

# *The* **Bulletin**



*Publication of the Illinois Firefighter's Association, Inc.*

**Volume 75, Number 6**

**November - December 2021**

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

## **IFA HOSTS LEGISLATIVE FORUM**



**The Illinois Firefighters hosted a legislative forum at the Belleville Firehouse, hosting fire departments and legislators from the Madison and St. Clair County area.**

## The Bulletin

November - December 2021 Volume 75 Number 6

The Bulletin is published digitally every other month and placed online at [www.illinoisfirefighters.org](http://www.illinoisfirefighters.org).

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**January 15, March 15, May 15, July 15,  
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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

Our Annual Conference is over and it appears everyone enjoyed the training and networking together. The highlight of the Conference was our Annual Memorial Service. This year, we read two years of names of our fallen firefighters that passed away. As you may remember, we canceled our Conference last year. Also, this year you may have seen a filming crew that was working on our behalf creating a marketing tool to address membership and benefits belonging to our organization. We are trying to get more proactive in getting our message out to all of you. We will be upgrading our website and using all the different media platforms in the hope that we are able to reach out to your communications needs with us. In the past, it's been disheartening to us to provide training at a very low cost and our members not taking

advantage of this benefit. We know Firefighters would take advantage of this benefit if the right communications got to them.

At our round table session Saturday morning of the Conference, many things were discussed. One of the items brought up was the tax Credit for Volunteer Firefighters or a real estate tax exemption that would benefit you as a volunteer. We will always continue to strive to create more benefits for you in hopes that this may create retention and recruitment within your department. As we try to further expand our mission across this State, it will only hinge on you being a member. There is no doubt that you are an Illinois Firefighter, but do you belong to the IFA and are you paying your dues and getting the benefits you deserve?

A couple of weeks ago, we attended the Midwest Networking Meeting in Des Moines, Iowa. At that meeting, there were eight different states that attended. Each state gave a presentation on what they were doing and the benefits they provided to their members. These meetings have been very beneficial in bringing to light possible new benefits that we could bring back to you. One of things that stood out with our State was the ability to deliver quality training statewide to the local level. Cornerstone has that capability and we must do everything in our power to see that program fully funded. IFSI and our State Fire Marshall have done an excellent job providing the training and funding necessary to meet our training needs. We have been very fortunate having a Fire Marshal recognizing and supporting the Fire Service with Firefighter safety first. As I said earlier, communication is the key to having the ability to touch every Firefighter. Our new IFSI Director Jim Keiken has been giving us monthly updates on what's going on at the Institute. His monthly address is a fine way of keeping us informed on those activities and future activities being rolled out. The Covid pandemic has been in the forefront for the last couple years now and the vaccines have been a blessing. It's not over and we continue to follow the guideline in hopes that this thing will pass. With all the Covid threats that are still around us, we still must address Firefighter cancer issues. At the last IFSA meeting (Illinois Fire Services Association) a team of researchers and administrators gave us an update on what they were trying to accomplish. Illinois is working with National teams and our own research team at IFSI trying to get funding to support ongoing research in Firefighter cancer. Until it is better understood we must use all means to reduce the risks of cancer by following the Lavender Report.

Winter is coming upon us fast and the higher risks of injury to Firefighters grows, whether on the fire scene or roadway. Be careful of slippery conditions, fall injuries grow with icy wintery conditions. It's also own twenty-five percent of deaths and injuries are driving to and from calls. Awareness and using defensive driving techniques can save more lives.

*“Train Smart, Be Safe”*

*God Bless*

*John Swan President IFA*





# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Margaret Vaughn, IFA Legislative Lobbyist

## IFA NAMES HOUSE SPEAKER WELCH HONORARY FIRE CHIEF

On November 12<sup>th</sup>, IFA Lobbyist Margaret Vaughn presented House Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch with an IFA Helmet making him an honorary Fire Chief in appreciation for his work to prevent the expansion of fireworks sales in Illinois. The presentation was held at the Westchester Fire Department in his district. Pictured left to right

IL Fire Safety Alliance Executive Director Phil Zaleksi, Speaker Chris Welch and IFA Lobbyist Margaret Vaughn.



