident to which the member has responded; or**

**(iv) while the member is enforcing what is reasonably believed to be a traffic law or ordinance.**

**(4) Payments made pursuant to this subsection must be paid to the beneficiary designated for this benefit by the member in writing and filed with the system during the member's lifetime. If no designation is made, then the payment must be paid to the member's surviving spouse. If there is no surviving spouse, the payment must be paid to the member's surviving children in equal portions. If there is no surviving spouse or child, the benefit is payable to the member's surviving parents in**

**equal portions. If a beneficiary is not designated and there is no surviving child, spouse, or parent, then the sum must be paid to the member's estate. The payments required by this subsection are in addition to any other benefit set forth in this chapter or otherwise in law, including worker's compensation, and are exempt from the claims and demands of creditors of the member.**

**(5) Payments made pursuant to this subsection must be paid from the contributions made by participating employers to the Preretirement Death Benefit Program. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the board may adjust the required contributions to the Preretirement Death Benefit Program as necessary to fund these benefits on the basis of the program's actual experience and the recommendation of the system's actuary.**

**(6) Any benefits paid pursuant to this subsection are not subject to subrogation, assignment, set-off, or lien claimed pursuant to Section 42-1-560.**

**First responder line of duty death benefits**

**SECTION 3. Section 42-7-90 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:**

**(3) first responder line of duty death benefit.**

**(a) For the purposes of this item, the term "first responder" means:**

**(i) an emergency medical technician as defined in Section 44-61-20(12);**

**(ii) a law enforcement officer as defined in Section 23-23-10(E)(1);**

**(iii) a corrections officer as described in Section 23-1-145 or Section 24-1-280;**

**(iv) reserves as defined in Section 23-28-10(A);**

**(v) constables appointed pursuant to Section 23-1-60;**

**(vi) a fire department worker who serves on a paid or voluntary basis for a firefighting agency, fire department, or a volunteer fire department and who performs duties related to rescue, fire suppression, and public safety; or**

**(vii) a coroner as defined in Section 17-5-5(3) or a deputy coroner as defined in Section 17-5-5(5) who directly engages in examining, treating, or directing persons during an emergency.**

**(b) Upon receipt by the State Accident Fund of the satisfactory proof of death of a first responder as defined in subitem (a) whose death was a natural and proximate result of an injury by external accident or violence incurred while undergoing a hazard peculiar to the first responder's**



**employment as a first responder while in the actual performance of his duty, provided that his death is not the result of the first responder's willful negligence, suicide, or intentionally self-inflicted bodily injury, there must be paid from the State Accident Fund to the designated beneficiary a one-time, lump sum benefit payment of seventy-five thousand dollars.**

**(c) The amount of the benefit provided for in subitem (b) is increased to a total of one hundred fifty thousand dollars if the first responder is killed in the line of duty as defined above and the first responder's death is either:**

**(i) the result of an unlawful and intentional act of another person; or**

**(ii) the result of an accident that occurs:**

**(A) as a result of the first responder's response to fresh pursuit, defined as the pursuit of a person who has committed or is reasonably suspected of having committed a felony, misdemeanor, traffic infraction, or violation of a county or municipal ordinance;**

**(B) as a result of the first responder's response to what is reasonably believed to be an emergency;**

**(C) at the scene of a traffic accident to which the first responder has responded; or**

**(D) while the first responder is enforcing what is reasonably believed to be a traffic law or ordinance.**

**(d) Payments made pursuant to this item must be paid to the beneficiary designated for this benefit by the first responder in writing and filed with the State Accident Fund in a manner prescribed by the agency during the first responder's lifetime. If no designation is made, then the payment must be paid to the first responder's surviving spouse. If there is no surviving spouse, the payment must be paid to the first responder's surviving children in equal portions. If there is no surviving spouse or child, the benefit is payable to the first responder's surviving parents in equal portions. If a beneficiary is not designated and there is no surviving child, spouse, or parent, then the sum must be paid to the first responder's estate. The payments required by this subsection are in addition to any other benefit set forth in this chapter or otherwise in law, including worker's compensation, but excluding first responder death benefit payments made to a member of a retirement system, and are exempt from the claims and demands of creditors of the first responder.**

