



THE CHIEFS CONNECTION

President's Message

I hope this edition of The Chiefs Connection finds you all well and back in the swing of work after a blessed Christmas and New Years. 2018 was a good year for the AAFC as we had two very successful conferences, including the joint summer conference with the Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs, saw growth of the AlaFire application, and began multiple projects to improve Alabama's fire service. Turn Your Attention to Fire Prevention has now grown to outside of the state as other organizations have realized the program can be more successful in reducing fire deaths when we all work together, and your association has been involved with several other groups as we help work towards a statewide home sprinkler coalition, professional development programs, and enhancing public education across the state.



I want to thank the AAFC Board of Directors and all those who have worked on one or more committees for making these improvements possible. One of the largest hurdles as officers of the association is to manage our daily, paying jobs and the work of the AAFC; without a doubt it takes a collective effort across the Board and the membership for the organization to be successful.

Looking ahead to 2019, there is yet more work to be done and great opportunities for education and networking. In February, we will be back in Tuscaloosa for what is slated to be another great conference and meeting. The annual SEAFCA conference is scheduled for July in Murfreesboro, TN. Fire-Rescue International is in Atlanta in August, and the AAFC Summer Conference moves back to the beach on August 11.

We should also see the Alabama legislative session kick off in March. The Joint Fire Council does an excellent job of keeping us posted on potential bills that can impact the work we do. Through our membership, we can have a voice in the laws that improve, or sometimes not, our firefighters and public safety. It is often said that *All politics is local* and you can help by sharing important facts and concerns with your local Senators and Representatives.

As I close, I want to mention that over the last couple of years we have seen several of AAFC's major contributors and our more tenured members reach that goal we all work for - retirement. We wish them all the best in the future, but we must also realize that it is up to us to incorporate our up-and-coming leaders from our departments into the AAFC and regional meetings, to allow them to grow within the AAFC and contribute where they can. Hopefully one day we'll all be retired and they'll be doing it better than we ever did.





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AAFC Regional Association Information

CAFCA

Central Alabama Fire Chiefs Association meets the first Wednesday of each month at locations throughout Central Alabama. Contact Deputy Chief John Brook for more information, jbrook@tuscaloosa.com

NAFCA

North Alabama Fire Chiefs Association meets the second Thursday of every month at locations across North Alabama. Contact Chief Tony Grande for more information, tgrande@decatur-al.gov

SEAFCA

Southeast Alabama Fire Chiefs Association meets bimonthly (even-numbered months) on the third Thursday at locations around Southeast Alabama. Contact Deputy Chief Michael Whaley for more information, michael.whaley@prattvilleal.gov

SWAAFC

Southwestern Alabama Association of Fire Chiefs meets bimonthly (odd-numbered months) at locations throughout the Southwestern region. Contact Chief Joey Darby for more information, jdarby@cityoffoley.org

Community Risk Reduction Requires Good Data!

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Turn Your Attention To Fire Prevention reaches across state lines-

TYATFP has been a staple of the AAFC since 2014, but the campaign has recently been spreading around the Southeast.

Turn Your Attention was endorsed by the SEAFCA and several SE State Chiefs Associations in 2016. Recently, a couple of states have gone beyond an endorsement and fully embraced the campaign.

Georgia Fire Chiefs adopted the campaign in 2017 and has been since working to spread the effort across their state. Mississippi Fire Chiefs, along with the Mississippi State Fire Marshal, recently adopted the campaign and plan to officially announce their kick-off this February at the state capitol.



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NFPA Southeastern Regional Director Robby Dawson

The Standard and Science of Protecting Firefighters

Providing protection from the hazards associated with the structural firefighting environment has been an ever evolving process. Two standards published by the National Fire Protection Association are important factors in that evolution - NFPA 1971, *Standard on Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting*, as well as NFPA 1851, *Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting* are those two documents. These provide the fire service with the consensus standards for protecting fire service members with the most recent advancements in technology and scientific research possible, but many questions remain about certain aspects of these documents, particularly about when fire fighting turnout gear should be retired.



