



VFIS[®] news

Bringing important information to emergency service organizations

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Pre-Emergency Planning Helps Save Lives

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Every year in this country, more than 100 firefighters lose their lives and thousands more are injured — many by “unknown” hazards. To reduce the number of unknown hazards, it is critical for departments to conduct pre-emergency planning at facilities in their response areas. An effective preplan will allow firefighters to maximize response, save civilian lives and property, and prevent or reduce firefighter injury and death.

Numerous investigations by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) regarding firefighter deaths have recommended that fire departments conduct pre-incident planning for all mercantile and business occupancies in a response area. The ISO (www.isomitigation.com) gives significant weight to pre-incident planning in the fire department operations portion of a community's rating.

The National Fire Protection Association has outlined the information that should be gathered during the preplanning process in NFPA 1620: *Recommended Practice for Pre-Incident Planning*.

- ✓ Details on construction and building dimensions for fire flow calculations (determine how much water you will need)
- ✓ Number of building occupants, how that varies per shift and any special evacuation needs
- ✓ Access to areas of the building and features such as shutoffs, lock boxes, fire alarm panels, hose connections and water supplies (determine how much water you can access)
- ✓ Length of challenging hose stretches to various points in building
- ✓ Limitations on ground/aerial ladder access
- ✓ Details on protection/detection and ways in which they can be utilized to handle an incident
- ✓ Means of ventilating the building
- ✓ Details on elevators in the building and how to control/access them
- ✓ Information regarding hazardous materials
- ✓ Where a spill in or around the building would drain
- ✓ Information on confined spaces in the building

Continued on page 2



Q. *A friend of mine told me that if I intentionally do something that causes harm to someone, that action would not be covered by my insurance policy. Is that correct?*

A. Good question. Your friend is referring to *intentional acts liability* coverage. VFIS policies include intentional acts coverage under the policy's General Liability section. Intentional acts coverage offers liability protection if, while attempting to save lives or protect property, volunteers or employees intentionally cause bodily injury or property damage.

Let's look at an example of bodily injury. Say a firefighter is rendering aid to a victim and a relative interferes. To allow proper treatment of the victim, one of your volunteers might intentionally restrain the relative. If the relative is injured as a result of being restrained, he or she could sue the department for damages. With VFIS coverage, the department would be protected if a court judgment was rendered against the department.

The same intentional acts coverage applies to property damage. A common example occurs in a situation where properties abut, such as condominiums, stores or row homes. Perhaps a middle unit is on fire and the Chief feels the only way to prevent the spread of fire to the entire complex is to order an adjoining unit bulldozed. The owner of the bulldozed unit could sue the department for damages claiming the damage created was unnecessary to control the fire. If a judgment resulted, intentional acts coverage would pay the claim up to the limit of the policy.

Not all carriers offer intentional acts coverage, based on the widely accepted cultural norm that an individual should not profit from his or her wrongdoing. At VFIS, we understand that occasions can arise when a department's intentional actions to achieve the greater good may result in damage to third parties or property.

Intentional acts coverage can be tricky and cannot be used as permission to act without sound rationale. If you are interested in learning more about this coverage, please discuss it with your insurance agent. 🌟

Pre-Emergency Planning Helps Save Lives

Continued from cover

- ✓ Salvage considerations
- ✓ Location of potential staging areas
- ✓ Location of potential medivac landing zones and triage areas

NFPA 1620 is on track to become a standard in the 2009 cycle, not just a recommended practice. NFPA wants to ensure that preplanning is being done and that recommended process is followed by firefighters conducting preplanning. Once the information is gathered, it must be documented and available to use during an incident.

Most departments have members that know the intricacies of many buildings in their response areas. But too often this information is not documented, existing only in the minds of various firefighters. To effectively preplan and execute a response, all firefighters and shifts must have access to this knowledge. Fire departments need to capture the knowledge and put it at the fingertips of every potential responder.