**(e) Any benefits paid pursuant to this item are not subject to subrogation, assignment, set-off, or lien claimed pursuant to Section 42-1-560.**

*(f) Within thirty days after a written determination of the State Accident Fund regarding payment, a person or representative of the estate, as set out in subitem (d), may seek relief by requesting a contested case hearing before the Administrative Law Court in accordance with its rules. A hearing may be requested to contest any part of the decision made pursuant to this section.*

**South Carolina First Responder Line of Duty Death Benefit Fund**

**SECTION 4. Article 1, Chapter 7, Title 42 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:**

**Section 42-7-220. There is established, within the office of the State Accident Fund, the South Carolina First Responder Line of Duty Death Benefit Fund. This fund is separate and distinct from the general fund of the State and all other funds. Earnings and interest on this fund must be credited to it and any balance in this fund at the end of the fiscal year carries forward in the fund in the succeeding fiscal year. This fund is created to ensure payment of line of duty death benefits to first responders as defined in Section 42-7-90 and only may be used for that purpose. The fund must be administered by the Director of the State Accident Fund who shall establish procedures to implement this section. Upon request from the Director of the State Accident Fund, the State Treasurer shall transfer from general funds of the State into the separate fund such sufficient amounts to pay claims that are owing and due pursuant to this section. The State Accident Fund, in coordination with the Office of State Treasurer, shall provide a report on an annual basis on the claims from the fund to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee.**

**Time effective**

**SECTION 5. This act takes effect on May 11, 2023.**

**Immediately At the Scene**

1. Immediately set up a unified command structure to involve all necessary agencies. This is beyond a simple single command, single operational period event. The scene of an emergency, where a LODD death has occurred, has to be thoroughly investigated. Not only does the cause of the fire need to be determined, but also what caused the mechanism of death. This is extremely vital to ensure that all benefits for a LODD won't be challenged. Also, any future civil lawsuits will hinge on the evidence and investigation

investigation of the scene. The NIOSH Investigation Team will also study the initial investigation and evidence for their final report. There also may be the possibility that this will be a criminal case.

2. Whether or not your department has an investigation team should have no bearing at the scene. When a death has occurred, it needs to be investigated by an outside agency. The local police department will be responsible for scene security and evidence preservation. The South Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal must be notified as soon as possible but not more than 8 hours from the time of the occurrence. Additionally, the South Carolina Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the South Carolina State Firefighters' Association must be notified within 8 hours from the time of occurrence by contacting the following numbers:

- South Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal
  - State Warning Point (803) 737-8500
  - CLEAR Team: 24 Hour Incident Response (803) 896-4911
- South Carolina State Firefighters' Association (900-277-2732)
  - Zorrina Harmon (803) 807-1099
  - Ashley Boltin (803) 960-7935
- South Carolina Occupational Safety and Health Administration
  - 24 Hour Reporting (803) 896-7672

3. The Local Codes Enforcement Authority and the S.C. Fire Marshal's Office CLEAR team will be responsible for each LODD report interviews, building construction, fire alarm/sprinkler activation status and other significant physical issues. The South Carolina OSHA and South Carolina State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) will investigate the incident with assistance of Local Law Enforcement. The South Carolina State Firefighters' Association will assist in members benefit package submittal and

arrangements for services. It is suggested that either the State Fire IST team or Mobilization be contacted and involved for overall operations during the period from the incident to a time appropriate after the funeral services.

