

# *The* **Bulletin**



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

**Volume 72, Number 4**

**July - August 2018**

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



IFA Lobbyist Margaret Vaughn spearheads "Dangers of Fire Works" Press Conference at Alexian Brother's Hospital bringing together safety officials and medical experts to explain impact of fireworks on kids, pets and Vets with PTSD

The Bulletin is published digitally every other month at Highland, Illinois

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## **Mission Statement**

Dedicated to the advancement of the Fire Service by providing leadership. The Association will proudly support 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

The summer is upon us and things are getting pretty hot. Not only the weather but the political environment as well. It appears to me that the only way to become a governor in this state, is that you would need to be a billionaire first. This almost eliminates any other qualified candidates unless you have MPG (Money, Power, Gets it done). You might ask why I keep discussing the political issues that face us. I hope you understand that the leadership in our State House are the ones that help support us outside of our jurisdiction. The Fire Service has taken big hits in the past on programs and services over the years. Not because of the lack of funds, but because of reducing budgets and appropriations.

This has been an ongoing problem for a long time coming from both sides of the aisle. The Fire Prevention Fund, in my opinion, has been used as a slush fund for the General Fund. Raiding this fund has had a big dramatic impact on the Fire Service especially for the small departments that need it most. This is another reason why I'll be writing positional letters to be sent out shortly to both candidates for Governor asking them, "Will you protect the Fire Prevention Fund and fully appropriate funds that support all the programs and budget items listed at the State Fire Marshal's Office". It is imperative that we seek answers before November for our own benefit. We also must understand that we are a sleeping giant and have the power in numbers to be considered as a swing vote.

On another note, we will be sending out the 2018 Conference and Down & Dirty Training flyers very soon. We are all geared up and ready to go on this fall's Conference.

The Illinois State Fair is the next thing on a agenda. We always have the last Saturday during the fair to be our work day. This year it is August 18th at the State Fire Marshal's tent. I want to invite anyone that wishes to help to call one of our Directors or me if you would like to man the tent. It's always a fun day and very rewarding, The hours start at 10 am and the workday stops at 5pm.

When I said the summer is starting off hot, I really meant it. We have already recorded a couple days of record heat. Working on the fire scene can become very dangerous, not only for the working conditions, but the extreme heat from the environment. Remember to keep your self well hydrated and drink plenty of water and rest at the rehab areas.

Lastly, we all know about the cancer risks we face as firefighters at our job. If you have not started a decon program with primary and secondary decon cleaning after a fire, you are taking a much higher risk of contracting cancer. We have started a program in our department at Colona Fire called GO GREEN CLEAN. We are marking all of our gear and air packs with green tags showing that its been cleaned after each use at a fire scene. This gives each firefighter and their partner a heads up to each other and the awareness that we are maintaining clean gear. You heard of pink for breast cancer awareness, we elected to use green as our motto in keeping clean for firefighter cancer prevention. Whatever you do to protect yourself after each fire make sure you do good personal hygiene and proper cleaning of your equipment.

With that being said, *"Train Smart, Be Safe"*

*God Bless*

*John Swan President IFA*





# Legislative update

By Margaret Vaughn, IFA Legislative Lobbyist

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADJOURNS ON TIME**

For the first time in modern memory, the General Assembly adjourned on time and passed a budget that the Governor signed right away. Last year the budget did not pass till July 4<sup>th</sup> only to be vetoed and other years the General Assembly has been called back in session through August to try to get the budget done. The State's fiscal year begins July 1<sup>st</sup>, but the goal is always for the General Assembly to adjourn by May 31<sup>st</sup>, because anything beyond that requires a 3/5ths vote (rather than just a simple majority) vote to pass.