Proper preplanning requires attention to detail. An effective preplan includes photos, drawings and notes. Some of the best preplans provide key information on a basic document needed for initial attack. Further information — including site and floor drawings, annotated aerial and specific feature photos, and detailed notes on building hazards — can assist chief officers as well as the planning officer in mapping out a strategy.

The best way to collect and analyze necessary data is through computer software designed specifically for preplanning purposes. Blazemark® is one program that allows fire departments to incorporate photos, drawings and notes into the preplan and develop a Quick Incident Plan for viewing by first-arriving officers. Chiefs and planning officers can then reference more detailed information as the incident progresses. Photos can be annotated to pinpoint key hazards, access points, shut-offs and other areas of interest that may not readily be identifiable at night or in smoky conditions.

Blazemark was designed by a team of emergency responders (including chief officers and a fire protection engineer) with combined emergency response experience of over 100 years. Blazemark is a Web-enabled, Java-based application that has been built to scale-up and handle multiple concurrent incidents. It allows complex buildings with multiple structures and construction types to easily be documented and viewed en route to or on the scene. Blazemark is just one of several tools available to assist you in preplanning endeavors.

Why should you conduct pre-emergency planning? Quite simply, it can save your life, the lives of your firefighters and the lives of those you protect. Get the information in advance — be prepared. 🌟

It is critical for departments to conduct pre-emergency planning at facilities in their response areas.

Staunton Fire Protection District Receives National Safety Award

The Staunton (Illinois) Fire Protection District was selected by the IAFC Volunteer Combination Officer Section (VCOS) and VFIS as the national recipient of the "Emergency Vehicle Safe Operations Initiative Award." This award supports the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and the United States Fire Administration (USFA) initiatives to reduce firefighter injuries and deaths as a result of vehicle accidents. VCOS members who experienced no accidents from August 1, 2006, through July 31, 2007, and demonstrated a functioning vehicle safety program were eligible for the award.

Staunton's comprehensive program is similar to a corporate fleet safety program and encompassed 11 components, including a safety-first program, use of a safety officer, a health and safety committee, a monthly safety bulletin, an agency audit program, a safety audit program, comprehensive driver training, a safety milestone recognition program, standard operating guidelines, a safety orientation program, and a seat-belt use initiative.

The award was presented at the 2007 VCOS Symposium in the Sun in Clearwater, Florida. Other departments recognized for their efforts were Blue Hills Fire Department, Bloomfield, Connecticut (second place); Fairlawn Fire Department, Fair Lawn, Ohio (third place); and Strasburg Volunteer Fire Co., Strasburg, PA (fourth place).

Departments receiving honorable mention were Bath Fire Department, Akron, Ohio; Dewitt Township Fire Department, Dewitt, Michigan; Cedarburg Fire Department, Cedarburg, Wisconsin; Kittitas County Fire Rescue 7, So. Cle Elum, Washington; Marysville Fire Department, Marysville, Michigan; Munroe Falls Fire Department, Munroe Falls, Ohio; Pearland Volunteer Fire Department, Pearland, Texas; Roseville Fire Department, Roseville, Minnesota; Sweetwater County Fire District #1, Rock Springs, Wyoming; Thornton Fire Department, Thornton, Illinois; and Verdoy Fire Department, Latham, New York. VCOS and VFIS congratulate all the recipients for their focus on safety. 🌟



Chief Rick Hasse (center) of the Staunton (IL) FPD receives the VCOS/VFIS "Emergency Vehicle Safe Operations Initiative Award" from Tim Wall, VCOS Chairman (right) and Chief Bill Jenaway (left), Executive Vice-President, VFIS Education and Training Services.

Mutual Aid by VFIS

Have you ever faced an emergency so large it was beyond your capability? Have you ever been challenged by an issue that required technical expertise from a trained specialist? Most organizations have, and in those situations, it's reassuring to have a bit of Mutual Aid to back you up.

