

Firefighting Content for Maryland & Beyond



VOLUME XIII: ISSUE IV

VOLUNTEER TRUMPET

MARYLAND STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION



IN MEMORY: GEORGE "FRED" A. CROSS
HONORING A HERO: RANDY SMITH
Zembower Fire Service Training Award
TAKE CHARGE OF BATTERY SAFETY





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Merry Christmas from all of us here at the Volunteer Trumpet. Have a happy and safe holiday and New Year. We hope you can share these holiday fire safety tips!

- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that burns. Make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be knocked down easily.
- Consider using battery-operated flameless candles, which can look, smell, and feel like real candles.
- Inspect holiday lights each year before you put them up. Throw away light strands with frayed or pinched wires.
- Read the manufacturer's instructions for the number of light strands to connect.
- Water your Christmas tree every day. A dry Christmas tree can burn very hot and very fast.
- Ensure your tree is at least 3 feet away from heat sources like fireplaces, radiators, space heaters, candles, or heat vents. Also, make sure your tree does not block exits.
- Get rid of your tree after Christmas or when it is dry.

Source: www.usfa.fema.gov/



Thank you, Fire Marshal Brian Geraci, for your ten years of dedicated and selfless service to the citizens of Maryland. Your leadership and outstanding effort to reduce fire deaths across the state will leave lasting impacts. We wish you well in your retirement.



Editor's Corner



My eighth topic is all about **succession planning**. Did you know you should have a plan for your successor? Whether in the volunteer fire service or a business, you need to have a plan when you "retire" from your position. Now is the perfect time to take someone under your wing and begin to train your eventual replacement. Inevitably, you won't be around forever, so being able to set up your replacement for success is better than failure. Yeah, I get that you might not be ready to release the reigns quite yet, and that's okay, but having a plan in place that will allow the department to continue smoothly is only beneficial to everyone involved, including the community. Oh, and the younger generation must understand that the wisdom you can provide as a senior president, chief, board member, engineer, and wagon driver is invaluable. And that only having a few years of experience doesn't make them automatically have 50; it takes a lifetime.

Because this section of the newsletter is meant to share ideas and start conversations, I want to hear new topics that I should cover from the readership and ways that we can work on expanding the readership of the Trumpet. If you want me to write about an issue, please send ideas to Jonathan Dayton at jonathan.m.dayton@gmail.com. About the Editor: Jonathan is a volunteer Firefighter/EMT serving Allegany County, MD. MSFA Committee Chairperson, Assistant Secretary, Allegany Garrett Counties Volunteer Fire Rescue Association Past President, President and Public Information Officer, Maryland Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council Member, and Nation Fire Service Speaker and Educator. Jonathan holds an associate's degree in Fire Science and bachelor's and master's degrees.

Jonathan

-FIND THE CHRISTMAS TREE-

We're continuing the "FIND THE ___" Challenge that we started this year. The goal is to find a specific item hidden in the pages of this book. In this issue, you are tasked with finding this **Christmas Tree** (to the right). Starting on **December 25th**, once you find this small item hidden within the publication, you must email Stephen Jenkins (sjenkins@msfa.org). It can be located on ANY page EXCEPT the front and back cover. The first correct person to discover the item will win the opportunity to submit one free 1/4 page ad!



ZERO DEATHS MARYLAND



If you are expecting a text message or need to send one, pull over and park your car in a safe location. Once you are safely off the road and parked, it is safe to text. [#BeTheDriver](#)

For our latest free simulation training and use your command and tactical skills to take on a commercial garage fire, visit mfri.org



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Training/Announcements

We are excited to have the 26th annual holiday train garden back at the Ellicott City Volunteer Fire Department. The Howard County Fire & Rescue Train Garden Crew (50+ fire department and civic-minded community members) started working in mid-October to imagine new and beautiful holiday displays. Opening from Saturday, December 2 until Monday, January 1 Hours of Operation Wed/Thu/Fr - 630p to 830p and Sa/Su - 11a-830p; closed Monday and Tuesday Christmas week: 11a -830p - Dec 26-29 (Closed Christmas Day); will close early on Christmas Eve.