## **FUNDING INCREASE for FIREFIGHTER TRAINING**

The good news was there was no sweeps to the Fire Prevention Fund and funding actually

- Full statutory funding for the Chicago Fire Department Training Program (\$2.8 million) and IFSI (\$4.2 million)
- MABAS - \$125,000
- Local Government Training Reimbursement - \$950,000
- Senior Officer Training - \$55,000
- Provides additional state support for various training programs at IFSI - \$645,000
- Cornerstone - \$350,000 (*this is on top of other funding*)
- Winter Fire School, Down and Dirty and the Annual Fire College - \$230,000 (funding to offset lodging costs for participants)
- Explorer-Cadet Program - \$65,000
- Computer-based Certification Testing - \$590,000

## **Fireworks Issues Pops Back Up**

On June 28<sup>th</sup> I organized a press conference at Amita Alexian Brother's Women's & Children's Hospital in Hoffman Estates on the dangers of fireworks. A family practice doctor spoke on injuries; their top psychologist spoke on the impact on vets with PTSD and two veterinarians explained the devastating effect of fireworks on pets and provided tips on how to keep animals calm. The event wrapped up with a live sparkler demonstration by retired Chief Mike Figolah to show how a simple brush of a sparkler can engulf clothing in under a minute. The press conference was covered by Chicago tv, radio and newspaper outlets and got great coverage.

Unfortunately, on July 3<sup>rd</sup> State Representative Barb Wheeler R-Crystal Lake 217) 782-1664 introduced HB 5928 to legal the sale of fireworks in Illinois, this happened during the same time when our border states of Indiana and Iowa both saw fatalities from the types of fireworks HB 5928 seeks to legalize. The General Assembly does not return to Springfield until mid-November, but I will stay diligent in fighting this legislation. Rep. Dave Severin R- Marion ((618) 440-5090), Rep CD David Meyer, (217) 243-6221, and Rep. Joe Sosnowski (R-Rockford) 815) 547-3436 are all co-sponsors.

*What can you do?* Please call their offices and let them know you are adamantly opposed to HB 5928 and any kind of fireworks expansion. Let me know that you contacted their offices, so I can keep track [mvaugh@springnet1.com](mailto:mvaugh@springnet1.com)

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## California Casualty Honors Future Firefighters

Young people are our future, and that is certainly true for the fire service. Encouraging young, enthusiastic and motivated men and women is crucial to continuing the valiant work of protecting our communities. That's why California Casualty is once again proud to sponsor the NVFC's Junior Firefighter of the Year and the Junior Firefighter Program of the Year awards.

It's our honor to congratulate Jared Hagen from the Northwest Fire Explorer Post in Ohio – chosen as the 2018 Junior Firefighter of the year, and also the Gaston, North Carolina Fire Department's Junior Firefighter Program, named the Junior firefighter Program of the Year.

Jared is a deserving recipient for this year's Junior Firefighter. He is an Eagle Scout who has spearheaded numerous fire and emergency service projects and has served in every leadership capacity at the post, including being the current elected post president. For his Eagle Scout project, Jared located 12 hidden fire hydrants throughout his community, and is now securing funding to mark all of them.

Jared has served as lead instructor at the Ohio Youth Fire and EMS Training Academy. He attends Stark State College's Emergency Service Program, where he has amassed enough college and high school credit, allowing him to begin working as a paid-on-call EMT for the Canal Fulton Fire Department following his high school graduation this past spring. Jared's father, Jeff, is a firefighter/EMT with the Canal Fulton FD, and Jared plans to follow his dad's footsteps to become a wildland firefighter.

Meanwhile, the Gaston, North Carolina, Volunteer Fire Department's Junior Firefighter Program is the NVFC's national award winner for 2018. In its fifth year as a recruitment tool, it excels in training, team building and strong community involvement. Students aged 14-17 take part in fire prevention and special activities for the department, and serve as counselors for an annual youth camp. They also participate in Easter and Christmas programs that serve youth in the community, and the students have prepared and served a Thanksgiving feast for the station as well as a family in need.

The Gaston teens showed their firefighting skills when they took second place in the local junior firefighter muster. Most importantly, more than half of the recruits join fire departments after graduation.