## IFA HOSTS REGIONAL LEGISLATIVE FORUM in BELLEVILLE

Following a press conference at the Belleville Fire Department on the 10 Year Smoke Detector Law, IFA coordinated a Legislative Forum for St. Clair and Madison County Fire Officials. Legislators in attendance included Sen. Chris Belt (D-East St. Louis), Rep. Katie Stuart (D-Edwardsville) and Rep. Amy Elik (R-Alton). The Forum was an opportunity for fire officials to get to know their legislators better and for legislators to gain a better understanding of local fire safety needs.

## FALL SMOKE DETECTOR PRESS CONFERENCES WRAP UP

For the past four years, thanks to a public education grant from First Alert, the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance has worked with IFA to organize press conferences for the 10 Year Smoke Detector law, set to go into effect January 1, 2023. This past fall, press conferences were held at the following fire departments: Belleville, Chicago Heights, Dixon, Franklin Park, Galesburg, Mt Vernon, Normal and St. Charles and they each received 8 installation kits and 100 of the 10 year model smoke detector to install in local homes.



## LEGISLATIVE SPRING SCHEDULE 2022

Every 10 years, based on the Census results, new legislative maps need to be drawn to reflect the changes in population and approved by the General Assembly by July 1<sup>st</sup> according to the Illinois Constitution. However, because of COVID, the Census results did not come out until August and there have been revisions and legal challenges made to the new maps that were approved last spring. The Congressional maps were just approved last week during the veto session. As a result, the spring primary for 2022 has been moved from March to June 28<sup>th</sup>, to give candidates time to figure out which district they are running in and for the state Board of Elections to make modifications to the process if further changes have to be made to the maps.

***How does this impact the spring session calendar?*** Ordinarily the legislature adjourns on May 31<sup>st</sup> and is in session 3 days a week from late January to April and then 5 days a week and sometimes weekends in May. However, the new schedule has the legislature returning January 4<sup>th</sup> and adjourning April 8<sup>th</sup> with many full weeks in between.



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.

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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](mailto:editor@illinoisfirefighters.org).**



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## Office of the State Fire Marshal



The COVID-19 pandemic really put a strain on fire department budgets across the state but impacted smaller combination or volunteer fire departments/districts the hardest. These smaller departments rely on fundraising activities to help keep fuel in their trucks and the lights on in the firehouse. The OSFM wanted to find a way to help those departments/districts to replace lost revenues. The State of Illinois COVID Relief Grant was established after working with the Governor's Office to secure funding. Under this one-time grant opportunity, eligible Illinois fire departments could receive up to \$15,000 in order to make up for lost donation revenues stemming from their inability to host local fundraising events during the periods of quarantines in 2020. A total of 36 fire departments/districts received a total of \$316,000 in funding.

The OSFM collaborated with the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association (IFCA) who helped assemble a special committee to review the grant applications utilizing a blind review needs-based analysis. This grant was financed through the Illinois Fire Prevention Fund, a non-general revenue fund that is supported primarily by a 1% assessment of the gross fire risk premium receipts of all insurance companies operating in the state.

The OSFM continues to work hard to provide funding and training opportunities to all departments through grants and loans from our office. Check the OSFM website, follow our social media pages, and make sure you continue to check your FDmail accounts as our office sends out eblast with important information about grants and other funding opportunities.

It's vital that all departments/districts across the state keep their NFIRS data current as this can cause them to become ineligible to receive grants and loans, not only from the OSFM, but also from federal sources. In the October 2021 NFIRS compliance report, of the 1038 departments on the report, 303 (29.2%) were deemed ineligible due to not being compliant. Even if your department/district doesn't respond to a call during a month, you must still complete and submit a no activity report. It's important to make sure that your reports are being accepted by the NFIRS system once you have submitted them. If you have questions about your compliance status, you can always view the latest report on our website at [sfm.illinois.gov](http://sfm.illinois.gov) under the grants and loans page, and reach out to our office with any questions.