NEW! Taking Care of Our Own Training Opportunity: January 7, 2023, 0900hours at the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company 109 S Hickory Ave Bel Air, MD 21014

A daylong training program sponsored by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.: Fire/EMS departments & Police departments don't know when they will have a line-of-duty death or serious injury. Do you have a plan in place? Do you know how to notify survivors in a timely and proper way? Are your personnel records current? Do you know how to access Federal, State, and local benefits? This training is targeted for all fire, EMS and Police service personnel; this course covers pre-incident planning, survivor notification, family and coworker support, and benefits and resources available for survivors.

To register use the following link:

<https://web.cvent.com/event/649f30c1-6900-4f9a-9237-ecb166b9ca5a/summary>

Registration is Open for the 2024 National Fire Service Staff and Command Course, March 3-8, 2024, in Annapolis, MD. This course, held in cooperation with the International Association of Fire Chiefs, is a week-long high-intensity concentrated program intended to involve the student in various peer group activities. The program is designed to assist emergency service officers in modern concepts of emergency management by developing professional knowledge and technical skills. The course is open to emergency service officers above the company officer level. Register here: <https://www.mfri.org/register/MGTS-301-R002-2024/seminars>

Save the Date: The 2024 Public Fire & Life Safety Educator Seminar; Saturday, March 23, 2024
8:30 AM to 4:30 PM MFRI College Park 4500 Campus Drive, College Park, MD - Helping Build Your Toolbox for Successful Educating! Networking lunch will be provided. Registration will soon be available on the MFRI website.

New MSFA UAV/Drone Committee: President Smothers is pleased to announce that Andrew Davis, from Brunswick Vol Ambulance and Rescue Company, will lead the building of this committee. Please contact President Smothers or Andrew if you are interested in joining the committee. Andrew's contact info is andrewDavis7104@gmail.com 240-549-9264

Call for New Committee Leadership: President Smothers is seeking interested individuals to chair the new Lithium Ion Battery Committee. If you have interest or experience in any of these areas and would like to get involved, please get in touch with President Smothers at esmothers@msfa.org

The Scholarship Committee has announced that the opening for the 2024 Scholarship application period will be January 1, 2024. Please see the Scholarship Committee page on the MSFA.org website for more information on available scholarships <https://www.msfa.org/committees-2/scholarship/>

The Volunteer Trumpet Committee is looking for contributors! Are you a subject matter expert in Health and Wellness, Firefighter Safety, Recruitment, and Retention, or just have a cool story to share? Contact Chair Jonathan Dayton for more info. <https://www.msfa.org/committees-2/trumpet/>

NFIRS Transition to NERIS: As reported a few months ago, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) is leading a national effort to develop and launch a new interoperable fire information and innovative analytics platform known as the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS). This platform will replace NFIRS as we know it.

"NERIS will empower the fire and emergency services community by equipping them with an empirical basis for decision-making. It will provide the community with reliable predictive analytics to support enhanced preparedness and response to all-hazard incidents, wildland-urban interface events, community risk reduction efforts, climate change threats and associated resilience and mitigation efforts, and future pandemic emergency response resource preparedness. It is important to follow these updates as the USFA moves closer to transition so we are all prepared." More details can be found here: <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfirs/neris/>





In Memory of Past President George "Fred" A. Cross

George "Fred" A. Cross, age 83, of Salisbury, Maryland passed away on August 25, 2023 at Tidal Health Regional Peninsula General Hospital in Salisbury, Maryland. Born in Eccleston, Maryland, he was the son of George Cross Sr. and Jeanette (Beall) Cross and husband of the late Patricia (Engle) Cross. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army National Guard. He was Member and Past President of the Baltimore County Volunteer Fireman's Association and Life Member of the Chestnut Ridge Volunteer Fire Company, joining on Sept. 11, 1961. He served as President at Chestnut Ridge Volunteer Fire Company in 1966, and then from 1968-69, 1971-72; 1979-1988, 1991-92 and 2006-07. He was inducted into the Baltimore County Volunteer Firefighters Association Hall of Fame in 2002, elected as President of the Baltimore County Volunteer Firefighters Association in 1975-76 and was President of the Maryland State Firefighters Association in 1995-96. He was currently a member of the Maryland State Firefighters Association Board and served as Past President and Assistant Treasurer. He is an Honorary member of the Sudlersville Volunteer Fire Company in Queen Annes County, a member of the United Communities Volunteer Fire Company and a Charter member of Norrisville Volunteer Fire Company.