Mutual Aid is a VFIS service that helps your organization with valuable safety, loss control and training information. Through a series of self-surveys, your organization can identify areas where additional resources from VFIS would be helpful. Mutual Aid surveys help you evaluate your vehicle operations, property, liability to others, management liability, EMS practices and organizational programs.

By using these tools, you can determine where your organization's strengths and weaknesses are and seek the appropriate resources to make your organization even stronger.

And getting a bit of Mutual Aid couldn't be easier. Simply go to www.vfis.com/resources.htm. The document can be found in the Other Resources & Downloads area, under the heading of Risk Control: Self-Evaluation Tools. 🌟

Save the Date for 2008 Safety Stand Down Week

The IAFC and IAFF led the nation by establishing the first Safety Stand Down in 2005. This groundbreaking event focused exclusively on reducing line-of-duty deaths and was supported by other major fire service organizations. In the last three years, the event has grown into a successful safety awareness and training initiative.

In 2008, the Safety Stand Down will become known as the Fire/EMS Safety, Health and Survival Week and will be held June 22-28. The week will be devoted to reviewing safety policies, evaluating the progress of existing initiatives, and discussing health and fitness. Fire/EMS departments should make a concerted effort during the week to correct safety deficiencies and to provide training.

Take a moment to pass along this information to all fire and EMS responders in your department or local area. VFIS will be providing discussion guides and tools that can be used during that week and beyond. 🌟

Mark Your Calendar to Meet with Congressional and Administration Leaders

On April 2-3, 2008, CFSI will host the 20th Annual National Fire and Emergency Services Dinner and Seminars in Washington, D.C. This is an extraordinary opportunity for fire service leaders to engage Congressional leaders and Administration officials in discussions about federal programs and legislation addressing the needs of local first responders. For more information, visit www.cfsi.org. 🌟

Nondestructive What?

Aerial Device Testing Enhances Safety and Prolongs Device Life



T. Randy Hess
Technical Director,
Risk Control Services

Aerial devices are critically important apparatus to fire departments. An aerial device could be a sectional ladder, an elevated platform or an articulating boom. Testing is very important for the prevention of aerial device failure and malfunction, which can have serious consequences.

There are two common causes of loss for the devices: metal fatigue and improper and/or lack of proper maintenance. Both causes of loss are largely preventable.

However, to prevent these losses and provide for safe operation, scheduled testing must be conducted in conjunction with routine maintenance.

Organizations that own aerial devices need to fully understand the requirements for testing these devices. NFPA 1911, Chapter 19 governs the process and procedures for aerial testing, and prescribes two levels of testing required for aerial devices: Annual Testing and Nondestructive Testing. All of the tests outlined in NFPA 1911, Chapter 19 must be conducted annually, and there is no option to pick and choose which tests are conducted.

Annual Testing may be conducted by any qualified individual (as defined in NFPA 1911, Chapter 19) once a year. This test is essentially a visual inspection and a documented operational test.

Nondestructive Testing (NDT), sometimes referred to as a Five-Year Nondestructive Test, must be conducted by a highly qualified and certified Level II NDT Technician, as specified in American Society of Nondestructive Testing (ASNT) CP-189, *Standard for Qualification and Certification of Non Destructive Personnel*. The NDT is a general term for one of several methods that can be used to inspect the aerial device's structural components without physically altering or damaging the materials. These methods could include, but are not limited to, liquid penetrant inspection, magnetic particle inspection, radiography, metal hardness and ultrasonic testing.

All of these tests are designed to detect metal fatigue, cracks or deformities in the frame, ladder, ladder rails, turntable, outrigger, bolts or any other critical metal structural component. An NDT must be conducted at least once every five years and whenever the aerial device has been damaged or stressed beyond normal limits.

The majority of fire departments that own aerial devices understand that NFPA requires testing, but there is often confusion and misunderstanding of what testing is actually required. The NFPA Standard and VFIS both require that a successful NDT be completed at least every five years for any aerial device. As the name implies, the Annual Test shall be conducted every year, including the years that NDTs are completed. The NDT is a supplemental test, not a substitute test. The testing organization shall meet the requirement of ISO 17020, *General criteria for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspections*.

