

The **Bulletin**



Publication of the Illinois Firefighter's Association, Inc.

Volume 76, Number 5

September - October 2022

FIRE LINE - DO NOT CROSS FIRE LINE - DO NOT CROSS FIRE LINE - DO NOT CROSS FIRE LINE - DO NOT CROSS

ENROLL NOW ON IFSI WEBSITE



DOWN & DIRTY
FIREFIGHTING WEEKEND

OCTOBER 28-30, 2022

OUR ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE

The Bulletin

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The Bulletin

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Mission Statement

Dedicated to the advancement of the Fire Service by providing leadership. The Illinois Firefighters Association will proudly support the health and welfare of the community of firefighters in Illinois through education, training, benefits and information networking at the local, state and national levels.

President's Message



Dear Fellow Firefighters

This may be one of the last articles that I write that will be going into the bi-monthly Bulletin. I plan on not running for reelection at the end of my term. I have had a very enjoyable time in the leadership of this organization. I consider the Illinois Firefighters Association one of the best Fire Service Organizations in this State. We have had some rough times in the past and were able to grow through those times. Our organization is in good financial shape and we have made many strides bringing this Association back to what it is today.

In the future, our destiny relies in your hands. To be a healthy and strong Association, we must have a strong membership. In the past, we relied on local leadership to pass the word out to our members on activities going on through-out the year. In today's world, we are able to touch each one of you individually. We are restructuring our communications and partnering with an outside vendor to assist us with this initiative.

Firefighting will always be a hazardous occupation. You will need great training, equipment and leadership to keep you safe. Our Association is committed to assist you with your training needs and provide the benefits to help protect you. Our Conference is coming up very fast and this will most likely be the last bulletin announcing the Down & Dirty Training weekend and Conference.

Please take advantage of that training at NO COST, only the Conference registration fee. Remember there are FREE rooms available on behalf of our State Fire Marshal.

Looking down the road, the new leadership should have no problem carrying the touch. All our Officers and Board members are well informed to bring this Association forward. I will remain on the board as Past President and assist the leadership when called upon.

We are hoping to continue marketing our GO GREEN CLEAN campaign to a new level. We have been in the forefront pushing Cancer awareness and prevention. With that being said, Decon equipment and training is available to help protect you from the dangerous carcinogens you face everyday. It is our hope to continue to promote prevention through safe decon practices. The only way this can be done is educating and training firefighters about the environmental dangers that we face at each fire scene.

In closing, Smokey the Bear once said "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires" I say "Only You Can Take The Initiative To Help Keep Yourself Safe"

"Train Smart, Be Safe"

God Bless

John Swan President IFA



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Margaret Vaughn, IFA Legislative Lobbyist

10 YEAR SMOKE DETECTOR LAW OFFICIALLY GOES into EFFECT JAN 1st.

Even though the 10 Year Smoke Detector Bill was signed in Aug 2017, it does not technically go into effect until Jan 1st, 2023. Like most building or fire code updates, there is a grace period to give people time to comply, which in this case was 5 years. This is why we have been doing a media campaign every fall since it passed at various fire departments across the state to educate the public. This year we have press conferences scheduled 10 am Thursday, Oct 6th at the Niles FD, Wednesday, Oct. 26th at the Rockford Fire Department, Dec 13th at the Washington FD, Dec 14th at O'Fallon FD and Dec 15th at the Decatur FD. We are also looking at scheduling a press event with the Chicago FD the last week in December leading up to the January 1st effective date.

FIRE SERVICE LOSES A TREMENDOUS ADVOCATE in LEGISLATURE with WILLIS PRIMARY LOSS

Sadly, Representative Kathleen Willis (D-Addison) who has been a tremendous advocate for the fire service in her role as Chair of the House Fire Caucus, lost a close primary race and will be leaving the legislature in January. She sponsored countless bills for IFA, including the 10 Year Smoke Detector Act and the law to allow FPD to include all areas under their protection on the tax rolls. IFA plans to present her with an award for our sincere appreciation for tireless work during the fall veto session.

HB 4461- Payment to FPD After Disconnection by Municipalities

Sponsored by Rep. Larry Walsh (D-Joliet) and Sen John Connor (D-Romeoville), this legislation addresses the issue of problems with FPD collecting money owed by municipalities required after disconnection of a district territory. If such payment is not made within 30 days following a written demand by the fire protection district entitled to the payment or which causes a fire protection district to incur an expense in order to collect the amount to which it is entitled shall, in addition to the amount due, be responsible to reimburse the fire protection district for all costs incurred by the fire protection district in collecting the amount due, including, but limited to legal fees and costs. **HB 4461 was signed into law by Governor Pritzker and takes effect January 1, 2023.**



Conference packets have been mailed. Sign up is done online through the IFSI website. Payments must be made either through the link from IFSI to the IFA payment page. Registration INCLUDES hotel accommodations. Once registrations open, sign up early to make sure that you get the class you want.