4. Immediately deploy local law enforcement to secure the area. Obviously, this should occur as soon as the fire is extinguished. Overhaul should be limited to only extinguish any pockets of fire. Do not move evidence, apparatus, or equipment until the Investigation Team has recorded its position. To the contrary, secure all PPE used by those immediately involved in the scene's operation. If it must be moved prior to a Team's arrival, then accurate recordings and/or chain of custody must take place - such as photography and written notes as to who did what and what was done.
5. Document and secure the physical evidence. Certain pieces of evidence must be preserved and tested for compliance with appropriate standards. Turnout gear and SCBA should be retrieved and locked as evidence either by the Investigation Team or the police. No one else should have access to or take control of the gear, this includes the Chief. All evidence should be impounded and protected by the SLED team or local police (the police may later release it to the SLED Investigating team). Ensure the chain of custody.
6. All Firefighters at the scene must individually document every activity that was conducted at the location from arrival at the scene until returning to quarters. This needs to be done immediately upon the return to the Station. Even though this will be a trying time and emotions may be high, they must understand the importance of immediate documentation for the investigation.
7. There are certain items at the incident scene that should always be documented. Firefighters should be made aware of the specifics that are needed within their Individual report:

- Location and position of dead and/or injured persons
- Position of hose lines
- Location and position of apparatus
- Location of the Incident Command Post
- Location of tools and equipment
- Location of windows, doors, and ventilation openings (open/closed)
- Areas and type of debris (any roof or floor collapse)
- Incident Command structure
- Adverse environmental conditions
- Protective clothing and safety equipment
- Major features of rooms, including location of furniture
- Scratches, gouges, dents, or breakage related to Firefighter activity
- Any other pertinent information
- Accountability system

8. It is important to understand that what is not found at the scene is just as important.

Document if parts of tools are missing, if pieces of protective equipment or clothing are missing, SCBA use, etc.

9. Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) inspection forms are located in Section 3 and should be utilized by the Investigation Team as the forms are very thorough.

10. The importance of a thorough investigation cannot be stressed enough. Many benefits will give substantial weight to the evidence and findings of fact presented by State and/or local administrative and investigative agencies.

11. As stated earlier, a thorough investigation ensures that the incident and all related

events are fully documented, and evidence is preserved to provide for additional investigation or legal actions at a later date.

### **After the Emergency has Been Mitigated**

1. This Section briefly covers what should be done immediately after the time of a LODD. For a comprehensive understanding of an investigation, please refer to the "Firefighter Line-of-Duty Death and Injury Investigation" manual. This manual is available via the IAFF [website](#).
2. It should be given to Investigators to assist and guide them during their investigation when available.

### **NOTE**

For fire scene investigation, you must contact your County Sheriff's Department to contact South Carolina State Law Enforcement Division (SLED).

3. A complete autopsy is recommended for every LODD. This is especially true in cases where a person collapsed, had a myocardial infarction, or died as a result of a non-traumatic mechanism. Autopsies determine the cause of death and are also needed to determine eligibility for death benefits, particularly the Public Safety Officer's Benefit (PSOB).
4. However, the determination of the need to perform an autopsy is a discretionary responsibility of the coroner or medical examiner. They may determine that no autopsy is required in a situation where there is sufficient other evidence to make conclusive determinations on the cause and manner of death.
5. The autopsy results may be essential to determine why or how a Firefighter was incapacitated; how the activity related to the cause of death, and whether protective equipment and SCBA performed properly. Blood gasses will determine what was inhaled prior to death.

6. The United States Fire Administration Autopsy Protocol should be given to the local coroner or medical examiner for their files. If and when an autopsy takes place, the department should ask the coroner if he/she does indeed have the protocol. If not, a copy should be given to the coroner immediately, prior to their performing the autopsy. This can be found [online](#).
7. The South Carolina Firefighter's Association notifies the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) located in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The National Fire Academy maintains the National Firefighters Memorial. Upon notification, the NFFF will post the Firefighter's name at the Memorial site and lower flags to half-staff in honor of that Firefighter per their policy.