Specifically, how old is too old for the structural fire fighting ensembles to be effective or reliable? It is relatively easy to see when a thermal liner or outer shell has been damaged to the point it should be removed from service, but when does that same garment reach its “expiration date”? NFPA 1851 (2014 edition) chapter 10 provides that guidance in section 10.1.2 which says “*Structural fire fighting ensembles and ensemble elements shall be retired ... not more than 10 years from the date the ensembles or ensemble elements were manufactured.*” This section has been debated by the Technical Committee for several cycles and they have again reinforced the concept that a ten year lifespan - from the date of manufacture - provides the best guidance to ensure firefighters are protected.

While scientific evidence is normally used to define these types of timelines, such research is absent in the area of shelf life of these materials. By the letter of the standard, garments that were purchased ten years ago and remained on a stockroom shelf must be disposed of and not used for structural firefighting. Garments that are routinely used certainly can show signs of normal wear and tear and should be replaced after such a timeframe but similar garments that are rarely used may seem to be in pristine condition similar to those kept on a stock room shelf. The question of how much degradation of the fibers and materials occurs and how much has technology and standards changed over time remains.

The Technical Committee addressed the latter question in the Annex A materials to NFPA 1851 when they noted, “*Since the NFPA standards are revised every 5 years, the 10 years represents two revision cycle that incorporate performance enhancements in ensembles and ensemble elements to warrant retirement of personal protective equipment (PPE) 10 years from the date of manufacture.*” Advances in materials and design over a 10 year period will provide firefighters with better protection, either in the form of vapor barriers, thermal shells, or from coverage. Retiring PPE on the 10 year cycle will take advantage of these improved protections. (continued on page 6)

(Protecting Firefighters continued from page 5)

The Technical Committee also evaluated the science question as it debated the life span of firefighting's gear, specifically the absence of such science was addressed in two points of the NFPA 1851 Annex where they noted, *"In the absence of scientifically validated test methods that would support modifying or eliminating the current mandatory retirement of 10 years, the technical committee reaffirmed the existing 10-year requirement for all PPE"* and that, *"the absence of a nondestructive test or evaluation method that can conclusively and reliably determine that PPE remains compliant with the performance requirements in place at the time of manufacture, the committee reaffirmed the existing 10-year requirement for all PPE."* That is to say that while you can test the materials in a garment and confirm that they perform as designed, those test methods actually destroy the material and make the garment no longer useable as a protective garment so, the testing isn't a workable solution to a set 10 year retirement date.

As the Technical Committee continues work on the next edition of NFPA 1851, which is scheduled to be published in 2019, they look forward to addressing the issue of shelf life and the 10 year retirement schedule. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has begun a research project that will look at the issue of PPE life span, and specifically the 10 year mandatory retirement benchmark established by NFPA 1851 section 10.1.2. Their study will likely take several years to complete and will not be ready for the 2019 publication of the standard, but the Technical Committee will be looking to the results for the next revision cycle which will be soon after 2019. The outcome of that research may have an impact on the lifespan or evaluation of structural firefighting PPE as the committee begins their work on the next editions of NFPA 1851 and NFPA 1971.

To participate in the process, or to keep track of the next steps in the process for the development of the next editions, visit www.nfpa.org/1851 or www.nfpa.org/1971 and click on the "Next Edition" tab for more information.

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LIVE FIRE TRAINING AND ACQUIRED STRUCTURES

ARTHUR WILLIS, SECTION CHIEF OF TRAINING
ALABAMA FIRE COLLEGE



“The ongoing training of fire fighters is the cornerstone of good fire protection in today’s world. However, the benefits derived from live fire training can be negated by injuries and deaths suffered by fire fighters under unsafe and poorly supervised training conditions.” (NFPA 1403, Origin and Development of NFPA 1403). The first edition of NFPA 1403 was published in 1986 and originally titled *Live Fire Training Evolutions in Structures* and has gone through several revisions including the incorporating NFPA 1406 *Outside Live Fire Training Evolutions* in 1997 into one document that is today’s NFPA 1403.

This article is going to elaborate on one component of NFPA 1403, **Chapter 5 Acquired Structures**. The discussion is not an argument for or against the use of acquired structures in live fire training evolutions, but to list a few points of interest when considering using such training methods, specifically asbestos regulation. The other chapters and annexes of 1403 should be referenced along with local jurisdiction SOP/SOG’s to ensure training objectives are met in a safe manner.