California Casualty has been proud to serve firefighters, like Jared and the committed youth of Gaston, North Carolina, for more than 40 years. Our company also provides funding for the NVFC Junior Firefighter Program Starter Kit, which aids fire agencies in starting their own community program to develop future volunteer and career firefighters. Learn more about the program at <http://juniors.nvfc.org/resources>.

California Casualty believes in giving back to the groups we serve in meaningful ways. We've provided Firehouse Makeovers to departments with outdated facilities. Our company sponsors and participates in 9/11 stair climb events around the country – where firefighters, law enforcement, educators and the public turn out to honor those who died on 9/11 and raise funds for the Fallen Firefighters Memorial Foundation's efforts to aid families who have lost a firefighter in the line of duty.

Once again, California Casualty will be paying the cost for four Illinois firefighters to attend the 2018 Down and Dirty Fire Fighting Conference.

We are also involved on a personal level. Illinois Field Marketing Managers Justine Sallee, Kathy Smith, Katie Dunn and Katelyn Kassel visit firehouses and attend trainings and conferences across the Prairie



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State. They volunteer to help with golf tournaments and other fire department benefits, as well as explaining benefits, like auto and home/renters insurance, that you are eligible for as a member of the IFA.

Because you give so much, we feel it's our duty to show appreciation for all that you do. California Casualty is privileged to have earned your trust, and we will continue to support firefighters and other first responders for many years to come.

As a way to say thank you for all the hard work that you do, California Casualty is inviting Illinois firefighters and EMTs to enter for the Work Hard/Play Hard "Better Safe than Sorry" sweepstakes. Three lucky first responders will win the Liberty Safe of their choice filled with a collection of 5.11 tactical gear that includes a backpack, carry bag, RAID Glasses, flashlight, hats and more. Get the details at [www.contest4heroes.com](http://www.contest4heroes.com).

Our representatives are always willing to visit your fire station to explain your auto and home benefits, and show how California Casualty supports firefighters across Illinois. Contact them, and learn more about the Down and Dirty Giveaway at:

Justine, 815.608.6326 or [jsallee@calcas.com](mailto:jsallee@calcas.com)

Kathy, 630.561.8318 or [kdsmith@calcas.com](mailto:kdsmith@calcas.com)

Katie, 309.212.2187 or [kdunn@calcas.com](mailto:kdunn@calcas.com)

Katelyn, 314.607.3309 or [kkassel@calcas.com](mailto:kkassel@calcas.com)

**This article furnished by California Casualty, providing auto and home insurance to firefighters since 1974 and to IFA members since 2012. Get a quote at 1.800.800.9410 or [www.calcas.com/IFA](http://www.calcas.com/IFA).**

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## Annual Memorial Program



Each year, in conjunction with the annual training conference, the IFA holds a Memorial Service honoring those firefighters that have passed on. We honor *ALL firefighters*, not just IFA members. If you know of a firefighter that has passed, they can be honored at the memorial

service if you send their name to the memorial committee. Please send any names of firefighters that have passed between September 1, 2017 through September 1, 2018 to [memorial@illinoisfirefighters.org](mailto:memorial@illinoisfirefighters.org).



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## Office of the State Fire Marshal

The Office of the State Fire Marshal, among its many duties, is responsible for adopting training standards and establishing state certifications for Illinois firefighters. The certifications granted by the OSFM carry with them an expectation for continued competency. This furthers safety and effective operations as firefighters work in a very high risk environments. Theoretically, after receiving a certification, firefighters could allow their skills to deteriorate to a point that they could no longer perform at the same competency level they did when they passed their initial certification tests. Allowing firefighters to deploy in this scenario puts them, their fellow firefighters, and the public in a precarious position.