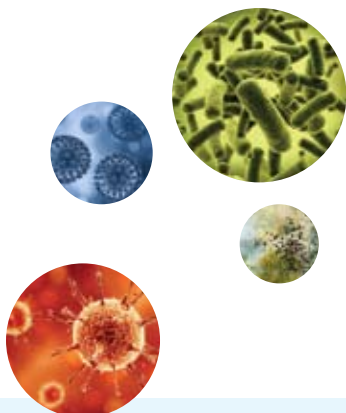
The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports between 2014-2018, almost three out of every five home fire deaths in the U.S. resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or non-working smoke alarms. The death rate per 1,000 reported home fires was more than twice as high in homes that did not have any working smoke alarms compared to the rate in homes with working smoke alarms. In fires in which the smoke alarms were present but did not operate, two of every five of the smoke alarms had missing or disconnected batteries. Dead batteries caused one-quarter (26%) of the smoke alarm failures. In Illinois, 80% of smoke alarms being replaced aren't working. By replacing alarms that have missing batteries or ones that are either expired or broken with new ten-year sealed detectors, this will help to reduce residential fire deaths across the state. Spend a few minutes and make sure everyone in your home knows what to do and where to go if a fire was to break out. This quick family meeting could help prevent a tragedy from occurring. The OSFM continues to stress the importance of having working smoke and CO alarms in homes across the state.



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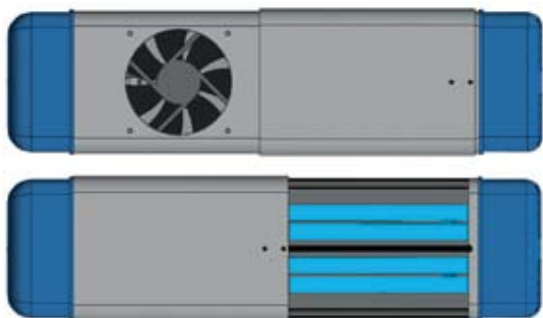
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Illinois Fire Safety Alliance



# The Bulletin

## Federal OSHA Issues Emergency Vaccination Mandate

by **Meganne Trela**  
**Ottosen DiNolfo Hasenbalg & Castaldo, Ltd.**

The United States Occupational Safety and Health Administration (“OSHA”) recently released an emergency rulemaking that requires mandatory vaccination or routine testing. While public employers, like Illinois fire departments, are not currently covered by these new rules, they could be amended in the future or applied via Illinois’ own OSHA. As a result, fire departments should start preparing to comply. Thankfully, given Governor J.B. Pritzker’s vaccination mandate for fire and EMS personnel, many fire departments may already be in compliance.

### **Requirements**

OSHA’s emergency rules are somewhat reminiscent of Governor Pritzker’s “vaccination or routine testing” order. First, a covered employer must “establish, implement, and enforce” a vaccination policy. By default, employers have to enact a “hard” mandate, which requires every employee to become vaccinated without any option to rely on routine testing instead. Yet, the employer can change to a “soft” mandate if they establish, implement, and enforce a written policy that allows employees to choose to be fully vaccinated *or* provide proof of weekly testing and wear a facemask.

Then, the employer must determine the vaccination status of every employee, including proof of vaccination status. The employer has to keep both records of the status and proof of vaccination for every employee *and* maintain a roster of the employee vaccination status. This information is all considered “employee medical records,” confidential, and must not be disclosed except as required by federal law (and to OSHA, when they ask).

To encourage vaccination, employers are required to provide up to four hours of time to employees to get each dose of the vaccine. Employers should also provide “reasonable sick time” to recover from each dose of the vaccine. This requirement only applies to “primary doses”—*not* boosters.

For all employees that do not get vaccinated, the employer must require proof of a negative COVID-19 test every seven days and retain the records and proof of the test result. The employer does not have to pay for the testing. However, in unionized workplaces, this aspect is subject to impact bargaining. Additionally, face coverings are required for employees that are not fully vaccinated, unless they are in an office with a closed door, eating or using biometric security sensors, or wearing some other acceptable form of facemask. In the event an employee tests positive, the employer must require the employee to promptly notify the employer, remove the employee from the workplace until they get a negative result, follow the CDC isolation guidance, or get a note from the employee’s physician confirming they can return to work.

