



VFIS[®] news

Bringing important information to emergency service organizations

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We welcome comments, suggestions and questions from our readers.

E-mail: vfisnews@vfis.com



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Preventing Apparatus Roll-Aways

VFIS is interested in helping emergency service organizations (ESOs) prevent apparatus roll-aways. The tools to avoidance are readily available to ESOs, and the cost can be minimal.



Using the "speed bump": Back the wheels over the bump and then roll forward until the bump stops the vehicle; then set the brake.

Using the "rack" – a square metal frame that cradles the tire: Roll the tire over the front of the rack until it comes to rest between the front and back lip of the rack.

A number of preventive measures can be taken, from the design of the station to using wheel chocks when the apparatus is either at the station or on the scene. VFIS offers the following suggestions to help prevent apparatus roll-aways:

1. In designing a new station, make sure the floor is angled so apparatus will not be able to roll out the door if the brake or chocks either fail or are not used.
2. When an apparatus is parked, use either wheel chocks, a speed bump, parking brake or a combination of any of these so the vehicle cannot move forward or backward.
3. Whenever a vehicle is left unattended use wheel chocks.
4. At the emergency scene specific types of vehicles can be chocked as described below:
 - a. **engines** - chock either the driver's-side front or rear tires
 - b. **trucks** - chock the driver's-side front tires only
 - c. **aerial trucks** - chock both front tires during operations
 - d. **other vehicles** - chock the left rear tire

Preventing roll-away accidents is important. ESOs need to constantly reinforce the need to use the above tools each time, every time. 🌟





Photo courtesy of Central Valley Fire District and Belgrade City Fire Department (MT)

Fire in the Wildland Urban Interface

Brett Gregr, VFIS Sales Executive (Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming)/Drummond Valley Fire Department (MT), USFS Certified "Engine Boss", Strike Team Engines Trainee, Task Force Leader Trainee

According to the Federal Register, 39% of all U.S. homes are in what is called the wildland/urban interface (WUI). Although not all areas have high fire danger, substantial development continues on the fringe of metropolitan areas and rural areas, creating islands in a sea of wildland fuels (i.e., vegetation). For years I have been involved in fighting fires in this environment; in Montana it is has become a cottage industry, employing hundreds of firemen and providing a primary income source for many fire departments.

The most important way to serve your communities regarding this issue is to educate them on the importance of fire-wise communities (see www.firewise.org). Homeowners must all do their part to create a safe work environment for firefighters. Our part is determining how we can best prepare our firefighters to work safely in this dynamic environment. What can we expect our mutual aid partners to do, and how can we safely and effectively work with agency personnel in an environment that is truly in their world?

The simple answer is to train our firefighters to use the federal standards for wildland fires. The basic wildland course is typically taught with standards of survival. This provides firefighters with a foundation for working safely in this environment. It also provides officers with the communication skills to work with their agency partners. In rural environments, working with homeowners and their burn piles is always good training.

If a fire department only responds to an occasional grass fire, how can your firefighters safely work without this training?

It is important that your firefighters have the appropriate PPE, consisting of fire-resistant wildland pants, boots, and a fire-resistant shirt. Turnouts

can work, but they are cumbersome in the wildland environment and can lead to heat-related illness. A hard hat and eye protection are also required as are a good supply of water and food; keep MREs and a case of water on each apparatus. (I once had an 18-hour shift in Montana with only water and chips. I can assure you this is a really bad idea.)

Here are the basics:


The safety code for all wildland fires is LCES: Lookouts, Communications, Escape Routes, and Safety Zones. Without LCES in place, firefighters are at risk; if it is not in place, disengage until it is, as this rule cannot be broken. Remember, there is no house, pasture or tree that is worth the risk of serious injury to a firefighter.

At the scene, appoint an incident commander (IC) to coordinate communications, give updates, help with lookouts, and call for additional aid.