The idea of adding continuing education requirements for OSFM certifications was introduced three years ago in 2015. The concept was initially presented to the Illinois Fire Services Association (IFSA). It was later reviewed and recommended by the Fire Advisory Committee (FAC) to the OSFM. After receiving the support from both of these organizations, which draw member representatives from all of the Illinois fire service organizations (career, part time, paid on call, and volunteer) the continuing education initiative was sent to the Illinois legislature where it underwent the rulemaking process and eventually became law. The new regulatory addition was subsequently included as a topic for all State Certification Advisory Committees (SCAC) to consider during their review process.

The need for continuing education is determined by the SCAC for each certification. If needed, they also determine the type of training and hours required. Like the IFSA and FAC, the SCACs consist of representatives from all of the Illinois fire service organizations. They serve the FAC and the OSFM as subject matter experts in the training standard adoption process. Once the SCAC establishes a recommendation, it is forwarded to the FAC who approves and then recommends it to the OSFM for adoption into our administrative regulations. Once accepted, the proposed standard is vetted through the rulemaking process by the Illinois legislature's Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR). The public, including any member of the fire service, may also weigh in on the proposed standard during the comment period before it becomes state law.

The OSFM was very open and transparent about the continuing education initiative. We made every attempt to gain feedback from the organizations that represent every area of the Illinois fire service, and included our proposed actions at every fire service conference and symposium that we attended. The feedback that we are now receiving, after the standard has become law, shows that despite our efforts the impact of the state regulation was not fully appreciated or understood by all.

While the ability to validate firefighter competency remains paramount and prudent for a variety of reasons, the OSFM is utilizing the feedback that we are now receiving to reassess the issue. My goals moving forward are:

- 1 – Solicit further feedback from all stakeholders who wish to opine about the subject;
- 2 - Identify an acceptable level of continuing education that sufficiently demonstrates a functional grasp of the skills that would support a state certification; and
- 3 – Minimize the level of documentation currently required by the , while developing improved methods of submitting such documentation to our agency in the future.

In every decision we make, the functional capacity, safety and well-being of the firefighters we serve remains our highest priority. If you have any comments, questions or suggestions concerning this or any other issue with our office I would encourage you to contact us.



# Illinois Fire Service Institute Updates

Jim Keiken, Deputy Director



## Mark Your Training Calendar

**Leadership Development and Decision Making** - October 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**IFA Down and Dirty Weekend** - October 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018

**NFPA Firefighter 1 Challenge Exam** - November 3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

**IFSI Winter Fire School** - January 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019

For more information on upcoming classes visit our website @ <http://www.fsi.illinois.edu/>

Welcome to summers and things at the Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI) are hot. As IFSI ended May, we completed our first Advanced Technician Firefighter/ NFPA Firefighter II course and the reviews are in and based on student the new ATF is a hit.

The Advanced Technician Firefighter/ NFPA Firefighter II course exceeds all requirements outlined by the Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal and NFPA 1001. This course provides the student with the knowledge and skills necessary to operate under general supervision during Firefighting operations. This course focuses on an intense hands-on approach to advanced firefighting skills. Students will experience advanced lectures to promote critical thinking, practical skills evaluations to promote competency and live fire scenarios to promote teamwork and coordinated fire attack.

The **94th Annual Fire College** was held **June 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>** and offered greater flexibility in course topics and scheduling than any Fire College prior. Students could select from twenty-seven class options to create their own training schedule to meets their personal and professional needs. Each course delivered deliver information at the forefront of national training standards. Watch for the more information and the results of these changes in the next Bulletin!

The Illinois Fire Service Institute was proud to offer the **16<sup>th</sup> Annual Explorer Cadet Fire School** Right after Fire College **July 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> 2018**. This unique training program delivered hands-on, live fire training to Explorers, Cadets, and Junior Firefighters between the ages of 15-20 years old. IFSI Field Instructors carefully designed each course to include skill-building exercises, practical application evolutions, and multiple immersive training scenarios that will challenge all skill levels.

