

The **Bulletin**



Publication of the Illinois Firefighter's Association, Inc.

Volume 78, Number 2

March - April 2024

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



Past President Swan to receive Chief James P. Seavey Sr. Health & Wellness Leadership Award From NVFC

(Story Page 21)



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



CONGRATULATIONS TO CHIEF JOHN SWAN

FIRE CHIEF OF COLONA FD and PAST PRESIDENT OF THE ILLINOIS FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

Chief Swan has been awarded the **CHIEF JAMES P. SEAVEY SR. HEALTH AND WELLNESS LEADERSHIP AWARD** from the National Volunteer Fire Council.

John has received this award for his innovative approach to development of a health intervention program to reduce the risks of firefighter cancer at the local, state, and national levels. Inspired by the "Pink Heals" trucks and their impact on cancer awareness, John worked with Alexis Fire Equipment to secure a donated working 1994 HME fire engine. Using donated funds, the engine was polished and wrapped in neon green with graphics promoting the GO GREEN CLEAN INITIATIVE for firefighter cancer awareness and prevention. The truck is outfitted with television screens to show videos about cancer prevention.

The Illinois State Fire Marshal's Office donated buckets, soap, scrub brushes, and hoses to hand out from the truck to fire stations across the state. Cancer risk reduction posters are also available for firefighters to take and display at their departments.

Visitors are also encouraged to sign up online for the National Firefighter Registry for Cancer.

The neon green truck has made appearances at FDIC, Illinois Fire Service Institute, IFA Down & Dirty Firefighters Training Weekend, the Illinois State Fair, several Illinois fire departments, and regional trainings throughout the state.

The GO GREEN CLEAN INITIATIVE is committed to supplying the necessary information, training, and decontamination equipment to all firefighters. Together we can begin to erase those three words that no Firefighter wants to hear:

"YOU HAVE CANCER"



STAY SAFE!

Terry Ford, President IFA



Legislative update

By Margaret Vaughn, IFA Legislative Lobbyist

IFA Opposes IL Dept of Public Health Rules to Require NREMT Exam for Emergency Med Responders

The IL Dept of Public Health (IDPH) is proposing administrative rules to standardize the national testing for all EMS levels so that emergency Medical Responders (EMRs) will also take the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians Exam (NREMT) exam which costs \$85. This will be in addition to the current \$55 licensing fee (however volunteers who serve a community under with a population under 5000 can apply for a waiver of the license fee).

IFA feels this will create a very significant hardship for many struggling volunteer departments and only compound the problem of recruitment.

IFA submitted Public Comments to IDPH in opposition to the Rules and will next be lobbying the individual legislators of the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) which is the next step in the approval process for IDPH. Please contact them legislators on the JCAR Committee and let them know you are opposed to IDPH's proposed Rules to require the National Registry exam for Emergency Medical Responders.

JCAR COMMITTEE

Name	District	Party	Phone	Email
Sen Cristina Castro	Elgin	D	847-214-8864	
Sen Bill Cunningham	Chicago	D	(773) 445-8128	bill@billcunningham.com
Rep Eva Delgado	Chicago	D	(773) 237-4558	StateRepDelgado@gmail.com
Sen Don DeWitte	West Dundee	R	(847) 214-8245	ildistrict33@gmail.com
Sen Dale Fowler	Harrisburg	R	(618) 294-8951	senatorfowler59@gmail.com
Rep Jackie Haas	Kankakee	R	(815) 523-7779	haas@ilhousegop.org
Sen Kim Lightford	Hillside	D	(773) 286-1115	sroberts@senatedem.ilga.gov
Rep Steve Reick	McHenry	R	(815) 880-5340	reick@ilhousegop.org
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Rep Curtis Tarver	Chicago	D	(773) 363-8870	office@repcurtisjarverii.com
Rep Dave Vella	Loves Park	D	815-329-6741	repdavevella@gmail.com

CHIEFS NOW HAVE UNTIL APRIL 11th TO SUBMIT VOLUNTEER ROSTER TO OSFM for VOLUNTEER TAX CREDIT

With tax season in full swing, many volunteers are taking advantage of the new \$500 volunteer state tax credit law pushed by IFA. The IL Dept of Revenue pushed back the date from January 12th to April 11th for chiefs to electronically update their fire department roster through the OSFM [PSE Portal](#) (Personnel, Standards & Education) and then include a list individuals who: 1) volunteered for their department for a) minimum of 9 months in the previous tax year 2) are not full-time career firefighters for any other department, and 3) earned less than \$5,000 in stipends. For additional instructions and link to the application go to [IDOR Volunteer Emergency Worker Tax Credit Info](#)