In 1992, the United States Congress established the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation to honor and remember those Firefighters who gave their lives in the line-of-duty. The major national fire service organizations endorsed the initiative included as part of the Fire Administration Authorization Act of 1992. The mission statement of the NFFF reflects its Congressional mandate: to honor and remember America's fallen firefighters and to provide necessary resources to assist survivors in rebuilding their lives. The following are NFFF programs:

- National Fallen Firefighter's Memorial
  - The Memorial lists the names of the Firefighters who gave their life and died in the line-of-duty. The memorial park honors the courage, commitment, and sacrifices these Firefighters made. Line-Of-Duty Deaths (LODD) are defined as:
    - Deaths meeting the PSOB program guidelines
    - Deaths from injuries, heart attacks, or illnesses directly attributable to a specific emergency incident or training activity

- Some cases will be excluded from consideration, such as deaths attributable to alcohol, or substance abuse; and other gross abuses.
- Annual National Memorial Weekend
  - Every May, the Foundation sponsors the official national tribute to all Firefighters who died in the line-of-duty during the previous year. The weekend activities are held in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The foundation provides lodging and meals for the immediate surviving family and assists with travel expenses when needed. Other family members may attend but must pay their own way. The Memorial weekend is an opportunity for survivors to be around and to share their thoughts and feelings with other survivors. Family members participate in seminars conducted by trained grief counselors. There are programs for children and teenagers. There is a picnic and gathering for the families. There is a family-only chapel service prior to the National Memorial Service. The weekend is to show the survivors that they have the support and resources to help them deal with their grief. It is also a chance for them to see how much the fire community honors its fallen firefighters and their families.
- Survivor Support Network
  - Under a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, the Foundation has established a Survivor Support Network. The network is a group of "experienced" survivors who can lend emotional support to fire service survivors in the difficult months after a death. Network participants are matched with survivors of similar experiences and circumstances. This type of support is important, as only a survivor can fully understand another survivor's experiences. The department should urge the survivor to utilize this service.



- Remembrance Program
  - The anniversary date of the death of a loved one is often difficult for the family. Survivors receive a remembrance card during the month of their Firefighter's death. The card, written by another Firefighter survivor, reminds the family that others remember and care.
- Chief-To-Chief Network
  - The Chief of the department may have a difficult time immediately following a Firefighter's death. The Foundation arranges for Chief-To-Chief contacts with Chiefs who have experienced a Firefighter's death.

## **NOTE**

For more information, or for utilization of the services:

- National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF)

P.O. Drawer 498

Emmitsburg, Maryland 21727

301-447-1365

[www.firehero.org](http://www.firehero.org)

- U.S. Fire Administration (USFA)

16825 South Seton Ave.

Emmitsburg, Maryland 21727

301- 447-1350 & 301-447-1000

[www.usfa.dhs.gov](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov)

## **NIOSH and the Firefighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program**

1. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) conducts Firefighter fatality and extremely serious injury investigations. In 1998, Congress

recognized the need for further efforts to address the continually national problem of occupational Firefighter fatalities, and funded NIOSH to undertake this effort.

2. The NIOSH program is to prevent Firefighter line-of-duty fatalities. The overall goal of this program is to better define the magnitude and characteristics of work-related deaths and severe injuries, to develop recommendations for the prevention of these deaths and injuries, and to implement and disseminate prevention efforts.

3. There are two types of fatality investigations; injury fatality and cardiovascular.

- Injury Fatality Investigations

- Upon notification from the South Carolina Occupational Safety and Health Administration and/or USFA (United States Fire Administration) of a line-of-duty traumatic death, NIOSH, as soon as practical, will dispatch a team of investigators to the scene/department. The team will conduct fatality assessment and control evaluation investigations to gather information on factors that may have contributed to the traumatic death. It will identify causal factors.

- Sources of information include the fire department individual Firefighters, witnesses, the scene, equipment, maintenance records, etc. The Division of Respiratory Disease Studies of NIOSH will evaluate the performance of SCBA, if necessary.

- Cardiovascular (CV) Disease Fatality Investigation

- NIOSH is informed of on-duty CV Firefighter fatalities by the IAFF and/or USFA. NIOSH accepts the definition of “on-duty” used by the USFA, that is, collapsing or having symptoms consistent with a heart attack while on-duty. NIOSH will immediately notify the South Carolina State Fire Marshal, the fire department and local representative. Approximately 4 weeks after the event,

a site visit is scheduled. NIOSH investigators will collect three types of information:

- General information about the member's fire department,
- Circumstances of the incident, and the victim's activities prior to the event, and
- Information about the victim's medical history.
- Sources for this information include the fire department, individual Firefighters, the victim's family, the victim's personal physician, the responding EMS personnel, and (if available) the autopsy report.