## **IFSI is BIG into Social Media**

Have you “Friended” IFSI and IFSI Research on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Snapchat? If you haven’t you should. IFSI’s social media is your direct access to the latest information on not only IFSI classes but also insight into IFSI students and instructors as well as the latest fire service research. As well as IFSI informational videos and terrific photos. With thousands of followers, IFSI social media is the place to be, don’t be left out.

## **WE ARE IFSI**

Lian Ruan, IFSI Librarian and Director of International Programs, has been recognized as one of 150 influential women in the 150-year history of the University of Illinois. The ‘150 for 150’ honor celebrates women and their impact on the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The University of Illinois in 1999, becoming the Head Librarian of the Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI). Beginning in 2005, Lian has led the IFSI Chinese Librarians Scholarly Exchange Program which has trained more than 340 librarians from all over China. She received her masters and Ph.D. from the School of Information Sciences (previously the Graduate School of Library and Information Science.) Among other awards and leadership positions, Lian is the winner of the University of Illinois’ Chancellor’s Academic Professional Excellence Award, the Special Libraries Association Diversity Leadership Development Program Award, CALA President Recognition Award, and Illinois Academic Librarian of the Year Award. Congratulations Dr. Ruan!

## **Illinois Fire Service Institute Library**

The Illinois Fire Service Institute Library (IFSI Library) provides fire/emergency library and information assistance and services to the Institute’s instructional staff, students, Illinois fire departments and firefighters, and other fire/emergency-related users in the successful and effective performance of their jobs.

The Library selects, acquires, organizes, maintains, utilizes and disseminates fire/emergency literature and media

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resources internally and externally, with the objective of furnishing accurate, up-to-date, timely, complete and relevant information assistance on the optimum usage of the facilities.

### Challenge Exam Program

The Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI) is now offering a **Challenge Exam for the NFPA Firefighter I** level. The Challenge Exam for the NFPA Firefighter I level gives experienced firefighters the opportunity to obtain national certification. Students will be required to complete a two-part evaluation consisting of a written exam and hands-on skills evaluations.

The Challenge Exam Program allows those who have completed training to a given level but do not currently hold an IFSAC or Pro Board National Certification, to complete an IFSI evaluation to prove competency and obtain National Certification. All Challenge Exams are based on NFPA Professional Qualification Standards. Challenge Exams are designed to give experienced firefighters the opportunity to obtain a portable certificate recognized in many other states, countries, and by government contractors.

**Course Dates:** November 3-4, 2018.

Courses will take place at the IFSI Training Grounds in Champaign.

For more information and prerequisite information: [https://www.fsi.illinois.edu/content/courses/programs/description.cfm?course\\_id=980](https://www.fsi.illinois.edu/content/courses/programs/description.cfm?course_id=980)

### Search Techniques for the Fireground

The pilot delivery of IFSI's new **Search Techniques for the Fireground** will be **October 31 – November 2018** at IFSI in Champaign. This 24-hour course is designed for students who may be involved in conducting primary and secondary searches of a single family, multi-family, and commercial structures. This class focuses on the primary search, secondary search, and final searches. Not only in residential buildings but, multi-family and commercial setting as well and goes further to include Vent Enter Search (VES), Rope Assisted Search Procedures (RASP) and Wide Area Search. Students also spend time learning and practicing the critical component of victim removal procedures. Each student is encouraged to develop and refine this skill set that will prove invaluable for the rest of their career.

**Course Dates:** October 31 – November 2018

Courses will take place at the IFSI Training Grounds in Champaign.