Honoring a Hero: Randy Smith Recognized by the Calvert County (MD) Branch of the NAACP for Exceptional Community Service

Surrounded by friends, family, and community leaders on Saturday, November 4, 2023, Randy Smith received the prestigious Malcolm Funn Community Service Award at the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) Calvert Branch Freedom Fund Luncheon. This accolade reflects Randy's remarkable contributions and steadfast commitment to the community, symbolizing deep appreciation for his tireless efforts in positively impacting the lives of those he serves.

With over 45 years of dedicated service, Randy Smith has held esteemed positions, including founding charter member, first African American President, Vice President, & Assistant Chief of the Dunkirk Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. He has also served as Past President and Vice President of the Southern Maryland Volunteer Firemen's Association. His leadership in shaping the fire service and ensuring community safety has garnered recognition from the African American Fire Fighters Historical Society. Notably, he was inducted into the Maryland State Firemen's Association Hall of Fame in 2022, an honor reserved for only 10 members of volunteer fire, rescue, or EMS departments each year.

Randy's commitment extends beyond Calvert County. Through his involvement with the Southern Maryland Volunteer Firemen's Association, he has been a vital link between Calvert County and the State of Maryland. His roles on the Legislation, Nominations, and Safety Committees, along with representing Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties on the Maryland State Firemen's Association's Executive Committee, showcase his dedication. Actively participating in numerous outreach programs, educational initiatives, community events, and collaborating with legislators, Randy tirelessly works to strengthen the bonds of volunteers and the communities they serve.

The NAACP Calvert Branch's recognition of Randy Smith not only honors an individual but also underscores the strength and unity that emerges when individuals come together for a common cause. It serves as a powerful reminder that, when united, incredible things happen, contributing to the betterment of our community and beyond.

Calvert County Fire-Rescue-EMS extends heartfelt congratulations to Randy Smith on this well-deserved honor, acknowledging his outstanding service and dedication to our community.



RECRUITMENT PROGRAM AT SUDLERSVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL – 7TH & 8TH GRADERS

Is anyone here interested in becoming a firefighter, EMT, paramedic, or dispatcher? Have you given it any thought? Did you know that there is a program in high school that you can take? Did you know your local fire department needs volunteers and offers an in-house Cadet Program? These were some of the questions posed to 7th and 8th graders at Sudlersville Middle School, Sudlersville, MD, during a recruitment assembly on November 20, 2023.

Chief Chad Angelini, Sudlersville Volunteer Fire Company, opened the assembly with the intent for the program, "We intend to spark interest in the fire companies & cadet programs and spark interest in the Fire/EMS Program of Study when you get into high school. We will discuss your possible interest in public service, particularly becoming a Volunteer Firefighter and/or an EMT." Past Chief Steve Hurlock, Church Hill Volunteer Department, followed with his company's cadet program. Steve recognized two of their cadets in the audience and pointed them out. Using them as an example, he spoke about the benefits of becoming a volunteer while you are young, training with your peers, and developing life-long friendships. Chief Eric Meredith, Crumpton Volunteer Fire Department, spoke about his life as a young student, bored and aimless, and consequently was urged to join the fire department as soon as he came of age. "There is nothing compared to the rewards, such as self-esteem, camaraderie, and service-of-self," Eric said as he reminisced about his volunteer service. On the EMS side of the fire service, EMS Captain Christopher Tingen explained their EMT program, with EMT Dawn Pipozar on hand to assist.

The speakers also touched on the high school's vo-tech program for Fire and EMS, which will provide them with most of the training that they need to be a volunteer and/or a paid professional. Many students who have taken this course have gone forward with a career in the fire service and have made a great living, working a great schedule. And they can pursue these careers and still serve their local community as a volunteer. There are even administrative roles that are needed if they are not interested in fire and EMS operations. Additional motivations, such as LOSAP, tax incentives, and property tax credit, were explained, and students were told to tell their parents about them, as the parents themselves may want to volunteer!



Past Chief Steve Hurlock CHVFD, Life Member (EMS) Madeline Hubbard, Fire Prevention and Assembly Coordinator SVFC, Chief Chad Angelini SVFC, EMT Dawn Pipozar CVFD, EMS Captain Christopher Tingen CVFD, Chief Eric Meredith CVFD. SVFC would like to thank MSFA and Activate Canopy Company for the gifted tablecloth, used here on a table as a banner, among other items received.