In addition to record-keeping, employers are required to inform employees of the employer’s policy, the employee’s right to non-retaliation for filing an OSHA complaint, that providing false information or documents is a criminal offense, and the safety and benefit of vaccination by providing a document posted on the CDC’s website.<sup>1</sup>

### **Scope**

At the moment, the new OSHA rules apply only to non-governmental employers with 100 or more employees. This may change, however, as OSHA indicated the initial scope of the rules was defined with an eye towards enforcement feasibility. Further, the rules do not apply to “settings where any employee provides healthcare services or healthcare support services” or to workplaces that work entirely remotely.

### **Timing**

Under the terms of the new rules, covered employers must meet all of the above requirements, except starting the weekly testing program by December 5, 2021. Employers then have 60 days to begin the weekly testing program. However, a federal appeals court has temporarily suspended OSHA’s new rules entirely. At this point, it is unclear when the rules will take effect, if ever.

### **Conclusion**

While OSHA’s rule does not currently have a direct effect on Illinois fire departments, it may in the future. Luckily, because fire and EMS personnel are required to be vaccinated through the Illinois Governor’s mandate already, any application of the OSHA requirement to a fire department will require minimal, if any, changes. If you have questions about the application of the new OSHA rule or Illinois’ vaccination mandate, please contact your attorney.

***Meganne Trela** is an associate with the law firm of Ottosen DiNolfo Hasenbalg & Castaldo, Ltd. in the firm’s Naperville office. Meganne concentrates her practice in the areas of municipal and school law. She assists clients with legal matters involving collective bargaining, contracts, employment issues, insurance, property disputes, public pensions, and litigation.*

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1 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/keythingstoknow.html>



# 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](https://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](https://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](https://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.







## The first time I saw how a fire sprinkler worked, I was a little upset ...

My name is Jordan Rodriguez. As a burn survivor, I never want anyone to go through what my family has gone through. My twin brother and I were burned in a house fire when we were 4 years old. While the rest of the family escaped without physical harm, my brother received burns on 43% of his body; 80% of my body was burned. We had many surgeries and spent months in the hospital. There was a mental toll to the fire as well. While growing up, I was bullied and often felt left out. Our mother was devastated and our older brother still deals with post-traumatic stress disorder.

When I was a young man, I saw a demonstration that compared a fire in a sprinklered room versus a fire in an unsprinklered room. ***I was upset because I realized that life would have been different for my family if our home had fire sprinklers.*** I was upset because I know how many homes and apartments do not have fire sprinklers. Now I am committed to being the biggest advocate I can be.

---

*You can directly impact your community's efforts to reduce fire risks by adopting and enforcing the latest codes that require fire sprinklers in all buildings. A fire can become deadly in less than two minutes. Fire sprinklers are the only technology that can actively prevent a fire from becoming deadly, protecting occupants and firefighters.*



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## Teens Inherit Parents' Driving Habits

Your son or daughter may have your eyes and your talent for sports. They also likely have your driving habits. Studies have shown that teen drivers often model their driving off of their parents.

Whether that's good news... or not so good.... here's a closer look at this phenomenon, and how you can keep your teen safe on the road.

### What We Say Vs. What We Do

What parents **do** behind the wheel has a greater impact than what they **say**, according to a study by Toyota and the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute. Researchers surveyed new drivers aged 16-18 and parents of this age group. They found that teens who engage in unsafe driving behaviors, such as cell phone use, often have parents who do the same.

That makes sense because long before your teen started driving, he/she was a passenger in your car. For years, you have been modeling driving habits without realizing it. Therefore, telling your teen not to text when driving – when you do it – can actually suggest that it's really okay.

### Tips for Parents of Teen Drivers

Now that your teen is driving, this is a good time to revisit and possibly revamp your driving habits. Here are seven easy ways that you can set a good example for your young driver.