Often, the confusion begins when the fire department contacts a testing company. While there are very specific NFPA standards for tests and testing procedures, there are no industry standards on the marketing of testing or on how to report the findings. As a result, departments may find themselves inadvertently not meeting testing standards, resulting in higher risk for loss.



Six Steps to Maintaining Your Aerial Device

Keeping up with the required maintenance and proper testing of aerial devices are the two most effective ways to help greatly reduce the risk of a catastrophic failure. Follow these basic steps to ensure everyone's safety.

1. Whether the device is new or used, follow the manufacturer's maintenance recommendations closely. Clean and well-maintained aerial devices don't wear out as quickly. Make certain your budget is adequate to keep up with the service of the vehicle and the aerial device mounted on it.
2. Have an NFPA Annual Test conducted every year as recommended in the NFPA 1911 Standard, Chapter 19.

3. Every five years, have the Nondestructive Test (NDT) conducted in conjunction with the Annual Test.
4. When contracting for testing services, be sure to clearly identify which test — Annual, Nondestructive, or both — you wish to have conducted and determine if the testing company is qualified to conduct those tests.
5. If you are in the market for a used aerial device, have both an Annual and a Nondestructive Test conducted prior to completing the purchase. Make certain that you obtain a copy of the test report(s) and a certificate indicating that the device passed the test(s).
6. If the aerial device is unusually stressed during emergency operations or training, or if it is damaged, have an NDT conducted prior to placing the aerial back into service.


Many departments simply request that someone come out and test the aerial device to meet NFPA Standards. In the case where the fire department does not specify which test to perform, the testing company may perform an Annual Test when the situation calls for a NDT instead, and, in some cases, the testing company may only be qualified to perform an Annual Test. They may advertise that they conduct NFPA compliant tests but do not clarify whether such NFPA compliant tests are Annual Tests or NDTs. The testing company is not required to specify that they are not conducting an NDT, because an Annual Test meets NFPA Standards as well.

Simply stated, the responsibility for knowing what test is required and when, and finding the proper testing company to conduct the proper test, is up to the fire department. If an individual is a Level II NDT Technician, they should be carrying proof (an ID card) of their certification level. It is a good idea to ask for that proof from the individual or company prior to hiring. In addition to asking questions regarding the tests, always obtain a certificate of insurance from the testing company under consideration to perform the testing to provide proof that the company has liability insurance.

Testing is critical when considering the purchase of a used aerial device. VFIS claims history shows that aerial device failure is not uncommon and that the risk of failure increases as a unit ages, particularly in units over 20 years old. Not surprisingly, some of the most common reasons for selling an aerial device are aging parts and unrepaired damage.

When purchasing a used device, a fire department should either require the seller to conduct a Nondestructive Test and provide the results, or the department should have its own NDT conducted prior to finalizing the purchase. If the aerial device doesn't pass the test, the department will need to carefully consider the cost of repairs and recertification before driving the device home. If a test has not been completed before the purchase, you may have just driven home a very expensive ground ladder transport vehicle.

If the seller offers a fire department a test certificate, proceed carefully. There are no industry standards for reporting test results. When a testing company provides a test certificate, it may or may not indicate what kind of test has been completed. Some certificates indicate that a test was conducted that met NFPA 1911, Chapter 19 Standards, but do not indicate what part of the standard was met. Some indicate that the certificate is good for one year, but does not indicate what test was conducted. Some certificates indicate that an Annual Test was completed, but their version of an Annual Test always includes an NDT. Sometimes there isn't a certificate available, which typically means that the aerial device did not pass the test and needs repairs.

VFIS is among several agencies actively working to establish standards for reporting requirements. Please contact VFIS Risk Control Services at (800) 233-1957 with any questions or concerns about aerial devices or testing and reporting requirements. 