Potomac Fire Co.2 Inc. recently placed in service a new Brush Unit equipped with a new Honda pump that comes to us, including the water tank, which holds 175 gallons and a 10-gallon foam cell. The rear of the unit also has a hidden compartment that holds a hard sleeve and broom. There's a winch that has a 12,000 lbs pulling rating, with synthetic rope. The unit also has working/response lights combined. This means that when the truck is in the park, lights illuminate the ground; there are also inside compartment lights and light bars mounted around the unit for nighttime operations. This built-in lighting improves the safety of our first responders. Leaf blowers, pre-packaged brush hose extensions, and access to the pass-through tool compartment, including room for gear, flares, chain saw safety gear, chain saws hot stick, battery-operated lights, wildland backpacks, BLS Medical Equipment, and new Lifepak CR2 AEDs.

KIDS CORNER



Hey kids! Fire Dog Spotty needs your help to spot all of the differences between the two pictures below! Can you help him find all 16 changes?



**The Changing Maryland Fire and Rescue Service
December Volunteer Trumpet
Chip's Firehouse Logbook
Chief Clarence "Chip" Jewell**

There is a change of atmosphere slowly engulfing the fire service in Maryland, and to a degree, the entire nation. Municipalities and counties are struggling to meet the growing needs of the increased population with new development construction and the decreasing availability of volunteers. Several counties are forming an organized county-wide fire and EMS delivery system that, in most cases, includes the first employees of county government to provide direct delivery of emergency services. This is a new concept for many counties that have been fully volunteer, or at least, whatever employees were in existence when hired by the individual fire and rescue companies.

I have lived through this transition in Frederick, a transition that continues to evolve. The explosion of growth, of what essentially was a city in the non-incorporated of Frederick County bordering the south of Frederick city in the 1980s, pushed the county government into developing a plan to provide fire and EMS service. The assumption of the 27 "paid drivers" of the City of Frederick on July 1, 1989, into a county "Division of Public Safety" has led to a county-wide force of career personnel exceeding 600 uniformed personnel in today in the Division of Fire & Rescue Services. Frederick County was not the first county or first commissioner form of government to develop a county-wide fire/rescue service delivery system. It certainly will not be the last. The especially delivery of EMS service has placed tremendous demand on local fire rescue companies and county governments.

Fire department ambulance services or volunteer rescue squads were few in the 1950s and 60s. Ambulance service was frequently provided by the local funeral home, often with a "conversion." ambulance that could also be used as a hearse. One community in Frederick County often said you could only tell if the vehicle was being used as an ambulance instead of a hearse if there was a pillow in the window. VFWs, American Legions, Lions Clubs, and other civic and veteran organizations also provided the ambulance service in some communities. Several Maryland State Police barracks provided ambulance service, primarily for transport from the scene of automobile accidents. Many years ago, I was told by a retired trooper that the MSP barrack would pull a trooper off the road to the barrack and get the ambulance to take to the scene of an accident, put the patient in the back, and take them to a hospital without an attendant in the back with the patient.



At one time, essentially every jurisdiction in Maryland was totally staffed by volunteers. Even the City of Baltimore had a total volunteer fire service until 1859 when the City of Baltimore essentially eliminated the volunteer companies and took over the responsibility of the fire department. It was not the lack of volunteers that pushed the city to take over the service, but rather the hostilities, fighting, and even murders that took place between the volunteer companies that forced the city to eliminate the volunteer companies.

The first county to provide paid fire service was Baltimore County. The growth area around the City of Baltimore was known as the "Belt." Though outside the city, the Baltimore Fire Department responded to fires in this area. The response of city apparatus into the county area became so frequent that on April 22, 1881, the Baltimore Board of Fire Commissioners passed a resolution that "...none of the apparatus belonging to this department shall hereafter be sent beyond the city limits..." On June 8, 1881, the Board of County Commissioners of Baltimore County officially established the Baltimore County Fire Department and directed Charles T. Holloway to "... furnish the Fire Department, ... two double tank chemical engines, each tank 85 gallons capacity, three double tank chemical engines, each tank 50 gallons capacity and one double tank chemical engine with a 35-gallon tank at a total cost of \$12,800."