Classes for 2022 include Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC), Foundations and Essentials of Firefighting, Engine and Truck Company Operations, Single Family Dwelling, Alternative Fuel Vehicles, Collapse Awareness, Volunteer Recruitment and Retention for the Emergency Services, Volunteer Fire Service Culture - Essential Strategies for Success, Creating a Psychologically Healthy Fire Department.

Watch the IFA website - www.illinoisfirefighters.org - and your emails for updated information



IFA has partnered with SAVVIK Buying Group to provide our members with access to equipment, supplies, apparel and even vehicles at group buying prices. We have sent SAVVIK a list of our members and their contact information and once SAVVIK has set up the list, our members will be receiving a notification like below. You will not be able to register your account until you receive this notice. The notice is being sent to the main contact the we have on file for our member departments.

If you do not receive your notification or if you are having problems creating your account, contact Secretary Treasurer at 618-830-3961 and he will assist you in setting up your SAVVIK account.

Once you are signed up with SAVVIK, there is another benefit for your members at SAVVIK Perks. SAVVIK Perks provides discounts for your members on entertainment, food, travel and many other personal discounts.

Illinois Firefighters Association- IFA Member

Welcome to the Savvik Buying Group!

Savvik Member # 28828

(Please note, the above Savvik member # 28828 is exclusive to the Association record only. Each member will have their own unique number. This is how we track vendor sales for revenue share back to the Association.)

Savvik Membership:

Your agency is a new member of the Savvik Buying Group through the IFA. This membership is FREE as a benefit from your association.

Savvik is a Public Safety GPO with over 13,000 agency members who have access to volume discount pricing on various products and services. Our vendor programs are competitively bid and publicly awarded. As a Savvik member you now have access to over 80+ vendor programs.

Savvik will give back 1/3 of your association sales revenue to the IFA

Member Login Instructions:

Go to <https://savvik.com>

Click on LOGIN, follow the instructions to set up your personal username and password.

About SAVVIK Buying Group

Our Beginnings

The Savvik Buying Group, formally known as the North Central EMS Corporation, is a non-profit organization owned by its members and formed to reduce the financial impact of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 within the EMS industry. Our mission is to provide members with a mechanism to achieve cost reductions, which has evolved into a group-purchasing program. Savvik values quality supplies and equipment for the members, at the industry's best prices.

The phrase "at the industry's best prices" plays an even more important role today than in previous years as the Medicare Fee Schedule took effect on April 1, 2002. Ambulance services across the country have seen a drastic reduction in their Medicare reimbursements which accounts for up to 75% of their revenue. This drastic reduction in revenue decreases their capital budgets and curbs their purchases if not determine their entire existence.

Where We're Going

Membership is comprised of ambulance services, fire departments, first responder groups, police/sheriff departments, industrial emergency response teams, and other organizations related to the EMS industry. Savvik is proud to focus on membership nationwide. Our intent is to offer the Electronic Patient Care Reporting and Data Collection contract to all Savvik members regardless of their physical location.

An amazing result of our success was the formation of The Savvik Foundation in 2000. Savvik invests back into the industry! A portion of our excess revenues are returned to regional, state and national EMS associations as well as being donated to The Savvik Foundation so that it can complete its mission of leading industry efforts in such areas as safety, efficient operations, education, research and national consensus building.

We're dedicated to improving the general wellbeing of the public safety industry as a whole. Our effectiveness increases with commitments from our vendor partners to provide Savvik members with quality products and services at the industry's best prices.

Savvik has enjoyed significant growth over the last few years by developing partnerships (including revenue sharing relationships) with regional, state and national EMS associations. Savvik has fifty-one group affiliates that include membership to the Savvik Buying Group as part of their group dues structure. The associations that participate in our group membership program receive quarterly reports and payments from our office. Payments reflect a portion of the contract management fee of the total sales their members purchased from our vendors.

Membership Includes:

Access to National Public Bids – you can piggyback for free!

Large vendor contracts – save time and money!

Online marketplace – 5.11 Gear at the lowest prices!

Individual savings programs – benefits you can share with everyone in your agency

All of this for FREE!

If you have not received your registration email from SAVVIK, contact Secretary/Treasurer Kerry Federer at 618-882-4783 or by email at editor@illinoisfirefighters.org.

SPECIAL PROJECT #S778: *LIFESAVER*



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Illinois Firefighter's Annual Memorial Service

The memorial service is held on Friday Morning during the annual meeting. Please send all names of active and retired personnel from departments that have passed away from October 1, 2021 - October 1, 2022. The names and department info can be emailed to Joe Heim at edfire18@yahoo.com

The IFA reads the names of ALL firefighters from the State of Illinois that have passed away during the year, at their annual conference Memorial Service. If you know of ANY firefighter that has passed away, even from other departments, please let us know. We would like to honor them at the memorial service. The names can be sent to us throughout the year and we can keep track of them to be read at the service.