LEGISLATION IFA SUPPORTS

The IL General Assembly's spring session is in full swing. Below is a list of bills supported by IFA:

HB 4144 Short Description: PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY DISRUPT

House Sponsors: Rep. Nabeela Syed-Daniel Didech - **Synopsis As Introduced**

Amends the Environmental Protection Act. Provides that a "disruption event" includes any planned or unplanned work on or damage to a fire

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hydrant. Changes the term "health care facility list" to "disruption notification list". Requires a public water distribution entity to also notify all affected fire departments and all affected dispatch centers on the public water supply's disruption notification list not less than 14 days before any known, planned, or anticipated disruption event or that are served by the public water supply and affected by any unplanned disruption event in the public water supply's water distribution system. Requires a fire department and a dispatch center to designate an email address to receive electronic notifications from the public water distribution entity concerning planned or unplanned disruption events.

HB 4359 Short Description: FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT-FUNDS

House Sponsors: Rep. Mary Beth Canty - **Synopsis As Introduced**

Amends the Fire Protection District Act. Provides that specified accumulation of funds by a board of trustees of a fire protection district may occur in the district's corporate fund or other district fund. Provides that the board of trustees of a fire protection district may accumulate funds for the purposes of emergency medical services, technical rescue, and other services performed by the fire district and for the purposes of providing employees other post-employment benefits.

HB 4568 Short Description: PROP TX-PTELL NEW RATE

House Sponsors: Rep. Matt Hanson - **Synopsis As Introduced**

Amends the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law in the Property Tax Code. Provides that a levy authorized for contributions to a Firefighters' Pension Fund for a municipality with a population of 500,000 or less is not considered a new rate. Effective immediately.

HB 4675 Short Description: VEH CD-ELECTRIC VEHICLE DECAL

House Sponsors: Rep. Bradley Fritts - **Synopsis As Introduced**

Amends the Illinois Vehicle Code. Provides that, upon registration of an electric vehicle, the Secretary of State shall issue a decal that distinguishes it from non-electric vehicles. Requires the owner of the electric vehicle to display the decal at the rear of the electric vehicle in a manner prescribed by the Secretary.

HB 4881 Short Description: EPA-OPEN BURNING

House Sponsors: Rep. Dennis Tipsword, Jr. - **Synopsis As Introduced**

Amends the Environmental Protection Act. Specifies that certain air pollution control prohibitions in the Act do not apply to open burning that is conducted by a municipality or fire protection district to provide instruction in the methods of firefighting, to test equipment for extinguishing fires, or to conduct research in the control of fires, if the municipality or fire protection district secures and maintains liability insurance coverage in an amount deemed sufficient by the Environmental Protection Agency by rule.

HB 5362 Short Description: ELEVATOR-TEMPORARY CERTIFICATE

House Sponsors: Rep. Mary Beth Canty and Kelly M. Cassidy - **Synopsis As Introduced**

Amends the Elevator Safety and Regulation Act. Defines "temporary certificate of operation" as a temporary certificate of operation issued by the Administrator or the Local Administrator that permits the temporary use of a conveyance by the general public for a limited time of 30 days while minor repairs or upgrades are being completed if it is determined by the Administrator or the Local Administrator that the conveyance's use will not jeopardize the safety and health of those using or working on the conveyance. Effective immediately.

SB 3163 Short Description: FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT-FUNDS

Senate Sponsors: Sen. Mary Edly-Allen - **Synopsis As Introduced**

Amends the Fire Protection District Act. Provides that specified accumulation of funds by a board of trustees of a fire protection district may occur in the district's corporate fund or other district fund. Provides that the board of trustees of a fire protection district may accumulate funds for the purposes of emergency medical services, technical rescue, and other services performed by the fire district and for the purposes of providing employees other post-employment benefits.

SB 3694 Short Description: ELEVATOR-TEMPORARY CERTIFICATE

Senate Sponsors: Sen. Ann Gillespie and Javier L. Cervantes -

Synopsis As Introduced

Amends the Elevator Safety and Regulation Act. Defines "temporary certificate of operation" as a temporary certificate of operation issued by the Administrator or the Local Administrator that permits the temporary use of a conveyance by the general public for a limited time of 30 days while minor repairs or upgrades are being completed if it is determined by the Administrator or the Local Administrator that the conveyance's use will not jeopardize the safety and health of those using or working on the conveyance. Effective immediately.