Thus, the first county government-organized fire department in Maryland was born. Over 100 years later, growth has forced many county governments in Maryland to become directly involved with the delivery of fire and rescue services. The 1960s saw Anne Arundel, Prince George's, and Montgomery Counties all begin to delve more directly into

providing fire protection with the implementation of career staffing in some of the volunteer stations. Though the firefighters in Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties were county employees; the initial career staff in the Montgomery County fire station were considered employees of the volunteer corporations, though funded by Montgomery County.

When I became employed as a dispatcher with Montgomery Fire/Rescue Communications in 1977, I was one of a select few actual employees of county government. Only the fire marshal's office, communications, administration, and the county paramedics at Wheaton and Bethesda were county employees. At that time, firefighters were hired and employed by individual volunteer fire and rescue companies in Montgomery County. After numerous legal challenges and opinions, including a landmark lawsuit that ruled the career firefighters in Montgomery County were, in fact, county employees, the Department of Fire/Rescue Services truly became a county fire department.

Rural Howard County suddenly became a major metropolitan area with the advent of the James Rouse planned community of Columbia. This new futuristic suburban "city" was really a blending of several new villages and communities linked together with by-ways and trails that rapidly grew, requiring the implementation of career staffing and new fire stations. The new fire stations were initially sub-stations of existing volunteer fire companies. The first fire station for Columbia was initially associated with the Fifth District Volunteer Fire Department of Clarksville. As the population of Howard County continued to rapidly expand, additional stations were built, initially as more volunteer-affiliated stations, ultimately being taken over as independent Howard County fire stations.

Carroll County and Washington County are both addressing the service needs and the financial impact of county government involvement in emergency services delivery. Several counties other Maryland counties now provide exclusive EMS coverage or are the exclusive providers of advanced life support. Other counties have expanded to provide both EMS and fire service personnel. The volunteer fire and rescue service is facing multiple challenges that are forcing local governments to address personnel and emergency service needs.

The rapid population growth in many jurisdictions combined with the disproportionate growth of the senior population in Maryland has stretched the volunteer resources that are available to the max. Combine these challenges with the serious volunteer recruitment and retention struggles being faced

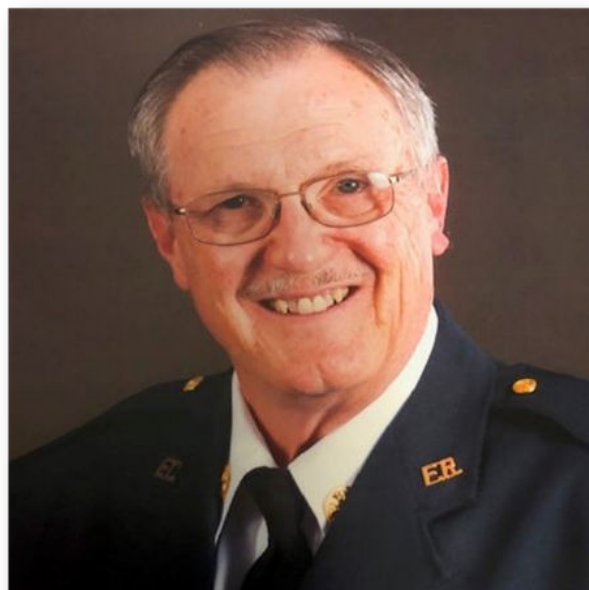
nationally has given most jurisdictions a reality check that times have changed, and local government must step up to help address deficiencies.

There is no shame in asking or needing help. The need for paid or career staffing has touched essentially every corner of Maryland. The transition from totally volunteer fire and rescue companies providing nearly exclusive service to our communities is transitioning to approximately 360 volunteer fire and rescue companies working in a cooperative effort with their local governments to plan and meet current and future emergency services delivery needs. Partnership and cooperation are vital words for developing a successful combination of fire and rescue services.

Believe me, the development of a combination volunteer/career county fire and rescue service is challenging and challenging. Needs of career staff are different from the needs of a volunteer. We must appreciate the needs of both and work together for the benefit of the citizens we all serve. In my MFRI fire officer instructor days, I would begin each class with this statement. "There is a litmus test for everything we do - How does it affect the people we serve?" It's not about giving someone a job or someone a fire truck to ride. It's all about serving our citizens. In these rapidly changing fire service environments, we can never lose sight of our mission.