When the LCES and the IC are in place and help is on the way, there are a variety of techniques that can aid in beginning to control a fire in a WUI. Form an anchor point with brush trucks at the base of the fire, and use natural barriers. After working up the sides or flank of the fire, pinch to the head of the fire. Remember, it is unsafe to attack any grass or timber fire from its head. Even in fine fuels (grass with three flame lengths) a firefighter can be overcome, causing injury or even death. Any time firefighters feel that the fire is getting beyond their capabilities, they should pull back until it is safe or until adequate resources arrive.

Keep in mind that there are many ways to control these fires. For years, ranchers and farmers have been controlling range fires with a dozer or disk. Simply removing the fuel from the path of the fire is a good strategy, making sure that LCES is established and escape routes and safety zones have been identified.

When the fire is under control and possibly out, make sure that it is completely extinguished. While this is not the most glamorous part of firefighting, its importance cannot be overstated. As always, keep LCES in place, as numerous injuries and even fatalities occur during this phase of wildland fires. A fire can re-kindle from any unburned fuel at the edge, such as horse or cow manure. Good practice suggests mopping up to a minimum of 60 feet in circumference around the edges of the fire.

The best strategy is to have your firefighters take the basic course in fighting WUI fires. Contact your state forestry office or U.S. Forest Service to locate the nearest class. Remember, our goal is to make sure everyone goes home. 

RESOURCES:

National Firewise Communities Program - www.firewise.org

National Interagency Fire Center - www.nifc.gov

National Wildfire Coordinating Group - www.nwccg.gov

Northern Rockies Coordinating Group - www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire/nrcg

Special thanks to Chief Brett Waters of Central Valley Fire District and Belgrade City Fire Department (MT) for his input and expertise.

ISO to Formally Reevaluate the FSRS

Hugh "Skip" Gibson, Manager, Community Infrastructure Information, Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO), Marlton, NJ

To make sure that a community can adequately control structural fires, the Insurance Services Office, Inc., (ISO) uses the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS). This manual also helps insurance companies evaluate a community's fire-suppression system using a numerical grading system called the Public Protection Classification (PPC™). The PPC measures the relative differences in levels of structural fire protection for more than 46,000 communities across the country, including municipalities in the five independent-bureau states.

Our office has embarked on a formal reevaluation of the FSRS to determine which portions of the current PPC program need to be revised. Our objective is to identify the portions of the current grading evaluation worthy of potential revision. We are talking with those involved—including the firefighting community, water suppliers, and emergency communications officials—regarding the scope and feasibility of the possible changes. ISO was honored to present the draft concept (FSRS 2009) to IAFC Volunteer Chief Officers Section (VCOS) during its Board of Directors meeting this past spring.

Following is an outline of some of the items being considered for revision. By publishing them here, we are offering you the opportunity to give us your feedback. 🌐

1. Enhanced reference to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and American Water Works Association (AWWA) standards, including
 - replacement of our current equipment inventory with the NFPA 1901 standard
 - recognition for adoption of an incident management system for fire departments according to NFPA 1561
 - recognition of Initial Rapid Intervention Crew and Rapid Intervention Crew teams in accordance with NFPA 1500
 - recognition for fire hydrants that produce flows up to 1500 gpm, in accordance with ANSI and AWWA standards and manufacturers' specifications
 - greater emphasis on hydrant inspection programs, including hydrant flow testing
2. Additional emphasis on firefighter safety and training
 - training and credentialing in accordance with the National Incident Management System and NFPA 1021
 - fire apparatus driver/operator training in accordance with NFPA 1002 and 1451
 - no credit for training without proper documentation
 - reference to firefighter safety requirements
 - personal protective clothing provided for all fire-suppression personnel at structural fires
 - assessment of level of fire ground interoperability
3. Recognition for adoption of SOPS for fire departments according to NIMS standards or Federal Emergency Management Agency publication FA-197
4. Increased recognition for technology-based systems, such as geographic information systems (GIS)
5. Partial or full accreditation from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) through the Commission on Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) – or achievement of the multi-core competency equivalent
6. Adoption and enforcement of fire-prevention and model building codes
7. Increased recognition of fire sprinklers in residential properties to determine needed fire flows
8. Reconsideration of the credit value for reserve pumper and ladder apparatus