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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.

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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:

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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 #2520

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for Preventing FIREFIGHTER CANCER



- 1** Full protective equipment (PPE) must be worn throughout the entire incident, including SCBA during salvage and overhaul.
- 2** A second hood should be provided to all entry-certified personnel in the department.
Following exit from the IDLH, and while still on air, you should begin immediate gross decon of PPE using soap water and a brush, if weather conditions allow. PPE should then be placed into a sealed plastic bag and placed in an exterior compartment of the rig, or if responding in POVs, placed in a large storage tote, thus keeping the off-gassing PPE away from passengers and self.
- 3**
- 4** After completion of gross decon procedures as discussed above, and while still on scene, the exposed areas of the body (neck, face, arms and hands) should be wiped off immediately using wipes, which must be carried on all apparatus. Use the wipes to remove as much soot as possible from head, neck, jaw, throat, underarms and hands immediately.
- 5** Change your clothes and wash them after exposure to products of combustion or other contaminants. Do this as soon as possible and/or isolate in a trash bag until washing is available.
- 6** Shower as soon as possible after being exposed to products of combustion or other contaminants. "Shower within the Hour"
- 7** PPE, especially turnout pants, must be prohibited in areas outside the apparatus floor (i.e. kitchen, sleeping areas, etc.) and never in the household.
- 8** Wipes, or soap and water, should also be used to decontaminate and clean apparatus seats, SCBA and interior crew area regularly, especially after incidents where personnel were exposed to products of combustion.
- 9** Get an annual physical, as early detection is the key to survival. The NVFC outlines several options at www.nvfc.org. "A Healthcare Provider's Guide to Firefighter Physicals" can be downloaded from www.iafc.org/healthRoadmap.
- 10** Tobacco products of any variety, including dip and e-cigarettes should never be used at anytime on or off duty.
- 11** Fully document ALL fire or chemical exposures on incident reports and personal exposure reports.



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Proposed OSHA Changes May Bring Huge Changes to Small Fire Departments and Volunteers

by John & Brian Johnston
Ottosen DiNolfo Hasenbalg & Castaldo, Ltd.

In a significant move, the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (“OSHA”) announced a proposed rulemaking on February 5, 2024, that overhauls the Fire Brigades standard. This represents a substantial shift from the existing regulations, primarily focusing on firefighting, to a broader scope that includes emergency medical services, tactical rescue, and equivalent services provided by employers. Importantly, the public has an opportunity to weigh in on these rules before they are finalized. We recommend you do so—especially on the points we isolate below.

OSHA is the federal agency tasked with ensuring workplace safety and health standards. OSHA does not directly oversee Illinois’ local governments; that is the purview of Illinois’ own Occupational Safety and Health Administration. However, Illinois OSHA is funded, in part, by its federal counterpart and therefore traditionally follows its lead.

One of OSHA’s key regulations concerns non-public fire protection firms like fire brigades, industrial fire departments, and private fire departments. As it stands, this 40-plus-year-old regulation governs firefighting operations. But OSHA wants that to change.

OSHA’s proposed rulemaking is one of the most comprehensive updates to OSHA standards in recent times, rivaling even the adjustments made for COVID-19 protocols. Weighing in at 250-pages, OSHA’s draft revisions redefine the scope of the “fire brigade” regulations and introduces modifications to a suite of related standards. These amendments touch on various aspects, from incorporation by reference and hazardous waste operations to respiratory protection and facility preparedness activities.

The core of the proposed changes lies in transitioning the “fire brigades” standard into an “Emergency Response” standard, broadening its application to include a range of emergency services beyond firefighting. OSHA’s goal is to enhance the readiness and effectiveness of workplace emergency response teams, thereby augmenting worker safety and health.

It is impossible to overview OSHA’s proposed rules in detail, given their length and complexity. At a high level, however, they categorize covered employers into Emergency Service Organizations (“ESOs”) and Workplace Emergency Response Employers (“WEREs”) or Teams (“WERTs”). This distinction is meant to differentiate between different industries. After all, private fire departments protecting chemical plants, refineries, and manufacturing facilities, face a different scale of operations and potential hazards than would a rural volunteer rescue squad.