Thanks,

Joe Heim
Memorial Chairman
Illinois Firefighter's Association



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6 Reasons to Clean Your Gutters Before Winter

“Clean the gutters:” It’s one of those perennial to-do list items that never seems to get crossed off. One season runs into the next, and before you know it, winter has arrived and your gutters are still full of debris.

Unfortunately, that can wreak a lot of havoc on your house, from water and structural damage to pest problems and more. And those problems will bring repair and replacement costs that can easily be avoided.

Check out the 6 ways below that clogged gutters can imperil your home, and 6 tips at bottom to get ahead of the problem.

Structural Damage

Clogged gutters cause water run-off and overflow, which can collect around your home’s foundation. Over time, that water can cause cracks in your foundation, which leads to huge repair costs. When ice dams form, excess water can also seep through your roof.

Damage to Gutter Components

When fascia boards – the long, straight boards running along the lower edge of your roof – are exposed to excess water, they can crack, warp and start shedding paint. If your gutters are weighted down with debris and/or frozen water, they can begin sagging. This can result in tearing and pulling away from the exterior walls, or even coming loose completely.

Interior Damage

Whether from ice dams or a clogged gutter that sends water running in all directions, your home interior is also at risk of damage. This can happen from water leaking underneath shingles and through the roof, affecting electrical systems, appliances and furniture. Oftentimes, interior walls will show mold, leaks and water stains, and cracks will appear on ceilings. Window and door frames can also warp and rot.

Ice Dams

These are a main culprit behind all the issues above because they force excess water away from the proper exit route (down the downspout), leaving it up to chance and gravity for water finding its way downhill. In addition, they also cause icicles, which – although picturesque – can injure people and pets, as well as damage your deck and roof.

Pests

A gutter full of leaves can harbor infestations of all kinds. Rodents love just about any dark, cozy place and can quickly start nesting and breeding. Before long, they may try to enter your home through the walls, under the roof, etc. Besides rodents, insects will quickly make a home in the decaying matter stuck in your gutters. This means mosquitoes, cockroaches, flies and termites, all of which can also make inroads into your home. Finally, mold, parasites, mildew and spores flourish in a damp gutter, posing a health risk to you and your family.

Avoidable Injuries

If you decide to tackle the gutters after winter has already arrived, you may be putting yourself at risk in trying to clean them. Icy and cold conditions make for poor ladder safety, and the chances of injury increase. If you spot any structural damage or hard-to-remove ice dams, you may be tempted to fix it yourself, but at that point hiring a professional is much safer.

Gutter Cleaning Quick Tips – The best time to clean is during autumn, after most of the season’s leaves have fallen (many of which will find a home in your gutters!). Here are 6 tips to get you started.

The Bulletin

1. Use a safe and secure ladder, and practice ladder safety.
2. Rake debris and leaves off roof before attacking gutters (be sure to wear rubber-soled shoes).
3. Wear safety eyewear and gloves.
4. Use a plastic gutter scooping tool.
5. Clear the downspouts.
6. Watch out for power lines.

Once fall gives way to winter, your window of opportunity for safely cleaning gutters closes until spring. Best to start early, before damage – and related repair costs – happen.

Call your California Casualty today, at **1.833.989.3597** or visit www.readyforquote.com/justine to make sure you are taking advantage of your coverage and benefits all year long.



Justine Sallee has been serving northern Illinois first responders as a California Casualty representative since 2012. She is dedicated to helping IFA members access this unique member benefit. Contact Justine at 719.532.8699 to have her attend an upcoming shift or volunteer meeting at your department.

This article furnished by California Casualty, providing auto and home insurance to firefighters for over 40 years.

ABOUT CALIFORNIA CASUALTY:

Headquartered in San Mateo, CA, with Service Centers in Arizona, Colorado and Kansas, California Casualty provides auto and home insurance to educators, higher education employees, firefighters, law enforcement, nurses and United MileagePlus members across the country. To learn more about California Casualty, or to request an auto insurance quote, please visit www.calcas.com or call 1.800.800.9410.



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This program combines fire prevention education and action to help keep Illinois citizens safe.

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Details are available at: www.ifsa.org/programs/alarms



Illinois Fire Safety Alliance



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- Adolescent Virtual Outpatient
- Withdrawal Management (Detox)
- Transitional Housing/Recovery Home
- Family Involvement & Support
- Treatment for Co-Occurring Mental Health & Substance Use Disorders
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Being a firefighter or EMS provider is tough. Remember that you're not alone.

Most people are aware of the physical demands that emergency responders face. But it's important to realize the impact on your mental wellbeing, too.

Taking care of your mental health is just as important as managing your physical health. The National Volunteer Fire Council is here to help with resources to Share the Load.