*Your comments are important to us. For more information and to give us your feedback, please go to www.isomitigation.com and click the **FIND OUT MORE!** button on the right side of the page. From there you can access and submit our feedback form online.*



Leadership, defined

By Chief Bill Jenaway, PhD, CFOD, CFPS

*Leadership
won't be
defined by
charts, graphs,
witty quotes,
or pats on
the back.*

*We hear it every day in the fire service—
We are lacking LEADERSHIP! The chief shows
good LEADERSHIP skills! The chief doesn't have
a clue how to LEAD!*

However, when you ask someone to define leadership, they can't. So what is leadership in the fire service and how do you know when you have it and when you don't? Or is this just another excuse for organizations that can't seem to accomplish what they need to do?

In all probability it is a mixture of situations, but one thing is clear: If you don't know what leadership is, you can't tell whether your organization has it.

Delving into this subject warrants a trip to the old dictionary—or maybe several dictionaries.

Merriam Webster simply defines leadership as “the position of a leader”.

Wikipedia defines leadership as “the process of social influence in which one person is able to enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task”.

A definition more focused on those who follow leaders comes from Alan Keith of Genentech, who said, “Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen.”

I choose to define leadership—emergency service leadership—as **the ability to influence others to achieve a desired outcome.**

So now you have it. All of these references define leadership as having the skills, the knowledge, and the interpersonal capabilities to make something happen that enhances the organization or process.

What does this mean in the 21st century fire service? It means that you probably can't “lead” the way you

did in the 1980s and 90s, because leadership is an interpersonal skill, and people's wants, needs, etc., have changed. Today's firefighters learn differently than they did twenty years ago; they use different technology; they have different interests.

You can't expect this new breed of firefighter to be led in the same way as before or to have the same expectations of leaders. Thus, as a leader, knowing your team and what drives them to respond the way you need to have them respond becomes critical to success, each of which is a different **situation**.

As I reflect on my early days in emergency services, all of the leaders came from one branch of the military or another, and most were officers or leaders in the military. In addition, the fire company was a quasi-military organization by design. These leaders weren't necessarily skilled in how to lead; they were taught how to meet objectives or goals, be it getting a tank from point A to point B, getting a group of men out of harm's way, or effecting a positive attack on an enemy (first military objectives, then fires and rescue situations). These goals were communicated by paper and pencil, by writing in the dirt, and by showing by example how to accomplish something. In the 80s learning was done differently, in meetings and classroom sessions, followed with formal goals and objectives. Computers became the 90's way for leaders to communicate and conduct training. As we moved into the new century, apparatus operations, strategy, tactics, pre-planning, handling emergencies—all of these involve computers in some fashion and require leaders who know not only how to use them, but how to use them to get their staff to accomplish an objective, such as extinguishing a fire.

In many ways, leadership has changed, from what was a direct process of communication between an officer and his or her staff to an indirect process of setting a goal and letting the team figure out the best way to get there. In either case, while the tools to help leaders lead may have changed, the purpose of leadership has not.

There have been many theorists who have come and gone during this same 40-year period, each with his





or her own idea of leadership. Steven Covey has his highly successful habits of leaders, while others like Pfeiffer, Bassi, and Northouse focus on individual attributes, competencies, outcomes, trust, coaching and the like, all valid components of what drives a person's leadership style. Few talk about the skills of Chief "Ogre," a real chief who tells me he "leads by intimidating his members". What's the old saying: "Whatever it takes...?"