The new rules then describe new requirements for establishing and managing workplace emergency response teams and employers, emphasizing the organization of emergency services, creation of emergency response plans, risk management, responder participation, and training requirements. Additionally, it sets forth guidelines on equipment, personal protective equipment (“PPE”), vehicle preparedness, incident management systems, and post-incident analysis, among others.

Significantly, the rules incorporate standards from the National Fire Protection Association (“NFPA”) underscores the proposed rule’s emphasis on training, health, safety, and equipment standards, particularly

for firefighting.

The proposed rule requires Emergency Service Organizations (“ESOs”) to set basic health standards for emergency responders, including regular medical checks and fitness evaluations at no cost to the responders. It also demands tracking exposures to harmful substances and keeping medical records private. ESOs must also create health and fitness programs to keep responders physically fit for their duties and mental health programs to help them deal with job stress and risks. OSHA used standards and data on firefighters’ ages and sexes to figure out what tests are needed and their costs. Some responders might need extra tests, like heart exams, based on the ESO’s decision or the health professional’s advice. Costs for these medical services come from various sources, including Medicare and Medicaid prices and estimates for specific health tests. However, OSHA’s cost estimates for providing these services are questionable and do not reflect real life medical costs.

And most significantly of all, the rules explicitly *include* volunteer fire departments and volunteer emergency medical services as covered entities. According to OSHA, this is so that volunteers meet the same safety and health standards as their professional counterparts. Undoubtedly, this will create significant—if potentially insurmountable—obstacles for Illinois volunteer emergency response organizations.

If adopted, the proposed rule will significantly impact employers and emergency service providers, necessitating substantial adjustments in how emergency services are organized, equipped, and managed. This transition underscores the importance of mutual aid agreements and collaboration among different service providers, both public and private, to ensure an effective and cohesive emergency response framework.

As the comment period progresses, stakeholders across various sectors will have the opportunity to shape the future of workplace emergency response standards. The proposed rule’s implications extend beyond regulatory compliance, promising to enhance the safety, health, and resilience of workers and communities alike.

We urge you to exercise your right to participate and ensure OSHA understands the real-life implications of its proposed rules.

John E. Motylinski is a partner with the law firm of Ottosen DiNolfo Hasenbalg & Castaldo, Ltd. in Naperville. John graduated summa cum laude from the University of Illinois College of Law and holds an undergraduate degree in political science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He focuses on the areas of local government, municipal, public pension, and labor and employment law.

Brian Johnston is a law clerk at Ottosen DiNolfo Hasenbalg & Castaldo, Ltd. in Naperville, Illinois. He is a second-year law student at the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law. Brian’s involvement includes membership in the Review of Intellectual Property Law as a writer, Trial Advocacy and Dispute Resolution Honors Program as a mock trial team member, and President of the Labor and Employment Law Society.

Health & Safety Corner

The Importance of Medical Physicals

Joseph M. Heim, CFO

As firefighters we seem to think we can handle and do anything, which for the most part we can. The one thing we sometimes don't seem to realize is the fact that we need to also prioritize our own health. This article is not going to be one of preaching on changing your lifestyle, but one of the importance of going to your doctor, listening to them and being your own advocate for your health.

What needs to be remembered is the health of every firefighter is important and like a structure fire, your health doesn't care if you receive a paycheck or not. I realize that not all departments can afford medical physicals for their members, some can afford certain aspects of them, but it is up to you as an individual to make sure to go to the doctor at a minimum of an annual basis and give them the information they need to evaluate you properly as a firefighter.

We know the facts that firefighters are at an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, this includes hypertension, cardiac arrhythmias, enlargement of the heart, along with sudden cardiac death. This is where my story comes in, back in January during my annual medical physical, the doctor noted my blood pressure was a little high and told me to keep an eye on it. Fast forward to March and during a 6-month dentist checkup, my blood pressure was over 150 systolic. I thought this was a mistake since it was one of the wrist ones and didn't believe in the accuracy of the machine. After the appointment I stopped at the fire house and took my blood pressure off of the cardiac monitor, the first reading was 154/95, thinking that couldn't be right I waited 5 minutes and took it again, it only went down to 142/95.

The next day being of the firefighter mentality, I decided to talk with a good friend Craig Haigh, about the situation and had him take my blood pressure. After he was done, I was asked how I felt, I said fine, to which he stated you have hypertension. I was definitely afraid of that conclusion, but with his infinite wisdom in firefighter physiological health his statement was "you know what the research says as you have participated in the studies, and it is not the end of your career as a firefighter."