Share the Load™ Program

nvfc.org/help

A program that provides access to critical resources and information to help emergency responders and their families manage and overcome personal and work-related behavioral health challenges.

Directory of Behavioral Health Professionals

nvfc.org/phfd

A listing of local providers who are equipped and ready to help emergency responders, rescue workers, dispatchers, and their families with their behavioral health needs.

Psychologically Healthy Fire Departments Toolkit

nvfc.org/phfd

A comprehensive toolkit designed to help fire department leaders promote and support mental wellbeing among their members and create a successful, high-performing department.





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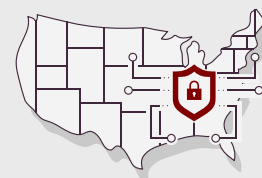
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With a curriculum overseen by an esteemed advisory board serving in organizations like the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National Security Administration, you will study the relevant coursework required to mitigate today's real-world challenges.

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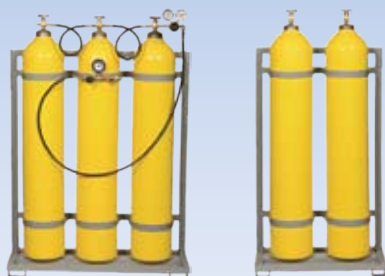
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- Low pressure air alarms
- Booster pumps
- Air reels
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FM Global



Fire Prevention Grants

Mark Blank, and Jed Bowen from FM Global worked with NIFSI during our fire safety classes with the AFFI in our pilot classes on “Fighting Fires in Fire Sprinkler Protected Buildings” classes earlier this summer. They are encouraging our Illinois Fire Service friends to apply for the fire service grants from FM Global. Take a little time to think of items, products, or systems that can help improve your fire prevention efforts in your community. Hope you can give it a try!

Tom Lia NIFSI

Because FM Global believes that the majority of fire can be prevented, FM Global is pleased to offer financial support to organizations working to combat fire. Through our Fire Prevention Grant Program, fire departments and brigades, as well as national, state, regional, local and community organizations can apply for funding to support a wide array of fire prevention, preparedness and control efforts, including pre-incident planning, fire prevention education/training and arson prevention/fire investigation.

To fill out an online application follow this link
<https://fs20.formsite.com/fmglobal/form14/index.html>

[For Questions firepreventiongrants@fmglobal.com](mailto:firepreventiongrants@fmglobal.com)

From the Chaplain's Rack

IFA Chaplain Josh Ehrler



Why does your house need a fire chaplain?

I've been asking us this question all year. For all that a fire chaplain can do on the fire ground, I believe where we might be needed clearest is in the firehouse. Well, so says the guy trying to justify his role.

We all get the Close Calls emails. We all know Paul Combs and his powerful artwork. By now we've watched enough YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, and documentary videos about post-traumatic stress that we know the terminology. We've started using the term "resilience" with frequency and for more than just physical endurance training.

And still, the reports come in of firefighter/EMS suicides. Some years there are nearly as many suicides as LODDs. Suicide numbers are high value because of their impact. Beyond them, there are the rates of substance abuse, divorce, high risk behaviors, chronic depression, and folks leaving the job. These stats are a click away.

Every department, from the big cities to the smalltown volunteer houses, has the same problem when it comes to addressing behavioral health. Not enough resources. Let's say your department brought in a renowned, trusted team to train your crews on resilience. Let's say you sent all of your officers to a conference on identifying post-traumatic stress. Let's say you do all the best things for your crews. We are still, all of us, restricted by time, energy, and our ability to maintain these conversations. It takes tremendous effort to normalize these critical topics amid so many critical topics and trainings.

Enter the fire chaplain. This is one of my fundamental responsibilities in my department. I am there to normalize the language of stress, trauma, and chronic emotional fatigue. Not that I'm the only one doing it, I serve an incredible department in which everyone is open to the conversation. However, though everyone else might be able to speak openly now and then, I always will. I keep the conversation going by leading training sessions (using drill time), making myself available, showing up on scene as often as I can, attending seminars and conferences, and simply talking plainly about the effects of stress.

A fire chaplain in your department can be an engineer, a truckie, a medic, whomever. That happens a lot, especially in smaller fire houses. With that, the chaplain also needs to be available separate from that role. The chaplain is the one entrusted by the department to keep the secrets while openly discussing the signs of trauma. She or he is the one to normalize the thoughts of disappointment, frustration, and anger for everyone else.

I am strong in my belief that someone in your house needs to take up this role. Someone who is either trained or willing to put in the hours to be a spiritual and psychological crisis responder. Someone who knows the lingo of the fireground and can integrate it with the words of acute and chronic stress. Someone who can also carry the words and thoughts that others will expect to be kept in strict confidence.