Fire Chiefs and Training Officers throughout Alabama routinely receive calls from individuals, in their jurisdictions, wanting to donate structures for their departments to use in live fire training. Many departments have used donated structures to train new fire fighters and to allow seasoned firefighters to polish skills. In most instances these training events are uneventful and objectives are met in a timely and proficient manner.

NFPA 1403 Chapter 5 starts with “Any acquired structure that is considered for a structural fire training exercise shall be prepared for the live fire training evolution” (Structures and Facilities, 5.1.1). Preparation includes determining ownership, clear title, written permission to train within the structure, and a long list of other documentation. There is one requirement that has always been a bit of a mystery to many in the fire service throughout Alabama, asbestos removal and documentation.

Debris removal from an acquired structure before and after live fire training often is a shared liability between the property owner and the department using the acquired structure. Regulations regarding debris disposal are governed by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), but asbestos is an exception because of federal and state regulations. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) administers all major federal environmental laws, including asbestos inspections and abatement. ADEM understands the need and/or desire by fire departments to use a structure, such as an old residential property, to train firefighters. But ADEM has to weigh the fire service needs against the environmental hazards to the public such as the risks associated with exposure to asbestos.

(continued on page 9)

(Acquired Structures continued from page 8)

The ADEM list of requirements for live fire training in residential structures are listed below.

1. A current and thorough asbestos inspection by an Alabama Accredited Asbestos Inspector must be completed. The inspector must be certified through Alabama Safe State (a link to their website is listed below).
2. All asbestos containing material (ACM) must be removed. Friable ACM must be removed by an ADEM certified asbestos removal contractor (Friable is ACM is that can be reduced to powder by hand).
3. ADEM Form 496 must be completed and received by ADEM at least 10 days prior to asbestos abatement and beginning training fire.
4. The burning of the structure must be used for live fire training.
5. Disposal of the remaining debris/ash shall be at a landfill and not buried.

Live fire training using an acquired structure can be a useful training aid. Many factors must be considered when conducting live fire training evolutions including cost. The cost required to make a structure safe for training may be cost prohibitive and thus require alternatives to training in acquired structures.

Listed below are a number of links that should be useful in obtaining definitive information about the possibility of asbestos in an acquired structure.

Training for Alabama Accredited Asbestos Inspector and contractors:

<https://alabamasafestate.ua.edu/environmental-accreditation/asbestos/index.php>

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-09/documents/epa-340-1-92-013-199209.pdf>

*See page 2-2 for information regarding intentional burning

<http://adem.alabama.gov/DeptForms/Form496.pdf>

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title40-vol8/pdf/CFR-2011-title40-vol8-part61-subpartM.pdf>

www.adem.alabama.gov

COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The AAFC Professional Development Committee has been working in conjunction with the Alabama Fire College to build a Professional Development system specific to the Alabama fire service. While the overall system is intended to address all ranks of firefighters, the AAFC sees the need to provide a foundation of knowledge and an avenue for newly appointed Chiefs to have the benefit of a network of resources needed to be effective in today's fire service. Multiple brainstorming sessions have taken place, and will continue into 2019. Look for an electronic survey in the coming months as a way to contribute and share what could have been (or would still be) a benefit to you. If you have ideas or would like to help in the development, contact one of the committee members: Wade Buckner, Matt Missildine, Arthur Willis, and Chris Collins.



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UPCOMING 2019 AAFC CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS - PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Two amendments are expected to be considered at the 2019 Mid-Winter AAFC meeting this February:

- An amendment to make the AAFC Constitution and By-Laws consistent with those of the SEAFCA and the IAFC in that an elected or appointed officer of the Association may serve the remainder of a term upon separation from the fire service.
- An amendment that would allow for County VFD Associations to provide AAFC memberships for the Fire Chiefs of the VFDs represented. These would be Associate Memberships and only available to those volunteer Chiefs of departments recognized by the Alabama Forestry Commission. This also sets the dues for these Associate memberships at \$300 annually.

These proposed changes have been published for review on the AAFC Website under the membership tab, and also emailed to the membership list. Please contact a Board of Directors member if you have questions regarding these proposed changes.