I share this story not to gain pity or a whoa is me mentality, but to tell everyone get checked out. I have been prescribe medication from my physician and feel better now than I have in a while. It is okay to not feel right, better to go and it be nothing than for it to be too late. The other part is follow the research, there is a lot of valuable information out there today than what our predecessors before us ever had.

Be Safe!

IFA honors Senator Tom Bennett



IFA presented Sen Tom Bennett (R-Gibson City) with an award in appreciation for his strong leadership role in getting the Volunteer Emergency Worker Tax Credit law passed. The presentation was held at the Gibson City Fire Department in Rep. Bennett's hometown and in addition to local fire officials, IFA Legislative Chair Kevin Schott and Deputy State Fire Marshal Allen Reyne came out to honor Sen Bennett. The event received phenomenal media coverage throughout central Illinois, including a major story on WCIA TV news.

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¹Pew Research Center





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.



Chief James P. Seavey Sr. Health & Wellness Leadership Award: Chief John Swan Sr. (IL)

Award Co-sponsored by VFIS and Ward Diesel Filter Systems



After reading the Lavender Ribbon Report put out by the NVFC and International Association of Fire Chiefs' Volunteer and Combination Officers Section, Chief John Swan Sr. of the Colona (IL) Fire Department wanted to do more to raise awareness among firefighters about cancer risks and put into practice actions that would reduce those risks. He decided to start by focusing on immediate, on-scene, gross decontamination, knowing it would be an easy-to-implement, low-cost intervention with huge benefits. He named the program "Go Green Clean" and began to use green cattle ear tags in his station to identify clean gear. The tags were removed when headed to a fire, and the gear would not be used again until it was cleaned and had a tag back on it.

Seeing the success the Go Green Clean program had in improving firefighter safety, Swan, who was president of the Illinois Firefighters Association (IFA), decided to pitch the idea to the organization. They saw the potential, and the Go Green Clean Initiative was born with the mission to develop and promote a health intervention program to reduce the risks of firefighter cancer at the local, state, and national levels.

Inspired by the "Pink Heals" trucks and their impact on cancer awareness, Swan worked with Alexis Fire Equipment to secure a donated, working 1994 HME fire engine. Using donated funds, the engine was polished and wrapped in neon green with graphics promoting the Go Green Clean Initiative. It was then outfitted with television screens to show videos about cancer prevention. The Illinois State Fire Marshal donated buckets, soap, scrub brushes, and hoses to hand out from the truck to stations across the state. Visitors are also encouraged to sign up for the National Firefighter Registry for Cancer and are given cancer risk reduction posters to take back to their departments. Since hitting the road in 2022, the truck has visited over 40 towns and distributed over 94 free decontamination kits. It has gone to conferences and the state fair, reaching over 100,000 people.



The Go Green Clean Initiative is committed to supplying the necessary information, training, and decontamination equipment to all firefighters. Led by Swan and his dedication to firefighters, the IFA's long-term goal is to have a fleet of trucks traveling nationwide.

From the Chaplain's Rack

IFA Chaplain Josh Ehrler



When was the last time you got stuck in a spiral of “why’s?”

It most likely was a kiddo who had you cornered, and with every short answer you gave to their “why,” all you got was another one.

Asking “why” is good training for kids. Their vision of the world is breaking open. They are beginning to realize that the sky changes colors, that grass is wet in the morning, and that getting dressed to go outside is not optional. Their want to understand how the world works is a powerful motivation.

It’s also worth our time as big kids to ask ourselves, maybe even ask our crew or our department, why we do the things we do. Or care about the things we care about. On one hand, asking a firefighter why they are a firefighter will earn a very short answer: “I’m here to fight fires.” Fair. And, it’s more than that. Or maybe a better way to say it is, the reasons for why one person is firefighter will be different from the next.

Each one of us has a set of values that shape how, and why, we do what we do. We can call them our Core Values, those concepts and ideas that are central to our identity. We can call them our Moral Code. Whichever term you prefer, we’re thinking about how we see the world, what we hold as vitally important to how we walk in the world, and what we expect of others whom we share the world with.