#### ***1. Refresh yourself on the rules of the road.***

It's been a while since you've studied for your state driving test. Now might be a good time for a refresh. Pick up your state's DMV handbook and review the rules. If your teen sees you taking this seriously, he/she will too. Pay special attention to your state's graduated driver licensing program. States have these laws to ease new drivers into driving with limited hours, limited passengers and other precautions.

#### ***2. Put away the phone.***

If you've ever texted or made a call while driving, you're not alone. This distracted driving behavior is as common among adults as teens. But cell phone use is as dangerous as driving under the influence. You are just as likely to get into a crash when using a cell phone as when drinking and driving. Teens are frequent texters, and the temptation to do so behind the wheel is great. A study in the Journal of Adolescent Health revealed that nearly 40 percent of teens had texted or emailed while driving in the past 30 days. That's why it's important to model behavior where you put your cell phone away. Don't use it at stop signs or red lights. Consider using your phone's "do not disturb" setting while driving. That will automatically put it out of commission.

#### ***3. Put away the food.***

It might be common for you to eat or drink behind the wheel. After all, isn't that what drive-throughs are for? Yet anything that takes your attention away from the road is a distraction that could cause an accident. Instead of eating while driving, pull over into a parking spot. Then you can really enjoy that hot lunch, coffee or treat with your teen.



### **4. Watch your speed.**

It's tempting to drive faster when you're running late. You also may speed when you're tired after a long day and you just want to get home. However, speeding is never safe and often costly—in terms of tickets and wear-and-tear on your tires. Speeding also uses more gas. Make every effort to drive the speed limit with your teen. Set your car to cruise control. Remember why you are modeling this behavior.

### **5. Talk to your teen about drinking and driving.**

The teenage years are filled with experimentation. Your teen may on occasion try alcohol, even if it's illegal and you have forbidden it. As we know, drinking and driving are a dangerous combination. About one in four teen car crashes involve driving under the influence, according to the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#). Talk with your teen about their options should they find themselves in a situation where they – or a friend – have been drinking and is about to get in the driver's seat. Emphasize that it is never okay to drink and drive and that the consequences could be deadly.

### **6. Make time to drive with your teen.**

Your teen has watched you drive for years. Now it is your turn. Make the time to drive with your teen, in [all road conditions](#). Show them that you trust them behind the wheel. Compliment him/her on safe driving behaviors. The more time you spend in the car with them, the more comfortable you (and they) will be when they are driving on their own.

### **7. Create a written safety agreement.**

Sure, you've told your teen a hundred times not to text while driving and to be home by 10 pm. But putting those rules in writing makes them official. A written [safety](#) agreement shows in black and white exactly what you expect from your teen. Violations of that agreement could result in loss of driving privileges.

Use the elements of your state's graduated license program as a basis for the safety agreement. This will likely include limiting the number of passengers in the car with your teen and the times that he/she can be on the road. Make sure you include any other family rules such as the curfew for the car being home, and how you wish your teen to check in with you. In doing so, you are setting up your teen for a lifetime of safe driving.



#### **Katelyn Hoffman, California Casualty Local Representative**

Katelyn Hoffman has been serving Illinois Firefighters Association Members as a California Casualty Representative since January 2018. To get a quote from California Casualty, please contact Katelyn at [Khoffman@calcas.com](mailto:Khoffman@calcas.com), call 833.989.3579 or visit [www.readyforquote.com/katelyn](http://www.readyforquote.com/katelyn) today!

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



U.S. Fire Administration  
Working for a fire-safe America

## NFA BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

*presented by*

The National Fire Academy, Illinois Fire Service Institute,  
Alsip Fire Department & Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Initiative



### DATE:

**DECEMBER 2 & 3, 2021**

### LOCATION:

**BILL DALTON TRAINING CENTER  
AT LOCAL 281 UA**

11900 S. Laramie Avenue, Alsip  
(right next to the **Alsip Fire Department**)

### SCHEDULE FOR BOTH DAYS:

<b>7:00AM</b>	<b>CHECK-IN</b>	* Continental breakfast provided
<b>8:00AM</b>	<b>CLASS</b>	
<b>11:30AM</b>	<b>LUNCH PROVIDED</b>	
<b>12:30PM</b>	<b>CLASS</b>	
<b>4:30PM</b>	<b>OVERVIEW</b>	



Fire Chief  
Tom Styczynski



## CLASS INFORMATION

**Course Instructor: Scott Barthelmass**

This two-day course is designed to help fire and emergency services learn what community risk reduction is and how to build organizational support for it.