(Note: Some information retrieved from "Hands, Horses and Engines: A Centennial History of the Baltimore County Fire Service" by the late Assistant Chief Gary Frederick Baltimore City Fire Department & Betsy Weaver)

**Have a Safe, Happy, and Healthy Holiday Season!
CHIP**



December Executive Committee Meeting

hosted by Westminster Fire Department



DID YOU KNOW?

The Maryland State Firemen's Association Executive Committee recently met for its December meeting in Carroll County. If you didn't know, the Executive Committee shall have the power to call Special Conventions and Conferences through the MSFA President.

The Executive Committee shall make an annual report to the MSFA and shall look after its interest generally. At all of its meetings, a majority shall constitute a quorum, and a majority of those present shall decide all questions.

The Executive Committee shall take an annual inventory of all equipment, supplies, etc., owned by the Association, listing the name of article, value of same and in whose custody said article is maintained. This inventory shall be published in the Annual Proceedings Book. No property belonging to the Association shall be disposed of without the consent of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee and the Elected Officers shall manage the affairs of, and the Executive Committee shall transact all business of the MSFA requiring action between the Annual Conventions and Conferences.

The Executive Committee shall review and approve, or disapprove with recommendations all recommendations for grants, loans, or low interest loans made by the Volunteer Company Assistance Fund (VCAF) Board. The Executive Committee shall confer with the President of the MSFA, with respect to requests for funding to be made for the Volunteer Company Assistance Fund Board, to be presented to the Governor by the President of the MSFA.

The Executive Committee shall review and approve the creation and/or presentation of any new awards based upon the review and recommendations of the Awards Committee.

**Zembower Fire Service Training Award
By Ron Watkins, MSFA Public Relations
Committee**

The Zembower Fire Service Training Award is sponsored by the Zembower family and presented annually to the department that has the highest number of formal fire and rescue training hours per active member completed in the past fiscal year. It was created to honor the fire company with the most training hours accrued through the formal classes provided by the Maryland Fire Service Extension Service (currently MFRI) and is based on the number of active members a department has based on the number of members reported in the MSFA Statistical Report. This award is presented at the annual convention of the MSFA.

The award was created by the Bruce Zembower family to honor Bruce's father, Mr. Cromwell Zembower Past Presedent, MSFA), from the LaVale VFC in Allegany County. Mr. Zembower was a very active instructor for the Maryland Fire Service Extension Service in the Western Maryland area. These would be classes that provided a certification card at successful completion, such as Basic, etc., and could be verified by the University of Maryland. As more counties began to hold classes in a formal academy setting, the award was changed to allow recognition of formal training provided by other recognized agencies in the compilation of training points.

The award consists of a large "traveling" trophy, which the winning department keeps for one year,



then returns for the next year's winner. They receive a plaque for their permanent display. To allow for more departments to receive recognition, two additional awards were created. A First Runner-up award is sponsored by Dan and Bobbi Stevens in honor of former Bay District Treasurer Bob Stevens, and a Second Runner-up award is sponsored by the Earleigh Heights VFC to honor their past chief Erman Dill.

The first award was presented to the Huntingtown VFD in 1976. Classes not considered to be "formal" training – classes that do not award a certificate or pocket card and that cannot be verified by MFRI or a local training academy – are not eligible to be counted for this award. All submissions are verified for accuracy, and any department that submits an application must have also submitted a Statistical Report to the MSFA.

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Mike Faust at 443-262-6896 or email him at
Michael.Faust@e-hps.com**

Mike is a life-long resident of QAC and a volunteer firefighter

The holiday season can be difficult.

We are here for you, 24/7.

Text 988 or chat with us online at
988lifeline.org/chat.

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

The MSFA Trustees Need Your Help

The MSFA Trustees make monthly payments to surviving spouses and dependents of our firefighters lost in the line of duty. Some of these payments have been going on for many years. The Trustees attempt to learn when any of these beneficiaries pass away, or dependents reach the age of 18 so we do not continue to send checks and cause unnecessary additional grief for these survivors. This is where the Trustees need the help of all member companies of the MSFA. If a receiver of benefits passes away, remarries, or changes address, the Trustees should be notified so our records can be maintained correctly. Sometimes, the Trustees do not learn of these changes until we receive a check back with a sad note that the beneficiary has passed away or is no longer at the address. Most benefit receivers whose marital status changes or address changes, notify the Trustee Secretary, but only sometimes. We need the help of our member companies in keeping the Trustees up to date. Personnel who are receiving disability payments are required to keep the Trustees posted on their ability to work status and medical condition. We would strongly encourage our member companies to stay in touch with the widows or widowers of members of their company who were lost in the line of duty and their members who were injured in the line of duty. This is part of keeping the "fire service family" together.