Every person has core values. Principles that are so important to our identity that we are willing to make significant, life-changing decisions because of them. Have you left a job because you simply could not handle how the boss was running the place? Maybe they were mean to trainees, deeply offensive, or cooking the books. Whatever the reason, you were done. You left because your core values, or moral code, gave you the wisdom to get out before you had to compromise yourself.

Being able to recognize our core values is a way to know more about ourselves. I know, that soft, fuzzy psychobabble stuff. But, when we know more about how we operate and see the world, we can more easily explain when we feel “off” in a situation. Back to the whys of our childhood. Asking ourselves why a place, a space, a person, or an event doesn’t sit right with us compels us to remember what is vitally important to us (core values) and how to address what’s not working.

I suppose this is one of the fuzzy aspects of being in a fire department. There will always be a little tension because the nature of a firehouse is to gather type A, problem solving, highly motivated women and men. Self-assured people butt heads. Sometimes, though, the tension gets thick, the ability to work effectively begins to slip, recruiting gets hard, and some folks just don’t want to share the back of a cab with certain others.

If you find yourself there as person or group, it might be time for you to evaluate your core values, consider the differences and, dare I say, talk about what is vital for each. Discover the common ground and name what is distinct. Maybe even think about what the core values of the department are as a whole. What kind of people should represent the patch? What values shape the way the entire house operates?

Naming core values brings clarity for you and for others. Clarity can make working alongside others a little easier because you know what you hold dear, and you know them. Being clear about who you are can give balance, purpose, even confidence. If you are curious what the heck I’m talking about, reach out. I’d be happy to have a chat about what you value, or swap ideas about how you can name them yourself or in your house.

Chaplain Josh’s Phone 608-234-3793

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“You can’t change your past, but you can change someone’s future.”

My name is Janean Dyson. On November 20, 2019, I was burned by grease that caught fire while I was cooking. My condo did not have fire sprinklers, so the fire spread quickly.

While trying to extinguish the fire using baking soda and flour, I suffered second- and third-degree burns on my face, neck and hands, leading to two weeks spent in the hospital’s burn unit.

Burns are one of the worst injuries anyone can experience, affecting people both physically and emotionally. Today, I help guide other burn survivors through their healing process. I volunteer my time as a counselor at a summer camp for burn-injured children and also as part of a peer support program through the Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors.

I also want to increase the public’s awareness about home fire sprinklers, the only technology that can stop a fire from spreading and prevent burn injuries and deaths. Cooking fires are the leading cause of home fires.* I hate the thought of someone else going through the same experience as me. Every new home and multifamily building should be protected with fire sprinklers.



Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board
Save Lives. Protect Property.
FireSprinklerAssoc.org

*July, 2020 - As reported by the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association), the leading cause of home fires and injuries is cooking.
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PROTECTION. PERFORMANCE. DURABILITY.

MK-1 STRUCTURAL FIREFIGHTING GLOVE (Certified Compliant to NFPA 1971-2018)

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Protection:

- Unprecedented 5 layers of 100% Kevlar knit for premium thermal, cut & puncture resistance
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- NFPA 1971 Compliant moisture barrier blocks chemicals and bloodborne pathogens

Performance:

- - Multi-layer Kevlar knit with goatskin palm provides outstanding flexibility, grip, and dexterity
- Unique sculpted fingertip design provides highest level of tactility
- Intricate sewing construction for highly functional tailored fit
- Sewn down palm layers for more efficient grip

Durability:

- Premium leather and 100% Kevlar for rugged construction
- Reinforced thumb croch protects high wear area

Pricing: \$95 for Gauntlet Cuff, \$155 for Texas Cuff



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Protection:

- 100% Kevlar palm side inner liner and back side outer shell
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- Padded knuckle protection with reflective strip
- ANSI Cut Level 3 protection

Performance

- Efficient sleek design for extreme flexibility, grip and comfort
- Kangaroo skin palm provides outstanding grip wet or dry
- Smooth sculpted fingertips support best in class tactility/dexterity
- Elasticized Kevlar debris catching inner cuff

Durability

- Kevlar palm liner, back shell, and sewing thread
- Kevlar laminate reinforced back side fingers
- Extremely durable kangaroo skin palm

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Half the year is here, is your testing program in progress?



2023 is the year your fire sprinkler systems are inspected the right way!

Begin the third quarter of 2023 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.