Personnel Training Offers Challenges

By Chief Bill Jenaway, PhD
Executive Vice-President, VFIS Education and Training Services

In some ways, the fire service is unique compared to other organizations. Our personnel put their lives on the line every day to protect and serve the community. Often we are working with a large cadre of volunteers versus paid staff. As non-profit entities, we are constantly seeking funding sources to underwrite continued operations. In other ways, the fire service is similar to other organizations and businesses. Personnel management, resource allocation, service delivery and workplace safety are crucial to the successful operation of any entity.

Training is one area where the fire service is both similar and unique compared to other entities. Like all organizations, our personnel require training to stay abreast of the latest trends and techniques in service delivery. But the fire service invests noticeably more time and resources into training simply to meet industry requirements.

According to the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD), the general workplace, on average over the past five years, has spent approximately \$1,000 per employee on training. Employees have used an average of 30 training hours per year during that same time period.

Compare those statistics to the fire service. In many cases, our *required* continuing education training exceeds 30 hours. If you calculate the cost of volunteer time at \$11 per hour and multiply by the number of *required* hours of training, you can see how quickly the fire service's investment in training can exceed the average.

Data from the ASTD suggests that the training industry in general has stabilized. By comparison, emergency services training has not stabilized but

has grown significantly. In our field, training needs and requirements are constantly changing. Causes for this continued growth include new hazards (such as hybrid vehicles), ever-changing training standards, the introduction of National Fallen Firefighter Safety Initiatives and Stand Down for Safety Day.

ASTD research shows that training delivery methods are shifting as well. Instructor-led training is diminishing while technology-based training and self-paced online training is increasing, with last year's rate at 11%.

These types of delivery methods enable students to learn more appropriately at their own time and pace using a medium with which they are both familiar and comfortable. These shifts may be due to advancements in technology as well as the expectations of younger generations, who are more likely to seek — even expect — online and technology-based training opportunities.

As personnel managers, it can be challenging to meet the training expectations or desires of multiple generations who learn in very different ways. What we must remember is that one size doesn't fit all.

However, regardless of the training content, the method used and the technology applied, there must be a link between learning and performance. The emergency service community must use training to enhance performance to provide a safer outcome, a more cost-effective outcome and improved customer satisfaction.

As we seek to meet training requirements for our paid and volunteer personnel, we must be prepared to shift our expectations and seek a variety of training opportunities that result in a better trained and adequately prepared workforce.

Is training a sizable investment? Yes. Is training worth the cost? Absolutely. You can't put a price tag on the end result of a well-trained emergency services workforce: saved lives. 🌟



The emergency service community must use training to provide a safer and a more cost-effective outcome.

Data for this article was obtained from the document "State of the Industry Report," 2007, American Society of Training and Development.

Seven is the Magic Number

Most emergency response apparatus don't log many miles. Low mileage aside, short trips, high speeds, quick stops and especially the aging process take their toll on the life of a vehicle's tires. For apparatus and other low-usage vehicles, tire replacement must be based on age as well as tread wear.

Rubber compounds in truck tires are designed to last for only a few years. Over time, tire rubber loses its strength, causing tires to fail without warning, potentially resulting in vehicle damage, accidents, injury or even death.

The average life for truck tires is 25,000–100,000 miles per year. Many emergency apparatus will never come near those mileage estimations. When developing your routine maintenance plan for vehicles and tire replacement, consider these three things:

1. Know and meet any applicable federal, state and local guidelines.
2. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations—most recommend replacing tires once they reach a certain age, *regardless of mileage*.
3. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) requires that *fire apparatus tires must be replaced every seven years or more frequently*. NFPA 1911, Inspection, Maintenance, Testing, and Retirement of In-Service Automotive Fire Apparatus (2007, Section 7.3.4), mandates that apparatus tires

“shall be replaced at least every seven years or more frequently when the tread wear exceeds state or federal standards as determined by measuring with a tread depth gauge.”