4. After the investigation, draft copies are generated to the fire department and the family.

Final reports (revised as appropriate) are available to the general public and disseminated to the fire service a month later. The report lists recommendations to prevent further similar fatalities in the affected and all other fire departments. Final reports may take two to three weeks for a CV investigation, or months for a traumatic injury investigation.

- All information gathered will be used as part of a database to study the causal factors common to Firefighter fatalities and to provide recommendations for prevention of similar incidents.

## **NOTE**

Be advised that NIOSH can enter the workplace in South Carolina for an investigation of a Firefighter fatality. The fire department does not have the right to refuse. If it does refuse, NIOSH has the federal legal authority to obtain a search warrant through federal courts.

Neither labor nor management can ask that an investigation not be conducted; NIOSH will investigate all Firefighter fatalities. Find more information on the NIOSH investigation and prevention program or contact NIOSH.

## **Preparing for the Autopsy**

You may be contacted and ask to provide preliminary data to the medical examiner. The below represents questions you may be asked and is provided to stimulate pre-incident planning and record keeping. An autopsy is not required but encouraged.

### 1. Circumstances of Death

#### a. Line-of-Duty

- i. Fire suppression activity
- ii. Other official activity
- iii. Possible unrelated activity
- iv. Former Previous Department/Firefighter activity

### 2. Medical Records Review

- a. Fire department injury/exposure records
- b. Current medical conditions/medications as known by an employer
  - i. aPrescribed
  - ii. Over the counter
  - iii. Administered by Paramedics/On Scene Responders

### 3. Complete Work History

- a. Length of fire combat duty
- b. Other jobs held during fire service
- c. Jobs held after fire service

### 4. Scene Investigation from the Unified Command

### 5. Scene Photography if relevant and needed

## **Why An Autopsy**

Firefighters are subject to many uncommon occupational hazards, including toxic and

superheated atmospheres, explosions, falls, crushing/penetrating forces, contact with fire, electricity, or hazardous materials, and extremely strenuous and stressful physical activities.

The autopsy results may be essential to determine why or how a Firefighter was incapacitated, how the activity related to the cause of death, and whether protective equipment performed properly. Having a clear picture of the nature of firefighting operations that were taking place (and to which the deceased was assigned) will assist in identifying possible mechanisms of injury. If the Firefighter was reported missing, try to determine the time of last contact or the length of time between the initial report and the finding of the body.

The fire department should have an Officer or internal LODD Investigation Team assigned to assist or act as liaison in the conduct of a death investigation. Other Investigators/ Lead Investigative Agencies may include the local law enforcement authority, the State Fire Marshal, South Carolina SLED (or other state officials), and/or federal/state agencies responsible for occupational safety and health.

In conducting the medical records review, obtain all documents which pertain to the incident. Document the occupational history of the deceased, including the number of years assigned as a "combat" Firefighter, any history of unusual exposures (or changes in frequency of exposure) to hazardous substances, and any relevant occupational medical history. Finally, all recent medical history should be reviewed, including documentation of any attempts at on-scene resuscitation.

### **PPE Documentation**

The department can aid in this process by knowledge of, and assistance in, collection, of the following information on a routine basis and having it available to investigators.

#### Condition of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

1. PPE description should include:

a. Turnout coat

- b. Turnout pants
  - c. Helmet
  - d. Gloves
  - e. Boots
  - f. Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus
  - g. Personal Alert Safety System (PASS)
  - h. Protective hood
  - i. Clothing worn under turnouts
2. The use of photographs to enhance documentation is suggested.

### **Maintenance of Chain of Custody of Equipment**

Exercise caution when handling contaminated personal protective equipment (PPE), especially from hazardous materials incidents, as residue may be harmful to those involved in the autopsy.