Friends, we all know the stats, the symptoms, and the truth: this work is darn hard and can bring costs that we may not count until it's too late. Consider recruiting a fire chaplain to help manage these effects. Talk to your local priest, pastor, rabbi, or imam. Talk to someone in the department who is trusted by others. If you are interested in learning more about implementing a chaplain role in your department, let's talk at the IFA Annual Conference. I would enjoy the conversation. Until then, take care of yourself, take care of your company.

Safe Call Now (24-7 crisis hotline for first responders)

206-459-3020

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

800-273-8255

Chaplain Josh's Phone

608-234-3793

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Barrington Countryside FPD	Glenside FPD	Matteson	Riverside
Barrington FPD	Glenwood	Mount Prospect	Riverwoods
Bedford Park	Green Oaks	Mundelein	Rock Island
Bellwood	Gurnee	New Lenox FPD	Rolling Meadows
Berkeley	Hanover Park	Newport Township FPD	Roselle
Berwyn	Harwood Heights	Niles	Roselle FPD
Bloomington	Hazel Crest	Norridge	Schaumburg
Bloomington FPD	Hickory Hills	North Maine FPD	Skokie
Blue Island	Highland Park	Northbrook	South Holland
Bridgeview	Highwood	Norwood Park FPD	St. Charles
Brookfield	Hodgkins*	Oak Brook	Streamwood
Burlington Community FPD	Hoffman Estates	Oak Forest	Sunnycrest FPD (Flossmoor)
Carol Stream	Homewood	Oak Park	Vernon Hills
Central Stickney FPD	Huntley FPD	Orland FPD	Warren-Waukegan FPD
Chicago	Indian Creek (Countryside FPD)	Palatine	Wauconda FPD
Chicago Ridge	Justice	Palatine Rural FPD	West Dundee
Clarendon Hills	La Grange Park	Palos FPD	Westchester
Country Club Hills	Lake Barrington	Palos Heights FPD	Western Springs
Countryside	Lake Bluff	Palos Hills	Westmont
Countryside FPD	Lake Forest	Palos Park	Wheeling
Crestwood	Lake Zurich	Park Forest	Wilmette
Deerfield	Lake Zurich Rural FPD	Park Ridge	Wood Dale
Deerfield-Barnockburn FPD	Lansing	Plainfield FPD	
Des Plaines	Lemont FPD		
Elgin	Libertyville		
Elk Grove Village	Libertyville FPD		
Elmwood Park	Lincolnshire-Riverwoods FPD		
Evanston	Lincolnwood		

FPD – Fire Protection District

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Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board

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IT'S
OCTOBER!



Is your 2022 fire sprinkler testing nearing completion in your businesses?

Begin the last quarter of 2022

by ensuring fire code and ISO compliance and sending notices to building owners as to what is required. A 3rd party inspection compliance management company like Brycer and IROL can help you carry out your fire sprinkler testing program at no cost to the fire department.



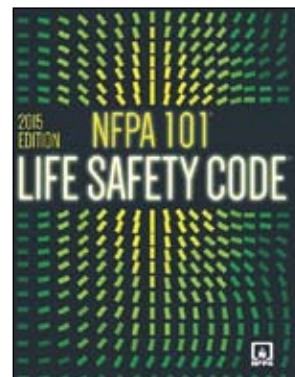
Regular Fire Sprinkler Testing is Required by the International Fire Code

Chapter 9, Fire Protection Systems of the 2018 International Fire Code requires water based fire protection systems to be inspected, tested and maintained at regular intervals in accordance with NFPA 25: Standard for the Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems.

Regular testing is also required through the Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal's adoption of NFPA 101: Life Safety Code, Section 9.11.1 (2015 edition).

All automatic fire sprinkler systems, stand-pipe systems and fire pumps must be inspected and maintained in accordance with NFPA 25.

Beginning in January 2023, be ready to enforce the NICET III minimum requirement by showing the legislation to your contractors who work in your town.



For more information:



Any company must be licensed by the State Fire Marshal and anyone testing a fire sprinkler system, standpipe or fire pump must have **(1)** satisfactorily completed a certified sprinkler fitter apprenticeship program approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, or **(2)** have current ASSE 15010 certification in inspection, testing, and maintenance for water-based fire protection systems by ASSE, or **(3) current NICET II (NICET III by Jan 2023) certification or equivalent nationally recognized program.** Are you checking these items before work begins? Stop any job violating this state law and/or call the state fire marshal.

Office of the State Fire Marshal

Application Period is now open for the OSFM's Small Equipment Grant and Revolving Loan Programs.**Small Equipment Grant Program**

The OSFM will award \$1.5 million to eligible fire departments and ambulance services for the purchase of small firefighting and ambulance equipment. All interested departments should send an application to OSFM electronically or postmarked no later than **November 30, 2022**.