For more information and prerequisite information: [https://www.fsi.illinois.edu/content/courses/programs/description.cfm?course\\_id=872](https://www.fsi.illinois.edu/content/courses/programs/description.cfm?course_id=872)

### Illinois Fire Service Institute Regional Representatives:

Northeast Region:	Randy Schlichter,	847-343-4039
Northwest Region:	Ray Palczynski,	563-468-8385
Chicago Metro Area:	Richard Stack,	773-988-0259
East Central Region:	Tim Meister,	217-202-4760
Central Region:	Jim Vaughn,	309-275-2499
Southwest Region:	John Nichols,	618-973-2059
South Region:	Ron Rains,	217-300-4657



Regional Representative Map

*The Illinois Fire Service Institute Regional Representative are the important link to bringing State Fire Academy training to your Fire Department.*

*Helping Firefighters do their work through Training, Education, Information and Research*





## Illinois Firefighters Association

### Prescription Assistance Program / Community Health Initiative

- You are likely overpaying for your prescriptions even if you have a low insurance co-pay. The Illinois Firefighters Association offers you the opportunity to purchase your prescription at the guaranteed lowest price by comparing your insurance co-pay price to a negotiated discount price through the Discount Drug Network (DDN). *Pricing examples are on the back of this page.*
- You are eligible to participate in this free program simply by presenting the card below to your pharmacist.
- This program is accepted at almost every pharmacy in the U.S.
- There is no cost to the patient and there is no patient information required to participate.
- Discounts are available to all participants regardless of current insurance status. (Insured, Uninsured, Medicare)
- All FDA approved brand name drugs and generics are covered by the plan.
- The program is HIPAA compliant requiring no patient data for participation.
- Generic drugs offer substantial savings over their brand equivalent. Ask your doctor if there is a generic drug alternative that provides you with the same medical benefit of the brand drug.

**Guarantee yourself the lowest price  
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**Key in your prescription information  
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**The pharmacies with the lowest price  
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No patient information required.**

**Don't have internet access?  
Our Customer Service number is**

**877-537-5537**

**The customer service representative will  
provide you with the same information.**



Illinois Firefighters Association receives a donation from the Discount Drug Network each time a patient receives a discount. Everyone participating in this free program benefits. Thank you for your participation.

# Check out the IFA's new REBATE APP



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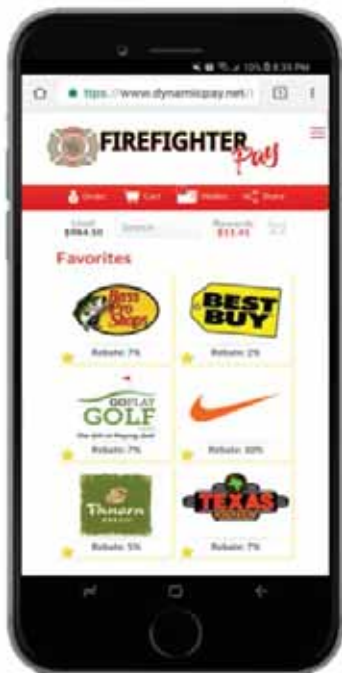
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**and \$7.50 goes to your local department**

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# Chaplain's Corner

## *FIRSTLINE* – Renewed Purpose and Revived Optimism for Your Firefighters

This Spring I partnered with a couple other FF/Chaplains in the Champaign area to co-lead a new faith-based stress and trauma healing journey addressing the spiritual and moral toll that critical incidents take on those within the fire, EMS, and police communities. I am speaking about *FIRSTLINE*, a 13 session course providing a unique blend of clinical insight with faith-based support for first responders and their loved ones. This was indeed a powerful and helpful experience for the career and volunteer firefighter/paramedics, police officers, ER nurse, spouses, and chaplains that were involved in the course. Below are the *FIRSTLINE* sessions and description of the topics covered:

**Session 1: THE GATEWAYS OF TRAUMA** Explores the six most common events and conditions that can bring on Post-traumatic Stress and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

**Session 2: CHANGE THE ROOTS, CHANGE THE FRUITS** Identifying “soul wounds” in our lives, and understanding that the “fruit” that our lives produce depend in large part on the type of soil our roots are in; natural trauma versus malevolent trauma.

**Session 3: PURPOSE IN YOUR PAIN** How one can change Post-traumatic Stress *Disorder* into Post-traumatic Stress *Growth*; the positive side of adversity and stress - seeing it as a strengthening agent.