The Trustees wish to make payments to all persons approved for benefits promptly and correctly. We wish to spare families the grief of having to return payments. We would also like to keep our accounts correct and updated whenever possible. We ask for the help of our member companies in keeping our records current.



Baltimore Pike Volunteer Fire Company hosted a regional joint trainings with Bedford Road, Bowman's Addition, Flintstone, Orleans, and Corriganville Volunteer Fire Departments.





Potomac Fire Co.2 Inc. decorates the annual Christmas Tree in memory of past members, symbolized by red, gold, and silver balls representing line-of-duty firefighter deaths across the country.



College Park Volunteer Fire Department Volunteers are out celebrating the holiday season with their community.



Congratulations FF/EMT Aleks Korpela, for being named the GVFD 2023 Firefighter/EMT (Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department & Rescue Squad, Inc. - Co. 35) of the Year at the American Legion Post 136 Annual Public Safety Awards Banquet.



American Legion Post 71, joined Oakland VFD as part of their "Be the One" project. The Be the One project is an outreach program to bring awareness of and prevention of veteran and first responder suicide. The Fire Department asks that you "Be the One" by reaching out to those in need. You could "Be the One" to save a life.



Bowman's Addition VFD would like to congratulate Firefighter Zachary Judd on successfully passing his CDL Class B test. Firefighter Judd has been working hard the last few months, practicing his pre-trip, post-trip, and maneuvering skills. Congratulations, Firefighter Judd keep up the hard work and dedication.



Brian S. Geraci
State Fire Marshal

AGENCY PRIORITIES



Maintain a healthy fleet based on health and safety of fire & explosive investigator industry standards.



Maintain and provide additional personal protection equipment to reduce prolonged carcinogen exposure.



Enhance, expand and broaden mental and wellness programs.



Deployment of Axon body worn cameras to sworn deputies.



Enhance the ability to perform a greater number of fire safety inspections with the expansion of our civilian staff.



Enhancement of community risk reduction and public fire and life safety education in vulnerable age groups.



Enhanced training requirements for all staff. Focus on continuing education and professional development.



Investing in a robust, state-of-the-art records management software, identified by internal audits as major priority.



Continue our partnerships with the MSP, local, State and Federal Agencies along with other industrial based stakeholders to have one voice



Complete a personnel and staffing study of the Agency. This will include a study of potential ranking structure changes.



Prepare and educate staff with the on-boarding of the new NFPA 1321: Standard for Fire Investigation Units.



Prioritize code enforcement in hotels/motels along with the continuation of Kari's Law enforcement.



Enhance the Bomb Squad Unit to assist with additional calls for service in Baltimore City and required upgrades of end of life robots.



Investing in leadership for personnel, advanced technology and broadening and reviewing Agency policies.



Ensure testimony to proposed changes to Public Safety Article 2-403 & Public Safety Article 2-405



Using technology and data identify fire trends to prevent future injuries and deaths of civilian and firefighters and reduce the amount of property loss



Conduct a facility review to ensure all OSFM facilities or locations adhere to DGS/ DBM standards and laws.



More robust recruitment efforts focusing on supporting diversity, gender equality & veterans.

Our Mission:

"is the protection of life and property from fire and explosion through the efforts of a diverse, highly trained and dedicated staff in partnership with other public safety agencies and the community. This is accomplished through aggressive criminal investigation of fire and explosive incidents, quality fire protection engineering services, enforcement of the State Fire Prevention Code, data collection and analysis, and public fire safety education."

Our Focus Areas:

- Explosive Investigations
- Fire/Arson Investigations
- Community Risk Reduction
- Fire Protection Engineering
- Accelerate/ Explosive K-9 Unit
- Underwater Hazardous Device Team

For More Information:

www.mdsp.maryland.gov/firemarshal



OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE
1201 REISTERSTOWN ROAD
PIKESVILLE, MD 21208
410.653.8980
MDOFSM.WIXSITE.COM/BLOG



TAKE CHARGE OF BATTERY SAFETY



FACT SHEET

What is a lithium-ion battery?