This course includes three units of instruction:

- Unit 1: Components of Community Risk Reduction.
- Unit 2: Community Risk Reduction as a Service Priority.
- Unit 3: Building Organizational Support for Community Risk Reduction.

There is a pre-course assignment to complete before class that should take about one hour to complete.

If you have specific questions regarding the course, contact:

**James Moore, Assistant Director**  
[jpmoore1@illinois.edu](mailto:jpmoore1@illinois.edu)

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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! **[Click Here](#)** for a list of past grant recipients and frequently asked questions.

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,**



# From the Chaplain's Rack

IFA Chaplain Josh Ehrler



Have you been doomscrolling?

First, do you know what doomscrolling is? Go ahead, take a minute, google it. In essence, its scrolling through Facebook or your favorite social media app, reading bad news. Instead of turning away, you keep going down the feed. Doomscrolling is difficult to stop.

This isn't just a social media thing, so let's not jump straight to cursing our devices. We see it when we watch the news. A 2019 study of humans across 17 countries through the National Academy of Sciences found a significant uptick in heart rate when folks

watched "bad news" versus "good news." Humans are attracted to disaster and crisis stories.

And here's one of the things I think about when I see those "bad news" events on my screen. I think about all of you. I think about my department that, once in a great while, has the unwanted privilege of being a front page/top of the hour story. While civilians are consuming the news, we in the fire service are the news.

Doomscrolling is just a term to describe a human process of dwelling in the badness. And I know, I hear it all the time, we in the fire service are tough. We're unaffected. We come off a bad medical or fire scene and try like hell to move on. We'll talk about it at the report, maybe say a little later on, but otherwise, keep it to ourselves. It's part of the job. It's the nature of the beast. You've heard all that. Maybe you've said all that.

I want to be really clear in saying, my role as a Fire Chaplain is not to create what doesn't exist. Every call affects everyone differently. I could do a full debrief with responding companies after a big call and discover no one is negatively dwelling. That's great. My intent is not to force what isn't there.

My goal in talking about these things is to remind us that we don't get to pick the call that our minds will obsess about. The wild thing about our brains is we cannot control how mental pathways are formed and which smell, song, or sight is going to flip our switch and send us down a rabbit hole out of which we cannot climb.

If you are doomscrolling (dwelling on) a scene or an event, please reach out to someone. Call your Fire Chaplain, that is the exact reason they exist in your department. Call your EAP (Employee Assistance Program) if your insurance offers it. Call your priest or rabbi. Heck, call me. We've never met, but I'm the Chaplain for the IFA, this is my role. I'm here to walk with you and find you resources. Do not let yourself spiral down in frustration and sadness. We have too much heavy drinking, too many divorces, too much risky behavior, far too many suicides in the fire service (one is too many), much of it rooted in us trying to tough it out and carry all those calls that we don't want to admit are continuously scrolling in your thoughts.

You are the one the community calls when they are in distress. Who do you call when the mayday in your mind is going off? Your mental health is vital because you are vital to your department. You are more than one bad call. Take care of yourself, take care of your company, watch out for each other.

<b>Safe Call Now</b>	(24-7 crisis hotline for first responders)	<b>206-459-3020</b>
<b>National Suicide Prevention Hotline</b>		<b>800-273-8255</b>
<b>Chaplain Josh's Phone</b>		<b>608-234-3793</b>

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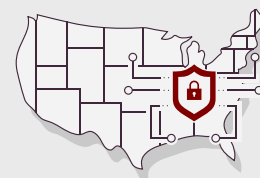
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# FIRE PREVENTION ALERT

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