**Session 4: MAKING CHOICES TO HEAL** The instrumentality of Free Will in how we survive trauma – or don’t; the necessity of being intentional rather than passive in the healing process; abandoning the harmful “Go-To Painkillers” that trauma sufferers often resort to.

**Session 5: UNLOADING** Understanding the difference between anger and angry outbursts; how to deal with “Triggers” that can lead to emotional outbursts; how to recognize and manage one’s anger before it leaves the launching pad.

**Session 6: COLLATERAL DAMAGE** How to deal positively with loss and grief; example of how Jesus dealt with the loss of His good friend Lazarus; how it is that God can allow such adversity in our lives if He is good and loves us.

**Session 7: WALKING THROUGH DEATH VALLEY** Understanding how depression can lead to thoughts of suicide, and how to deal with them – in one’s self and in others; explore the key causes of suicidal ideation, and the warning signs of suicide.

**Session 8: GUILT AND INNOCENCE** The difference between true guilt and false guilt; how one should respond to both kinds of guilt; seeking forgiveness from God for our harmful acts.

**Session 9: FORGIVEN AND FORGIVING** The roles of accountability and restitution in forgiveness; why and how we need to forgive others who have hurt us; why and how we need to forgive ourselves when we have transgressed our own standards and personal boundaries.

**Session 10: ARMOR UP** Recognizing and defending ourselves against the malevolent impacts and tactics of the world around us, spiritual opposition, and our own corrupt tendencies; assessing vulnerabilities in our lives through which evil influences can gain access and degrade our abilities to function and enjoy life.

**Session 11: YOUR TRUE IDENTITY** Traumatic events and cumulative stress tend to shake our self-identity to the core, producing a negative self-image and lack of confidence; seeks to rebuild a positive self-image based on truths from scripture, rather than the negative influences around us.

**Session 12: SHARE YOUR STORY and Session 13: GRADUATION**

I want to encourage every chief, chaplain, and fire department to consider bringing *FIRSTLINE* to your area and available to your firefighters – it is not a difficult process and personal attention, training, and resources are available. Please take a look at the specifics at [www.firstlineresponders.com](http://www.firstlineresponders.com). Also feel free to contact me and I will answer any questions I can and help you to get equipped to bring *FIRSTLINE* to your fire department and area.

**Kevin Coffey, IFA Chaplain (815-457-2007, [kc9526@yahoo.com](mailto:kc9526@yahoo.com))**





## Boost Your Health: Start a Morning Routine.

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For more tips just for firefighters  
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# Alcohol use and response to emergency calls on call back

by Meganne Trela  
Ottosen Britz Kelly Cooper Gilbert & DiNolfo, LTD

Firefighting is a dangerous business that requires heightened alertness and function. Any inhibition or decreased ability to function in response to an emergency can put the lives of firefighters, other first responders, and the general public at risk. Thus, firefighters clearly should not respond to an emergency while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism notes that alcohol use can cause motor impairment, memory problems, concentration difficulties, and breathing problems, among other issues. <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption>.

Many departments have or are considering “zero-tolerance” policies to reduce risk and limit liability. However, there are many considerations to take into account when developing and implementing a “zero-tolerance” policy. In call-back situations and for volunteer departments, responders are generally responding to emergencies from the everyday events in their lives. They could be responding from a family BBQ where they had one or two beers, or from dinner with a loved one where they had a glass of wine. Many times, the responding members themselves are trusted to make the right judgment call. Regardless of whether the member is operating an engine or truck or providing emergency medical care at the scene, responding members need to be able to function at a high level during an emergency.

Departments that do not have a policy are at risk for increased on-the-job injuries as well as liability exposure for injuries that arise out of a member’s response to an emergency while under the influence. Because the department does not know where the member has been before he or she was called to respond to an emergency, it can be difficult to detect and enforce alcohol use policies. A clear policy regarding when it is or is not appropriate to respond can help to prevent responses from individuals who could put themselves or others in danger.