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PUBLIC AND LIFE SAFETY EDUCATORS GROUP MEETS

On December 5th, several AAFC members attended a meeting of Public Fire & Life Safety Educators from all over the state of Alabama. The meeting was held in Madison and Firefighters, Fire Marshals and Chiefs all came together to be a part of the discussion on how to better make the State of Alabama as safe as possible. With the focus being on Community Risk Reduction (CRR) and mutual collaboration, a clear goal of developing a network of experience and inventiveness in public education, and objectives were easily created and recognized by all in attendance. Discussions were had about the Georgia United Community Risk Reduction Manual, defining goals as state educators, defining Alabama's fire problem, NFPA's Hero Experience overview, and current programs from the state Fire Marshal. A work group was established to explore the Georgia Unified CRR manual, along with a group tasked to identify and recruit educators for the At-Risk areas of Alabama.

Half of the battle of engaging in CRR activities is that many departments struggle to solve the individual needs of our communities with very little contact or help from outside sources. Another function of this group is to introduce resources and help to those who were struggling to start, or maintain, CRR programs at the community level. NFPA Regional Education Specialist Kelly Ransdell was also in attendance to give the group an inside look at the vast amount of information available from NFPA to aid in CRR. Our State Vision 2020 representatives Chief Tony Grande and Deputy Fire Marshal Dalan Gassett also presented information available through strategicfire.org.

A second meeting is tentatively scheduled for late February in the Clanton area. Watch the AAFC social media pages for more information as it becomes available, or contact Captain Michael Sedlacek (michael.sedlacek@madisonal.gov) or Deputy Fire Marshal Dalan Gassett (jonathan.gassett@insurance.alabama.gov) if you or someone in your department would like more information.



Madison Fire and Rescue introduced their state of the art Virtual Reality CRR Trailer this fall. This one of a kind mobile education experience gives citizens both young and old the opportunity to see different residential fire scenarios and recognize hazards and smoke alarms, along with practice home safety drills like escape plans, in a virtual environment. Madison plans to have the CRR Trailer available to show at FCEDC in February.



2019 Alabama Legislative Session

The 2019 State Legislative Session is scheduled to kick-off on March 5th with several new faces in Montgomery. No doubt phrases like “Gas Tax” and “Lottery” will be buzz words throughout this session, but there are many potential pieces of legislation that could impact the fire service in some way. Some of these that have been rumored thus far:

- Reintroduction of legislation that gives the RSA Local Units (Cities, Boards, Districts) the option to move Tier 2 employees to a system similar to the current Tier 1 Retirement.
- A possible bill to clarify the liability of Fire Departments and firefighters for the voluntary installation of smoke alarms in private residences.
- Changes to the Landlord/Tenant Laws that specifically address the installation on smoke alarms in residential rental properties, particularly 1 and 2 family dwellings and in areas without local code enforcement.
- Expansion of presumptive cancer clauses to include Worker’s Compensation insurance.
- Possible tax incentives for volunteer firefighters.
- Legislation affecting fire districts, district fee structures, and possible fire protection coverage for large tracks of forest land.

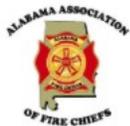
The AAFC will work to keep the membership informed on legislation that may benefit or detract from the fire service and public safety. As the session gets underway, look for updates as they become available.

Peer-to-Peer is for Chiefs too!

Peer to peer support has been recognized as an important part of providing for mental and emotional health in the fire service. Cases such as the suicides of Battalion Chiefs David Dangerfield in Florida and Erik Sutton in Wisconsin show that rank does not make us immune to the stresses of life and the job. However, it is likely difficult for most chiefs to find a peer they can turn to for such support. Some may choose to cross the rank lines for support while others may seek out friends in other departments, possibly of other ranks. Regardless of how, it is important for chief officers to recognize the necessity for personal support and develop a network to assist when needed.