In recent years, we also have heard more about **situational leadership**—the art of leading based on the situation being worked through and of those involved. This doesn't just apply to fire service, but to all types of activities, e.g., fundraising, emergency response, negotiating with elected officials, and more. This is but one leadership theory; there's also participative leadership, transactional leadership, and transformational leadership, to mention a few.

Well, maybe that's where we stand with leadership in the fire service. Since everyone defines it differently, maybe leadership differs in how it is applied, based upon what is needed to accomplish the task or objective, and based upon the resources and personnel available, their skills, knowledge,

experience, and willingness and ability to perform what is needed.

Wow! We might have actually defined what leadership really is—and it's not in a book! It's not in a class! It is not something you are born with! It is not something passed on from parent to child! Leadership is getting people to do what is needed, when it is needed, with the resources at hand, and if you can't do it with those elements, you call for mutual aid.

Let's face it, we can take all the course work and fancy seminars we want, but, the goal at the end is, could the officer lead the team to solve the problem, win the game, succeed in the conflict? Or did the group perform ineffectively and lose the asset, lose the game, lose the argument, lose the money, or lose the battle? Leadership, in these cases, won't be defined by charts, graphs, witty quotes or pats on the back. Leadership is defined by RESULTS, and is driven by the situation.

What do you think? Email me at wjenaway@vfis.com. As we wrestle with the leadership performance of tomorrow's emergency service officers, you may agree, have a great idea, or disagree entirely. Let's advance leadership by challenging each other to define it and make it a station-wide word. 🌟



NEW: VFIS Classes Online

In our continuous efforts to improve safety and operations in the fire service through education, training, risk management and insurance programs, VFIS has joined forces with St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, PA in the development of a distance-learning program. VFIS is pleased to announce that our distance-learning site, vfis.sju.edu, is now live.

Check out these three valuable programs in our initial release:

- Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) Driving Safety (*our full training program including videos*)
- Firefighter Safety (*our basic firefighter safety program*)
- Sexual Harassment Prevention (*designed as a refresher program for annual compliance with required harassment prevention training*)

These courses are designed to be taken in your location and at your convenience. In many cases, courses have the capability to allow you to include your department's specific guidelines and officer sign-off. Our distance-learning courses offer everything you would find in the classroom, minus, of course, the actual instructor. You will receive a certificate of course completion upon passing the online assessment.

Once you are on the site, you can easily navigate to register and begin taking classes. Please call VFIS at (800) 233-1957, ext. 7964, to confirm your status as a client and obtain an access code.

Without question, distance learning is the method of education and training for the future, and VFIS is now poised to offer programs in this fashion as well as traditional classroom training.

For details on this, contact your VFIS sales executive or education and training staff. 🌟

Protect Your Members with HIGH VISIBILITY Traffic Vests

By Steve Austin, Project Manager, CVVFA Emergency Responder Safety Institute

As of November 2008, if your fire department, rescue squad, fire police unit or related group is operating on the highway without approved high-visibility garments you have two problems: your members are at increased risk of injury and your organization risks penalties and litigation. That's because, after two years of official rule-making procedures and an intense education campaign by a number of public safety organizations, 2008 Rule 23 C.F.R. Part 634 - Worker Visibility took effect.

The rule encompasses all workers on the highways, not just emergency responders. It requires that everyone wear American National Standard Institute (ANSI)-labeled garments while working on Federal-aid highways, meaning any highway constructed or maintained with federal funds. The rule is part of legislation mandated by Congress to improve worker safety on the roadways. No federal-aid highways in your district? You aren't exempt, because the rule is slated to become part of the Federal Highway Administration's Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices in 2009 and will expand to include all highways.

Complying with the rule is not particularly difficult. ANSI 107-2004 Class II vests and ANSI 207-2006 public safety vests are readily available at most uniform and safety supply outlets as well as online. Prices range from about \$18 to \$50 per item, and most vendors offer a substantial price break for larger orders. Roadway safety experts recommend that vests include a 4- or 5-point break-away feature that allows the vest to come apart if caught on a moving vehicle; this is to prevent the wearer from being dragged down the road.