Lithium-ion is the most popular rechargeable battery chemistry used today. It consists of single or multiple lithium-ion cells along with a protective circuit board.

Where can I find lithium-ion battery-powered devices?

Lithium-ion battery-powered devices can be found in the home and workplace in many common products such as — cell phones, laptops, electric power tools, wheelchairs, lawn mowers, e-bikes, e-scooters, and electric vehicles.

What are the risks associated with lithium-ion batteries?

Despite their many advantages, lithium-ion batteries have the potential to overheat, catch fire, and cause explosions. This most commonly occurs when the batteries are damaged, suffer electro-chemical abuse (e.g., from overcharging or completely draining the battery), are in high- or low-temperature environments, or have an internal short-circuit. The heating from the internal short circuit can cause chemical reactions that lead to thermal runaway.

What is thermal runaway?

Thermal runaway is the primary driver of risks related to lithium-ion batteries. Thermal runaway is what happens when a fault causes self-heating in a battery cell. The process of self-heating generates incredible heat — more than 1,000° F — which decomposes the cell into smoke and flammable and toxic gases. When the heat from thermal runaway spreads to other cells, it can cause them to experience faults and the rest of the battery to go into thermal runaway.

Thermal runaway often immediately ignites a fire, but if the ignition is not immediate, the buildup of flammable gases can cause an explosion that blows out windows and spreads fire throughout a structure (e.g., an apartment, house, or storefront).

Learn how to
**Take C.H.A.R.G.E.
of Battery Safety**



Learn more at batteryfiresafety.org.

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What can I do about battery safety?

From the first sign of a problem, you could have less than a minute to escape a battery fire. With the speed of these fires, the best way to be safe is to prevent a fire from starting. Prioritizing these safety measures will help you **Take C.H.A.R.G.E. of Battery Safety.**

TAKE

C

Choose certified products

- When purchasing lithium-ion battery-powered devices, be sure to look for products that are listed or safety certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory to ensure they meet important safety requirements.
- Countless products sold online do not meet these critical safety standards.

H

Handle lithium-ion battery-powered devices with care

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Only use the charging equipment that comes with the product.
- Store batteries away from extreme temperatures, direct sunlight, exits, and anything flammable.
- Do not modify the battery or the charger in any way.
- Charge larger devices (such as eBikes) outside the home – and never in your exit path.
- Do not charge larger devices overnight.

A

Always stay alert for warning signs

- Check battery-powered devices often for damage or abuse such as swelling or punctures.
- Listen for unusual hissing or popping sounds.
- Watch out for excessive heat or a strange odor.
- If you notice any of these warning signs, stop using the lithium-ion powered devices.
- White or gray wispy smoke indicates immediate danger of thermal runaway.

R

Recycle devices and batteries properly

- Responsibly dispose of old or damaged batteries and devices by taking them to the nearest battery recycling center.
- Never discard batteries, chargers, or battery-powered devices in regular trash bins.

G

Get out quickly if there's a fire

- Know the warning signs to look and listen for and get out if you see – or hear – one.
- Follow your home fire escape plan to leave immediately and **call 9-1-1.**

E

Educate others on battery safety

- Now that you know what actions to take, spread the word. Protect your friends and loved ones by sharing how they can **Take C.H.A.R.G.E. of Battery Safety.**

Don't Suffer in Silence

Emergency responders face unique levels of stress, risk, and unpredictability every day. This can take a toll on your mental health.



Photo courtesy of Lauralee Veitch



Share the Load™ Program

This program provides access to critical behavioral health resources for emergency responders and their families.

nvfc.org/help



Directory of Behavioral Health Professionals

This is a listing of local providers who are equipped to help emergency responders and their families with behavioral health needs.

nvfc.org/phfd



Psychologically Healthy Fire Department Toolkit

This toolkit helps fire department leaders support the mental wellbeing of their members to create a successful, high-performing department.

nvfc.org/phfd



NVFC First Responder Helpline

This helpline assists NVFC members and their household families through crises and everyday work-life stresses. The helpline is offered through Provident by Business Health Services.

nvfc.org/helpline





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Happy Holidays!



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***THE MISSION OF THE MARYLAND STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION IS TO SERVE,
PROMOTE, ADVOCATE AND REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF THE VOLUNTEER FIRE,
RESCUE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES OF MARYLAND.***