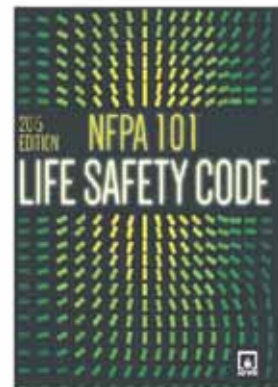
Regular Fire Sprinkler Testing is Required by the International Fire Code

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.

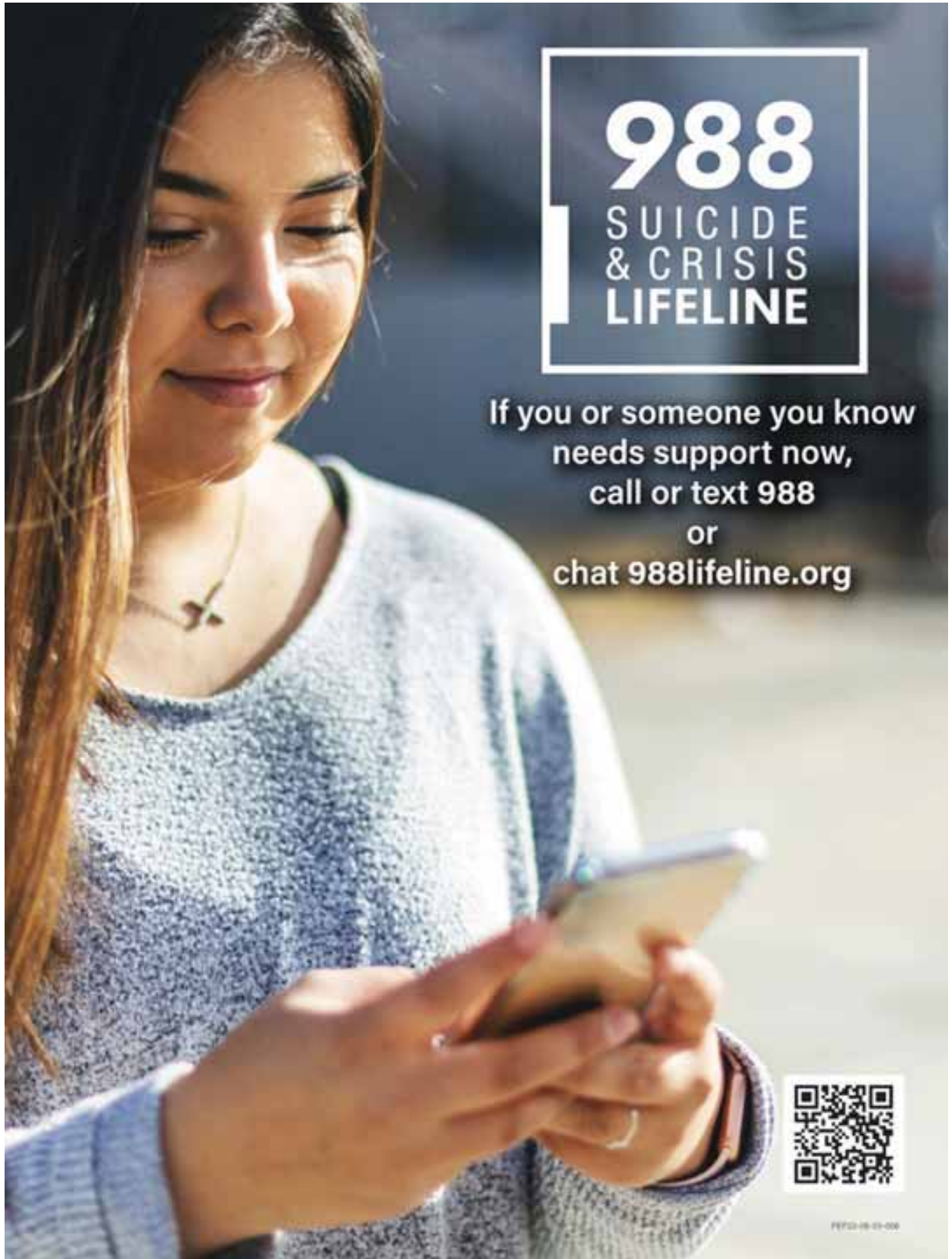
Help educate the contractors working in your town or district by giving them a copy of the state contractors licensing act.



For more information:



Is your fire sprinkler testing program for your commercial and residential occupancies in progress? Any company must be licensed by the State Fire Marshal and anyone testing a fire sprinkler system, fire pump, or standpipe 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 III 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.



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