To ensure peak performance of the apparatus tires, make routine visual and physical inspections. As part of statute 1911, the NFPA instructs departments to:

- ✿ Inflate tires according to manufacturer's recommendations.
- ✿ Clean and lubricate wheel bearings and seals, and inspect regularly for deformation, wear, cracks or leakage.
- ✿ Torque wheel-attaching nuts to the manufacturer's recommendation.
- ✿ Inspect wheels and rims for cracks, deformation, structural integrity and corrosion.

A complete guide to establishing an inspection, maintenance and testing program for apparatus is available through the NFPA. For more information, visit www.nfpa.org. ✿



Tire replacement correlates to vehicle and responder safety.

VFIS Hits the Road

One of our priorities at VFIS is providing quality education and training for our clients. VFIS programs help clients expand their knowledge and skills in safety and risk management.

During 2007, our instructors conducted 500 programs in 43 states, the District of Columbia and Canada. More than 16,000 individuals participated. Our most popular class offering is Emergency Vehicle Driver Training (EVDT), followed by Highway Responder Safety and Operation Safe Arrival.

Our education and training staff finds itself answering more and more technical questions, as well as responding to your questions on standard operating guidelines, best practices for safe driving, and overall fire and EMS safety. These questions, along with your participation and evaluations of VFIS programs, help us define the types of education, training and consulting services we will be developing in the future. Your input counts!

We hope to see you at a program in your area in 2008. Many of our classes are held at local fire stations, and all training sites are chosen for their convenient locations. Now is a great time to start thinking about what education or training would help enhance your personnel's abilities while improving your risk management. ✿



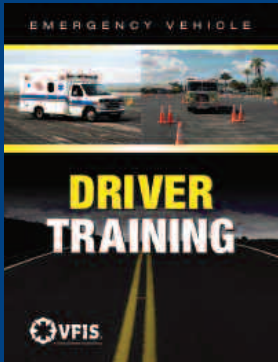
For more details about VFIS Education and Training Programs, contact us at 800-233-1957 (ext. 7964) or www.vfis.com.

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Please route to your local emergency service organization

VFIS Releases Updated Emergency Vehicle Driver Training Program

VFIS is committed to reducing the number of deaths and injuries among the emergency responder population. Part of that commitment is promoting the safe operation of emergency vehicles.



When calling, please request:

New 2008 versions:

black
EVDT Participant Manual
(C10:258)

black
EVDT Instructor's Program Kit
(C10:256)

Older versions:

yellow
EVDT Participant Manual
(C10:068)

yellow
EVDT Instructor's Guide
(C10:049)

VFIS offered its first driver training program in 1978. Over three decades VFIS has supplemented this flagship program with a wide variety of programs and materials addressing safe response. VFIS is pleased to announce the release of its 2008 edition of the Emergency Vehicle Driver Training (EVDT) Program.

For more than two years, VFIS has worked to develop and update both the comprehensive Instructor's Program Kit and the Participant Manual. Most of the updates were based on suggestions from the training academies and community colleges that have adopted the VFIS EVDT Program, as well as EVDT instructors who deliver the message of safety to students across the United States and Canada.

The 2008 Instructor's Program Kit includes an Instructor's CD with an updated PowerPoint® presentation, sample blank forms for the instructor to document the program, student certificates, sample tests, related handout materials, links to various national and state organizations, and additional instructor resources. The Instructor's DVD has been updated to include new Competency Course videos and two additional videos, EZ EVOC for Fire and EZ EVOC for EMS. The revised Participant Manual has been redesigned with fill-in-the-blank sections that allow the student to more easily follow the instructor and remain engaged throughout classroom instruction.

VFIS will conduct four-hour training sessions on the 2008 EVDT Edition at various regional locations. The training is designed for instructors who have taken VFIS EVDT instructor training within the last five years.

Numerous organizations and training facilities utilize the current version of the EVDT Instructor's Guide (C10:049) and EVDT Participant Manual (C10:068). VFIS plans to support the current versions of these products for the next two years. For pricing and to order the 2008 edition of the Emergency Vehicle Driver Training (EVDT) Program, please call (800) 233-1957, ext. 7951. 