The Small Equipment Grant Program was established to provide grants of up to \$26,000. A total of \$2.5 million was awarded to 104 fire departments/districts and EMS providers across the state in April.

This program is an innovative approach to a problem that has long caused difficulties for the fire departments and not-for-profit ambulance services in Illinois, particularly those that have hardships in generating the necessary revenue for small equipment. The grants allow eligible applicants the opportunity to purchase small tools and equipment that they may otherwise not be able to purchase. In addition to firefighting personal protective equipment (PPE), applicants can also apply for personal infection control items such as masks, gowns, and gloves this application cycle. Most Illinois fire departments, fire protection districts, and township fire departments are eligible to apply. In addition, stand-alone, not-for-profit ambulance service providers are eligible to apply.

All applicants are required to have participated in the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) for a minimum of two years prior to applying. The OSFM will require departments to be current from August 2020 through August 2022 for this grant period.

Additional information including the application can be found here: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/sfm/lam/FireDepartment/Grants-and-Loans/Pages/default.aspx?fbclid=IwAR2IKJADTq30x027VLZUazoBZVtynRWD91meoygszVGpNg61et5NSFhblXc>

Fire Truck and Ambulance Revolving Loan Program

The Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM) and Illinois Finance Authority (IFA) have opened the application period for the Fire Truck and Ambulance Revolving Loan Program. The Fire Truck Revolving Loan Program (FTRL) and Ambulance Revolving Loan Program (ARLP) are designed to assist departments or cities in purchasing emergency vehicles that they may not be able to afford. All interested departments should send an application to OSFM electronically or postmarked no later than **October 31, 2022**.

Under the FTRL program, fire departments, fire protection districts, and township fire departments may apply for up to \$350,000 in low interest or no interest loans for purchase of a fire truck or brush trucks. The loans must be repaid within 20 years. Approximately \$10.5 million is available for this application period.

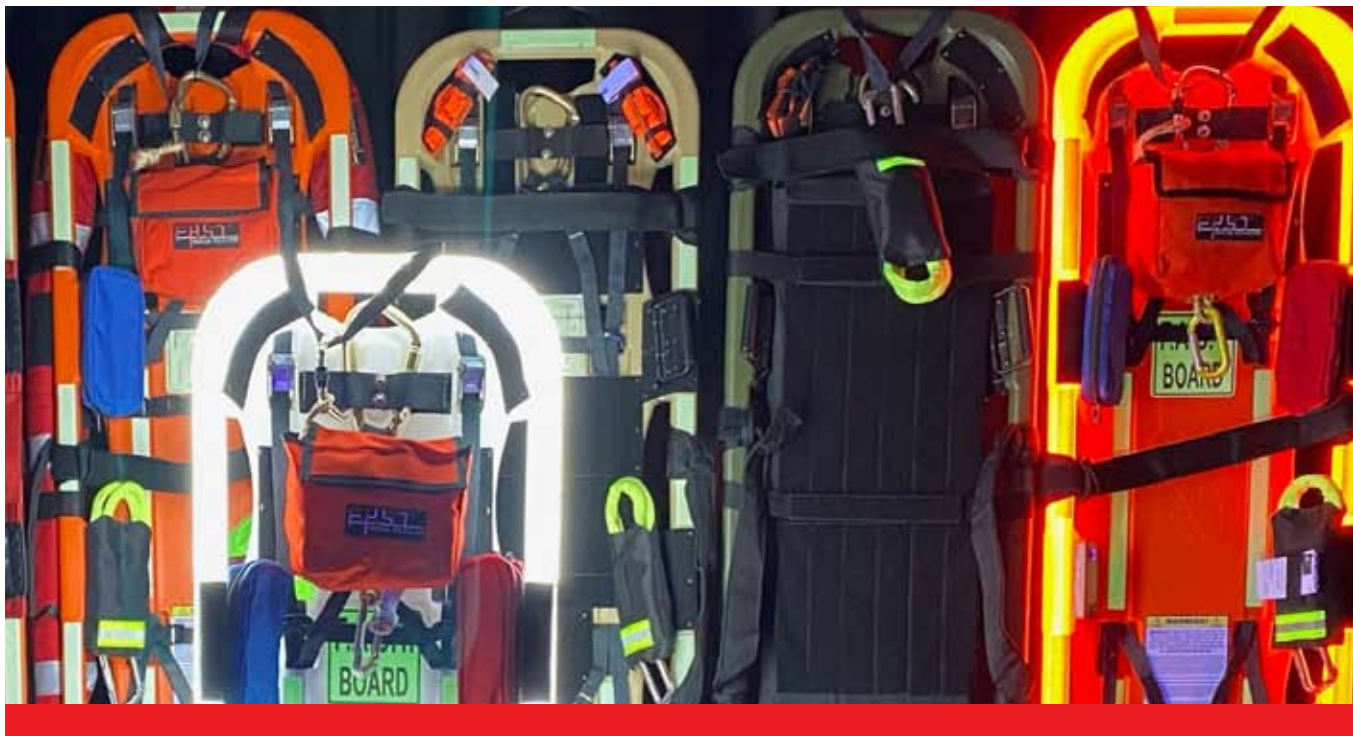
Under the ARLP program, units of local government (city, town, village, township, fire department, fire protection district) and not-for-profit ambulance service providers can apply for no interest or low interest loans for purchase of ambulances of up to \$200,000. These loans must be paid back in 10 years. Approximately \$2.7 million is available for loans this application period.