PPE should be sealed in a metal can/drum if fire accelerants or other volatile/toxic chemicals are found to be present; otherwise, PPE should be air-dried and preserved for examination, preservation of the original state of PPE, including clothing, is essential. PPE should be considered as evidence and handled accordingly.

### **The Need for Toxicological Examination**

The toxicological analysis performed for Firefighters should be of a higher order than that performed for civilian fire casualties. In addition to ascertaining blood levels of various toxic products that are commonly found in a fire environment, it is beneficial to know about the presence of any judgment impairing substances. This may be important in the determination of eligibility for death benefits as well as for determining causality. Determination of specific levels of metals, organic compounds, and gross particulate matter should be conducted

because Firefighter exposure to these substances is believed to be greater than that for civilians. Additionally, this information may yield important clues about the cause, manner, and mechanism of Firefighter death.

### **Firefighter Emergency Contact Form**

One of the greatest pre-incident actions the department can take is to regularly complete a form similar in nature to the below provided. These questions are seemingly insignificant but at the time of a LODD hugely important. Remember, this information may not be superseding to any other legal document of record.

FORMS

LODD CHECKLIST



# *Chapter 10*

## **The South Carolina State Firefighters Association**

The South Carolina State Firefighters' Association was founded in 1905 by a group of determined fire service leaders to work to promote education, training, benefits provision, and legislative representation. Today our mission stands: to serve the membership as the leader in fire service advocacy, benefits, education, and safety, while acting as the steward of the Firemen's Insurance and Inspection Fund. The Association expresses a reiteration of the values expressed in the Maltese cross points — representative of the profession which we serve — that are: sympathy, gallantry, perseverance, loyalty, dexterity, explicitness, observation, and tact. The Association feels that sharing of the qualities of our members greater enhances our collaboration and cooperation and best describes how we will conduct ourselves, our business, and our representation for our members.

The Association is about helping you and your members. Every fire service person in the state is a member — paid and volunteer; officers and line personnel. We are not a labor union. We are a service organization for our members and the leadership team will try and live up to that every day.

Our website has over 1100 pages of content as to what we do for you. Below are a few key areas.

### **Firemen's Insurance and Inspection Fund (1%)**

You may have known a little about 1%, and with this document, we will try and point you in the direction for more detailed information. The Association teaches classes on this topic and has a 1% manual for your use.

Basically, the state collects a tax of 1% of premium on insurance companies that comes



directly back to you, through our Association. The state is providing you with state tax dollars each year. We are the fiduciary; your members get to decide how to spend it (within parameters). We approve the expenses and audit your books.

As of 2023, around \$23 million is returned to the fire service through this process from the state. The amount you receive is based on the amount of assessed property in your primary coverage area. Your County Treasurer and Auditor handle this portion for you. The areas which you may spend the money in are: Retirement and Insurance, Training and Education, and Recruitment and Retention. The caveat: you cannot spend the funds on anything which the local governing body should be / is responsible for (suppression and basic training for instance).

As Chief, your responsibility is to ensure that members have equal access and benefit from the funds and that the process is adhered to. You get one vote as a member on those expenses. You are asked to sign off on most of the forms and processes and, fundamental to all this—you are responsible for keeping your roster of members up to date.

Dive into 1% details [here](#) or [here](#).

## **Membership Roster**

The list of members is of primary importance in most everything else you will do with the Association. It drives benefits, eligibility, and training resources. You will enter your roster through the Association DB [portal](#).

**\*\*Please note, you as Chief will maintain two; possibly three, separate databases/rosters for your efforts at the state level. 1). The State Fire Portal. 2). The SC State Firefighters' Association roster/database. 3) And possibly a roster for your supplemental Association retirement. This is difficult to understand given modern compatibility, but the State's restrictions on data sharing- in light of security issues- precludes combining the data bases.\*\***

If you cannot constantly keep this roster up to date, delegate the responsibility. It's that important and the Association can give you numerous examples of where this wasn't done, and members lost benefit opportunities. Let the Association know if you need help.

### **Member Benefits**

Your Association has a committee at work constantly trying to secure added benefits to your members. It's one of the main Association functions. The page for these benefits is under the membership tab of the web [page](#).