DEVELOPING *the Future*

FIRE CHIEFS EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE



February 5-8, 2019 | Tuscaloosa, AL



Tuesday, Feb. 5

2pm-3pm	Board of Directors Meeting
3:15pm-5pm	Pre-Conference Business Meeting
5pm-6pm	Meet & Greet

Wednesday, Feb. 6

8am-9am	Opening Ceremonies
9am-10am	Break & Vendor Time
10am-12pm	Keynote Speaker: Gordon Graham
12pm-1:30pm	Lunch
1:30pm-3pm	Gordon Graham
3pm-3:30pm	Break & Vendor Time
3:30pm-5pm	Shane Ray

Thursday, Feb. 7

8am-8:30am	MDA & Announcements
8:30am-8:45am	AFC Update
8:45am-9:30am	Break & Vendor Time
9:30am-11:30am	Steve Kerber
11:30am-1:30pm	Lunch; Jeremiah Castille
1:30pm-3pm	Steve Kerber
3pm-3:15pm	Break
3:15pm-4:15pm	Jim Crawford

Friday, Feb. 8

8am-8:30am	Coffee
8:30am-10:30am	Business Meeting

Register today for the 2019 Fire Chiefs Executive Development Conference! We have a fantastic line-up of speakers and exhibitors scheduled, plus plenty of networking opportunities. Don't miss the Business Meeting on Friday as we are set to elect Officers and consider Constitution amendments.

The registration link is available on www.alfirechiefs.com under the "Upcoming Events" tab.

Organizational Size Up: Supporting Our Members' Mental and Emotional Well-being

Chief Matt Missildine, Pike Road Fire Department

Every fire service leader owes it to their members to gain an understanding of the mental and emotional stressors associated with our field. While there is no shortage of literature available on the topic in general, and especially for practitioners in particular, the literature available for fire service leaders seems to be limited. Consider that the text book for recruit school is different from the text book for Officer IV. That is the case because of the different needs of each. So too is the case when it comes to providing for the mental and emotional health of our members. Chiefs don't need to be CISM counselors, after all that's a task level activity. As fire service leaders, we need to have an awareness of the problem and ADDRESS it at an ORGANIZATIONAL level.

That brings me to my purpose here: raising awareness for the Yellow Ribbon Report. This report, titled "[Under the Helmet - Performing an Internal Size-up: A Proactive Approach to Ensuring Mental Wellness](#)", was released by the Volunteer and Combination Officer Section of the IAFC to bring awareness to the issue of mental and emotional health in the fire and emergency services. The IAFC Safety, Health and Survival Section and the Emergency Behavioral Health Alliance also contributed to this report. The report is 42 pages of background information, statistics, resources, and action items that chiefs and organizations can use to address, and hopefully prevent, the problems associated with mental wellness.

Consider that suicide in the fire service and other public safety fields has been recognized as a problem somewhat recently, but we are only beginning to learn the scale of the problem due to cultural and reporting issues. While suicide is a terrible outcome, we must remember that it is not the only possible outcome for a member suffering from a mental or emotional health issue. There is no way to know the relationship problems, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and work performance issues that our members have endured due to poor emotional or mental health. To that end, and perhaps most importantly, the Yellow Ribbon Report, NFPA, and numerous others cite cumulative stress as a possible cause of these issues, not just horrific, post traumatic stress inducing incidents.

My observation is that, as a service, we have become proactive in providing CISM resources to our members following bad incidents. It seems almost automatic these days: have a bad call and chaplain/counselor types show up. However, if that's the case, why are the statistics showing suicide to be on the rise when there are more CISM training and resources available than ever before? My belief is that the cumulative stress is the cause. This stress is caused by the day in, day out activities associated with the fire service. They include answering calls, interrupted sleep and missing time with family, just to name a few. As fire service leaders, I think we need to develop our organizations to provide members the support they need to face and process such stress. The Yellow Ribbon Report serves as a good starting point. To do anything less is to treat our members as less than the most valuable resource we have.

The Yellow Ribbon Report is available under the Resources section of the [AAFC website](#). If you have any questions or would like more information about it, please let me know at mmissildine@pikeroadfire.com.

Have an idea for an upcoming newsletter?

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SAVE THE DATE

- Fire Chiefs Executive Development Conference, Bryant Conf. Center, Feb 5-8
- Fire College Weekend - Atmore, Feb 22-23 & March 1-3
- Fire College Weekend - Athens, March 6-10
- SEAFC Leadership Conf in Murfreesboro July 15-18
- FRI - Atlanta, August 7-10
- AAFC Summer Conference, Perdido Beach, August 11-14

save the date!

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