All applicants are required to have participated in the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) for a minimum of two years prior to applying. The OSFM will require departments to be current from August 2020 through August 2022 for this grant period.

Applications and Eligibility criteria are available here: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/sfm/lam/FireDepartment/Grants-and-Loans/Pages/default.aspx>

Completed applications should be submitted to:

Office of the State Fire Marshal
Small Equipment Grant Program
1035 Stevenson Drive
Springfield, IL 62703



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AN UPDATE FROM THE ILLINOIS FIRE SERVICE INSTITUTE

The fall training season is here and the Illinois Fire Service Institute Team is busy! In just a few short months, we will execute the delivery of three special events, the largest resident Academy class, BOF training at 3 site locations, 17 Special Operations Training Program classes, 6 Leadership Development and Decision-Making offerings, 12 Instructor Program courses, 3 GM Electric Vehicle training classes, 4 Fire Ground Officer classes, 2 national fire service conference presentations, PLUS multiple no-cost classes across the state through the Firefighting/Cornerstone Programs. It is a busy time for IFSI!



SPECIAL EVENTS:



Registration for the **5th Annual Veterans in the Fire Service Day** event is now open. This is a unique personal and professional development program designed for US Armed Forces Veterans who have also served, are serving, or may be interested in serving as a member of the fire service. The Veterans in the Fire Service Day will offer two training schedules for students (Future and Current). The program is available at no cost to participants and includes housing and meals.

IFSI will also host the 2022 **Illinois Firefighter's Association Down & Dirty Firefighter Weekend** in late October. The event will offer live fire, hands-on and classroom training deliveries. See the promotional flyers for both events for more details. Complete program details and registration for both events: **FSI.ILLINOIS.EDU**

LIBRARY RESOURCES:

The IFSI Library just closed out the "Children Fire Safety Literacy Reading and Discussion" program through the American Library Association's American Rescue Plan: Humanities Grantmaking. The program was a great success, reaching over 500 children across Illinois who learned about fire safety, fire history, and what firefighters do. Congratulations to all of the departments that participated in the program. The resources purchased for this program and their discussion questions will continue to be available at the library.

**WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT OF OUR
MISSION.**

A graphic celebrating the success of the children's fire safety program. It features the IFSI logo, a photo of children in a circle, and text detailing the program's achievements and statistics.

IT WAS A SUCCESS!

The IFSI library just completed a successful program funded through the American Library Association's American Rescue Plan that ran from March 1 through August 31.

All the children's books purchased for this program and their discussion questions will continue to be available at the library. We hope that these books and resources will be used to support children's fire education for many years to come!

PROGRAM DETAILS:
Over 80 children's books were purchased for ages Pre-K through 12th grade. Book topics covered included fire safety, fire history, what firefighters do and firefighting as a career.

PROGRAM STATS:
→ 38 Reading/discussion sessions took place
→ 511 Kids in Illinois were impacted
→ 31 Firefighters from 21 fire departments participated

For complete details on the impact of the program, please visit: **FSI.ILLINOIS.EDU**



VETERAN'S IN THE FIRE SERVICE

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TRAINING

OCTOBER 22 & 23

IFSI TRAINING GROUNDS, CHAMPAIGN

IFSI Veterans in the Fire Service Weekend

An Opportunity for Firefighters Past, Present, and Future

This annual event is a unique, personal and professional development program designed for US Armed Forces Veterans who have also served, are serving, or may be interested in serving as a member of the fire service.

The Veterans in the Fire Service Weekend will offer two training schedules for students: **future firefighters and current firefighters.**

We are proud to offer a **First Responder Resiliency course.** First responder resiliency matters, and this course will seek to remove the stigma surrounding the discussion of mental health, trauma, and suicide.

TWO DAY CHALLENGING TRAINING EVENT

- ❖ NO COST TO ATTEND
- ❖ PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- ❖ INCREASED ESPRIT DE CORPS FOR VETERANS IN THE FIRE SERVICE
- ❖ MEALS AND LODGING ARE PROVIDED

All Veterans (whether currently in the fire service or looking into a future with the fire service) will benefit from a day of **hands-on, live fire training activities.** Students will engage with an elite group of IFSI instructors who will introduce essential firefighting skills while participating in rigorous training rotations.