Several main benefits come with your dues/membership and are listed in this document and the next section.

### **The SC Firefighters Retirement and Trust**

One of the functions of your benefits is the operation of a supplemental retirement system —LOSAP for volunteer firefighters, and a governmental plan for paid personnel. Around 60% of the 1% funds collected go into these plans with around 12,900 persons participating. As of early 2023, the plan invests around \$106 million dollars in funds on behalf of our members. It is one of the best placements for your 1% funds which you can select. Find out more on our [website](#) and scroll to the section on Retirement.

### **SC Firefighters Insurance Service**

You, as a member of the Association, are part owner in a for profit insurance company. The SC Firefighters Insurance Service, SCFIS, is co-located in the Association main headquarters and is a full-service insurance agency. They not only facilitate the provision of major Association member benefit policies but are ready to help you in your department operations as well. Find them [here](#).

A sample of services include: Property and Casualty Coverage, Health coverage, disability programs, helicopter emergency transport programs, life policies, 24 Hour AD&D coverage, and legal services.

## **Line of Duty Death Response (LAST)**

Covered in an earlier section of this manual, LODD response is not something taken lightly and not an event without severe impact to any organization. We hope this resource is never used again, but reality says our members unfortunately will need help in the event of LODD occurrence. That is where LAST steps up to serve you. LAST is a nationally based concept and program administered by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

The SC State Firefighters' Association is your link to these services. The Association has a trained team of individuals standing by to aid you in this time of desperate need. Professionalism is assured and LAST seeks only to support you in your management during this difficult time and is designed to be a support team for you, not a management team to take over any component of your organization.

To mobilize LAST, call the Association or any of our team members: (800)277-2732

## **Behavioral Health Needs Response (FAST)**

PTSD and stress related injury is a reality for today's emergency responders. As Chief, you need a preventative and treatment mechanism. The Association offers those services through our First Responder Assistance State Team or FAST.

FAST will come to your department and conduct preparedness and preventative training for your personnel. Several levels of courses exist to serve your needs.

FAST will help you establish a Peer Contact network within your organization, which is the fundamental for success in managing stress within the system before it grows.

FAST will respond post-incident and help guide your staff through processing mental health and wellness issues. They are staffed with a large number of volunteers that have great experience in helping our own, process this new part of their lives.

Should the need grow greater, should your staff need clinical help, FAST and SCFIS can

help guide your personnel into clinical treatment programs which will aid in recovery and management. Fortunately, the state of South Carolina's General Assembly will pay for this service for Association members. FAST would like to help guide you through and give advice to you as Chief, or directly to your personnel, as to navigating the need for clinical help. The intent is to help persons before getting to the point of a workers compensation claim. To get healing and help before it becomes a legal matter between employee and employer through the workers comp process. The program has had huge success and we encourage you to learn more about it and make this available to your personnel.

### **The SC Firefighters Foundation**

Many things SC Firefighters encounter cannot be handled alone or by funding which presents itself through government raised sources. That's where the SC Firefighter's Foundation can step up. With scholarships and benevolence, the SC Firefighters' Foundation seeks to fill gaps in what the state's first responders needs.

Annual Scholarships can be found on this site. Application processes for benevolence can be found here also.

Please consider a donation to this important 501c(3) organization which seeks to ultimately help you and your members.

### **The SC Fire Service Heritage and Culture Foundation**

At the time of the revision to this manual, the Association is formalizing the construction of an existing committee into a stand-alone 501c(3) organization. The Heritage and culture component to the Association's services is dedicated to the preservation of historical artifacts and documents important to our state history and to the culture of our profession. This is done through the work of a select few dedicated volunteers and staff which write history and preserve and display historic memorabilia to honor the fire service and enshrine the lessons learned.

To see the collection, visit the Association office in Columbia. To be a part of the process and volunteer your interest and time, call our office, and ask staff. Our collective history is too important to lose.