Emergency service organizations should prepare related SOPs/SOGs and incorporate them into their manuals. Detailed information and a generic SOP may be found at www.respondersafety.com. The site also includes explanations as to when members should not wear a vest, such as during fire-suppression activities. There are many more free resources and training materials on the site as well.

Members should be trained to understand the new SOP and know how and when to wear high-visibility garments. Company officers are responsible for ensuring that members comply, as they are with all regulations involving emergency operations. An officer has a primary responsibility for doing as much as humanly possible to protect members from injury.



Photos courtesy of
Ron Moore, McKinney Fire Department (TX)

NEWS YOU CAN USE

IAFC Foundation Scholarships

The IAFC Foundation helps ensure that our nation's first responders are fully prepared to face the challenges of today and tomorrow and can effectively lead the fire service to serve and protect our citizens. Each year the Foundation provides scholarships that make it possible for first responders to access the advanced learning opportunities they need in order to be prepared for the increasingly complex realities of the world today.

To view the 2008 Scholarship winners, find out how you can apply for a scholarship, or become an IAFC Foundation sponsor, please visit www.iafc.org.

Stewart Recognized for 25 Years of Commitment

Joe Stewart, the VFIS Ohio Regional Director, was honored at a recent sales and education event for representing VFIS for 25 years. Joe is a strong supporter of VFIS and the Ohio Fire Service. In fact, Joe is so close to his local fire department that his office is in the very same building! A member of the Ohio Firefighters Association, Joe is a past recipient of Ohio's William L. Howard Award for his contribution to educational support and other beneficial programs across the state as well as his financial support of a number of worthwhile programs such as fire schools, seminars and other venues. He is a charter donor of the Ohio Fire Executive Program, making possible the vision of leadership education for Ohio's Chief Fire Officers. We thank Joe for his contribution to VFIS' success and for his many contributions to Ohio's fire service.



*When your feet
are on the street
your vest
is on your chest.*



A responder's first line of defense is being seen by an approaching vehicle. The sooner an emergency responder is visible to a motorist the more time there is to slow down and move over. This fact has not been lost on construction workers or even on convict road gangs, who have been wearing high-visibility garments on the highway for many years.

Emergency service organizations who make little or no effort to comply with the rule and who don't enforce the proper wearing of vests are exposed to problems in several areas. They may be in danger in OSHA states of being fined for providing a less-than-safe workplace. There may also be state regulatory measures that exact penalties for non-compliance with worker safety rules. Organizations may also be subject to civil litigation by members or their families should there be an injury or death of a responder who was not wearing a compliant garment at the time of the injury.

To avoid a tragedy, or, at the very least, an unpleasant and embarrassing citation, remember this simple vest policy: "When your feet are on the street your vest is on your chest" 🌟

Steve Austin is the project manager of the CVVFA Emergency Responder Safety Institute. The Institute counts VFIS as valued partner in promoting safety at roadway incident scenes. The Institute owns and operates www.respondersafety.com.

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Fire Conference Recap

This past October Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) hosted a one-day fire conference in Brandon, Manitoba, Canada. This fire conference is held every two years in conjunction with the Manitoba Emergency Services (MES) Conference. Representatives from ANA community fire departments and councils were invited to attend the conference where information was presented on various topics related to the ANA fire program. The conference received high marks from those who attended, and the ANA looks forward to providing the same level of training again in two years.

The agenda for the day covered the following topics:

Morning Session - ANA Fire Program Update

- New VFIS Accident & Sickness Program
- Workplace Safety and Health
- NFPA Level 1 Community Fire Training
- 911 Update
- ANA and Provincial Fire Department Reporting Forms

Afternoon Session

- VFIS Emergency Vehicle Driver Training

ANA provides funding to communities so that representatives can attend and bring back information to their community fire departments. The conference is held one day before the MES conference to allow firefighters or members of council to attend both events. Attendees were given training kits for fire truck drivers to use to train other firefighters in their community.