IFSI encourages attendees to network and share professional and personal experiences. The program allows ample time for discussing the parallels of the fire service and the US Armed Forces throughout the special event.

Loaner firefighting personal protective equipment and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) will be available to students. **Advance reservations for gear are preferred.**



An Opportunity for Firefighters Past, Present and Future

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OCTOBER 28-30, 2022

DOWN & DIRTY

FIREFIGHTING WEEKEND



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Think Twice Before Blocking on Social Media

by James G. Wargo and Victoria Roman
Ottosen DiNolfo Hasenbalg & Castaldo, Ltd.

Governments that operate social media accounts must do so carefully. Indeed, censoring content on a government's official social media platform can violate the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech. Not only that, and as illustrated by the recent case of *Czosnyka v. Gardiner*, even public officials who censor certain viewpoints and block critics on *their* social media accounts may actually violate the First Amendment. 2022 WL 407651 (N.D. Ill. Feb. 10, 2022).

In *Czosnyka*, a group of six Chicago residents brought a claim against 45th Ward Alderman James Gardiner to challenge the constitutionality of his conduct regarding the regulation of speech on his Facebook page. Alderman Gardiner allegedly solicited constituent engagement and feedback through the interactive elements of his Facebook page, which he created for his role as a government official. In operating his Facebook page, the residents alleged that Alderman Gardiner "routinely hides or deletes comments that criticize him or his policies." In addition, the residents claimed that Alderman Gardiner permanently banned certain constituents from commenting on his Facebook page, sending messages, and responding to comments posted by others on the platform.

Alderman Gardiner filed a motion to dismiss arguing that plaintiffs had failed to sufficiently allege that *his* Facebook page was a public forum subject to the protections of the First Amendment. The court disagreed and sided with the residents, holding that even Gardiner's *personal* Facebook page could potentially be encompassed by the First Amendment's prohibition on government censorship.

The court explained that "public forums" are "locations or channels of communication that the government opens for use by the public for expressive activity." In determining whether the government has intended to designate a particular forum as "open to assembly and debate as a public forum," courts have analyzed the "policy and practice of the government" and the "nature of the property and its compatibility with expressive activity" to determine the government's intent. *Cornelius v. NAACP Legal Defense & Educ. Fund Inc.*, 473 U.S. 788 (1985).

From this, courts have largely concluded that "when the government or a government official uses a social media account for official business, the interactive portions of the social media platforms are public forums for First Amendment purposes." So, the Constitution's limits on government control of speech apply online as much as they do in newspapers, at marches, or in townhall meetings. Because it is unconstitutional for a public official to block critics from entering a public townhall simply because of their views, it is similarly impermissible for that public official to create a social media page and then restrict people with critical viewpoints from posting on the page.

However, not every social media account operated by a *public official* will be found to be a government account subject to the protections of the First Amendment. For example, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals recently found that a state representative's Twitter account was not a public forum subject to the protections of the First Amendment. *Campbell v. Reisch*, 986 F.3d 822 (2021).

But even a private social media account can turn into a governmental account "if it becomes an organ of official business." As such, if a public official's private social media account includes references to his or her official policy positions, links to government phone numbers, email addresses or websites, or allows individuals to either seek government services or access and discuss government information, then the account will likely be found to be a public forum subject to the dictates of the First Amendment.

After weighing these considerations, the court in *Czosnyka* concluded that Alderman Gardiner's Facebook page was not purely private; it had become an "organ of official business." Thus, the residents had sufficiently alleged that "Alderman Gardiner restricted their access to a public forum in violation of the First Amendment by barring them or deleting their comments from the interactive portions of his" Facebook page that designates the alderman as a government official. Furthermore, the court found that the residents had sufficiently alleged that Alderman Gardiner had "knowingly banned constituents and engaged in content-based regulations of speech" on his social media page.

At this time, the case law on social media accounts that constitute public forums subject to the dictates of the First Amendment is still developing. At this point, though, public officials who operate any social media account that is in any way related to their official duties should be mindful of the protections afforded under the First Amendment to members of the public who wish to express their views through that social media platform.

James G. Wargo is an associate with the law firm of Ottosen DiNolfo Hasenbalg & Castaldo, Ltd. in the firm's Naperville office. Mr. Wargo concentrates his practice primarily in the area of local government law. He has a broad range of experience representing municipalities, fire protection district, public pension funds, park districts, libraries, and school districts on both transactional and litigation matters.

Victoria Roman is a law clerk at Ottosen DiNolfo Hasenbalg & Castaldo, Ltd. in Naperville, Illinois. She is a rising 2L at the University of Illinois-Chicago School of Law, pursuing a concentration in Trial Advocacy and Dispute Resolution. Victoria's passions include advocating on the behalf of those afflicted by the legal system and participating in several on campus organizations such as the Student Bar Association and the First-Generation Law Student Association.



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