### **Lobbyist Principle**

Advocacy for membership takes many forms. Health to financial well-being, insurance to training. No less is the advocacy needed in the political arena on behalf of membership. The Association is the leader in the SC fire service in an organized, trained, and communicative group seeking to constantly seek out new and better ways to ensure the wholeness and success of our service for our communities. This legislative advocacy is most certainly not centered on the improvement of members, but primarily in the improvement of the ability of these members to serve their citizens. This service drives all the Association does as a registered lobbyist principle in SC. The Association employs the services of a lobbyist, registers as such with the state, and provides vigilance and dedication to being a part of the legislative process on behalf of our members.

Covered earlier in this manual is a passage which stresses the importance of your local involvement (Following Legislation/Relationships, Government Chapter). Getting to know your elected officials is a must and a high priority for you as a Chief officer. Getting involved in our Legislative activities is also important:

- Volunteer to be on the Legislative Committee
- Read the weekly Legislative Report
- Follow the state's general assembly through the use of the app – [SC Legislation](#)
- Attend the annual Legislative Day hosted by the Association in the early spring of each year.

### **Training Opportunities**

One of the more prominent features to the Association are the training functions which are

held. Thousands of persons each year attend training events sponsored by you through the Association. A Training and Education fee assessed to all member department is to aid in the funding of these and other programs. Take advantage and suggest your members do likewise. Find more [here](#) and on our [events website](#).

### **Fire Service Improvement Conference**

Through the FSIC, the Association seeks to provide a program designed for intense manipulative and technical skill development through acquired structure and live scenario evolutions. The program is designed to give exposure to unique scenarios and top tiered instructors from around the country. The programs are typically geared towards skills development and non-traditional classroom environments. The program is held in January of each year and details can be found on the events page above.

### **Fire-Rescue**

The premier southeastern venue for national level instructors in classroom settings, interaction with fire service vendors, and involvement with major first response trends is SC Fire-Rescue. SC Fire-Rescue serves as the annual conference of the Association. Fire-Rescue is held each June in Myrtle Beach. Over 5,500 fire service individuals attend, over 140 vendors showcase their products and innovations, over 1700 students are trained in a series of 4 days of programs—all for free for your members. Oh, and they have incredible golf tournament too! [See more details](#).

### **Quarterly Training**

The Association seeks to keep members engaged in activities of your Association and that partially is accomplished by have frequent gatherings that not only offer training, but information contact about happenings in the state. To accomplish this, a long-standing effort by the Association is quarterly meetings. You will see these published in advance and usually occur in January, March, and October.

## **The Officers Academy**

A relatively new addition that has taken much steam in 2022 and 23, the Officer Academy was derived to meet the ever-growing needs of “middle management” within your organization. Retention issues and turn over has sparked a need to develop officers at a unique pace. This program is an intense 6-day program intended to stress, network, and offer detailed action items for your junior officers (and seniors looking for a challenge!). The programs are held in March and October of each year and have a large following from alumni committed to ensuring the programs continued success and productivity. [Find more information.](#)

## **Leadership Institute**

Since 2010, the Association has taken an intense interest and investment in the development of future leaders of our profession for the state. Front and center of meeting that need is the Leadership Institute. A year long and intense study of leadership models and organizational structures within and without of South Carolina has turned out class after class of those now in major leadership positions in our state, not in small part due to the exposures had in this course. Competition for enrollment is intense and limited to small scale. The course is free, and all logistics are provided. [Read more.](#)

## **Communications**

The cornerstone of the success of any member-based organization is communications. The Association and its leadership teams constantly seek to find new and improved ways to communicate our efforts to members. Here are just a few ways that you as Chief should take advantage and which you should push to ensure your members do the same.

- Apps — for events and general information.
- [Rattle Watch](#) — sign up through the web site for a weekly e newsletter.
- Emails — ensure your rosters are complete to receive frequent email blasts.

- Social Media — located at the bottom of the main page, we provide information on most major social platforms
- Calendar — check the calendar and add your local events on the Association website.
- Classifieds — one of the most highly used features of the web site are the jobs listing posts that we encourage you to utilize. It receives a lot of hits on this page.