What is a “zero-tolerance” policy? Generally, zero-tolerance means that an individual should have a blood alcohol concentration (“BAC”) of **zero** to be eligible to respond to an emergency. Violation of the policy means termination of the relationship with the member (or severe discipline at the very least). However, under the Illinois vehicle code, the legal limit for driving a motor vehicle is a BAC of .08. The BAC limit is lowered for individuals with a commercial driver’s license (“CDL”) (for commercial vehicle with a weight of more than 26,000 pounds) to a BAC of .04. Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Devices (“BAIIDs”) do not allow DUI offenders to start their vehicle if their BAC is above .025. Because most fire apparatus falls within the weight category used for CDLs, it would be prudent to prohibit members from responding with a BAC over .04 at most.

However, enforcement may become problematic as each individual responds to alcohol differently. Outside of breathalyzer checks or the use of BAIIDs, it is difficult to determine whether an individual is able to respond under a “zero-tolerance” policy. Individuals who weigh more tend to absorb and metabolize alcohol at different rates than those with a lower body weight. In addition, different medications (whether prescription or over-the-counter) interact with alcohol and can increase the side-effects of alcohol use. For example, an individual weighing 140 pounds may have a BAC of .023 after one drink (1.5 ounces liquor/12 ounces beer/5 ounces wine), whereas, an individual weighing 240 pounds may only have a BAC of .014 after that same drink. The amount each individual consumes per hour also may impact the individual’s BAC.

It also takes time for alcohol to be metabolized by the body. Generally, an individual’s BAC drops by .015 each hour after a drink. <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption>. Individuals consuming alcohol may think that their BAC is back to zero after one or two hours; however, depending on how much they drank and how quickly, their BAC may take several more hours to return to normal.

So, what should a good “zero-tolerance” policy look like? The policy may vary depending upon the needs of the department; however, a solid policy should include the following:

## The Bulletin

- A defined BAC level which prohibits personnel from responding;
- Guidelines for considering the individual absorption and metabolism of alcohol;
- A mechanism for checking, detecting, and reporting individuals suspected of violating the policy;
- Mandatory testing if the employee is involved in an accident causing major damage or injury; and
- Consequences for failing to abide by the policy.

As with any policy, it is important that all members are informed and periodically reminded of the policy and its purpose. Also remember that policies that are not enforced can lead to legal liability. Under a "zero-tolerance" policy, members who violate the policy should face severe penalties and be limited in their ability to respond to emergencies. Furthermore, members that respond to the scene of an emergency and appear to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs must be immediately prohibited from participating in the emergency response or operating emergency apparatus. Departments considering updating or implementing "zero-tolerance" policies with respect to alcohol use should contact their attorney for assistance.

*Meganne Trela is an associate with the law firm of Ottosen Britz Kelly Cooper Gilbert & DiNolfo, 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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## Help needed at 2018 Illinois State Fair

Each year, the IFA sponsors a day in the Illinois Fire Services Association tent at the state fair. Help is needed staffing the tent on Saturday, August 18. It takes a lot of help for all of the people that go through the tent. If you or any other members of your department are available to work that day, please contact Chairman Bob Reason at least 45 days prior to the day for the IFA day at the State Fair, August 18, at the phone numbers or email below, so that he can get enough parking passes and admission tickets mailed to you prior to the work date.

Robert Reason, Director  
State Fair Committee Chair  
Phone: 309-265-6472  
E-mail: [breason@sbcglobal.net](mailto:breason@sbcglobal.net)





# **NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**Anyone interested in running for a position  
on the Illinois Firefighter's Board of Directors,  
contact the Secretary/Treasurer Kerry Federer  
email [editor@illinoisfirefighters.org](mailto:editor@illinoisfirefighters.org)  
or cell phone 618-830-3961  
for more information.**

**Election to be held Friday, October 19  
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in conjunction with the  
Annual Conference and Training  
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