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs is involved in developing a high quality of life for Aboriginal and northern communities. As part of this mission, it is responsible for supporting the fire departments and fire programs in 48 northern and remote communities in Manitoba that don't belong to a municipality—including approximately 300 volunteer firefighters. 🌟

Wingspread V Conference Report Now Available

Wingspread V, the fifth conference held on statements of national significance to the fire service and to those who serve, was held in Atlanta in late March and early April of 2006. Named for the Wingspread Conference Center where the conference was originally held in 1966, the conference has continuously been held once per decade since.

To summarize the conference, a report has been developed for your information. It is divided into statements of emerging issues of national importance to the fire service and statements of ongoing significance. The contents include The Fire Problem in the United States; Home Fire Safety; Firefighter Safety; Emergency Medical Services; The Volunteer Fire Service; Federal Fire Programs; The Customer; Professional Development; Collective Bargaining; The Fire Chief; Interoperability; Fire Service; Regionalization; Fire Prevention and Public Fire Education; Labor and Management; Deployment Standards; Firefighter Credentials; Sustainable Revenue; Fire-Fighting Communities; and The Impact of Technology.

The report is available at <http://www.nationalfireheritagecenter.com/Library.htm>. 🌟



VFIS News
P.O. Box 2726
York, PA 17405
(800) 233-1957
Fax: (717) 747-7030
www.vfis.com

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Chief Joe Florentino (second from left), VCOS Board of Directors, Dave Wyrwas (left), VFIS, and Joe Giorgi (right), VFIS, present the 2008 VCOS/VFIS Vehicle Driving Safety Award to Chief Chuck Flynn of the Wethersfield Fire Department (CT).



Chief Joe Florentino (left), VCOS Board of Directors (left), Dave Wyrwas (second from right), VFIS and Joe Giorgi (right), VFIS, present the 2008 VCOS/VFIS Recruitment and Retention Award to Chief John Bales (center) and the Golden Fire Department (CO).

VCOS Awards Presented at Symposium in the Sun 2008

The Volunteer & Combination Officers' Section of the IAFC announced the winners:

John M. Buckman III Leadership Award

Fire Chief David L. Stokes from the Anne Arundel County (MD) Fire Department was honored as a fire chief or chief officer from a volunteer or combination department who has demonstrated leadership, integrity, and moral values.

Emergency Vehicle Safe Operations Initiative Achievement Award (Sponsored by VFIS)

Wethersfield (CT) Fire Department, represented by Fire Chief Chuck Flynn, was recognized for support of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and USFA initiatives to reduce firefighter injuries and deaths as a result of vehicular accidents.

VCOS Symposium Scholarship Winners (\$1,000)

Scholarships were awarded to Fire Chiefs Dave Derricott of Mantua (UT) Fire Station 110 and Jerry Doyle of the City of Lockhart (TX) Fire Rescue so that they could benefit from the educational opportunities provided at the VCOS Symposium in the Sun.

Military Challenge Coin

Chief Larry Grorud, Janesville (WI) Fire Department, was "coined" in appreciation for his past service to our country during the Vietnam era. He was presented with the Military Challenge Coin by the VCOS, the Grateful American Coin Organization, and *National Fire & Rescue Magazine*, with the help and technical support of many others, including IAFC staff, Firehouse.com, and the Washington (DC) Fire Department's Chief Dennis Rubin. Also "coined" were Training Officer Ron Smith from Gillette, WY, and Assistant Chief William Parker from the Manchester (CT) Fire Department's 8th District.

Retention & Recruitment Award (Sponsored by VFIS)

Golden (CO) Fire Department, represented by Fire Chief John E. Bales, had the best retention and recruitment program from the nominees submitted during 2008. 🌟