

AROUND THE STATE



A Word from our Fire Service Partners

From the Editor: The following column is intended to provide our readers an update on fire service activities from around the state.

Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal



The OSFM continues to work on finalizing the application for our upcoming Fire Station Construction and Rehabilitation Grant. This program provides grants of up to \$350,000 for construction or rehabilitation of fire stations. Rules for the program are now finalized and available by visiting our website sfm.illinois.gov.

In order to be eligible to receive these grants you MUST have an active registration with SAM.gov and also be registered with the state's Grantee Portal. Please follow the instructions included in a PowerPoint available on our website to obtain these registrations. Failure to achieve these registrations will make you ineligible to receive a grant so get started as soon as possible as SAM.gov registration can take time. Also, applicants must be NFIRS compliant for at least the last two years. You can enter your information or contact our NFIRS staff by following this link (<https://sfm.illinois.gov/iam/firedepartment/nfirs.html>).

The application window is expected to open in December. Make sure to follow our website, social media pages, and check your FDMail accounts for updates about this grant!

This year's theme for Fire Prevention Week was Smoke Alarms: Make Them Work for You! Data shows that working smoke alarms reduce the risk of dying in a home fire by more than half, 54% to be exact. Meanwhile, roughly three out



of five fire deaths happen in homes with either no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. Sadly in 2023 there were 89 residential fire deaths in Illinois with the majority of these deaths occurring in homes without working smoke alarms. These are scary statistics, but it's not only the residents of a home fire that are at risk, but the responding firefighters as well. We encourage departments across the state to get involved in programs like "Be Alarmed! Smoke Alarm Installation Program" that is a joint venture between the OSFM and Camp I Am Me by Illinois Fire Safety Alliance. This year, the OSFM and Camp I Am Me worked with fire departments from across the state to host the first ever Statewide Smoke Alarm Blitz. We are excited to see the number of alarms that were installed and families that were educated about the importance of having a fire escape plan and other important fire safety information provided to them. If your department is interested in joining this program, visit <https://www.ifsai.org/prevention-resources/smoke-alarm/>.

"Be Alarmed!" is a fire safety education and smoke alarm installation program administered cooperatively between Camp I Am Me (CIAM) and the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM). The program distributes fire safety education materials and 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms to fire departments in the state of Illinois. The fire departments then deliver the education while installing smoke alarms in at-risk homes within their communities. Both the educational materials and smoke alarms are provided at no cost as a result of funding from both the CIAM and OSFM.

Data is such an important part of any safety program in communities no matter their size. This is why it is so important that communities get involved in Community Risk Reduction. Leaders should conduct a localized risk assessment plan that takes a holistic approach involving all parties, not just one group. These assessments allow all agencies, not just the fire department, to evaluate what are the greatest risks to their residents and work together to help mitigate or create programs to reduce risks. The OSFM remains committed to the CRR process. There are some departments right now across the state that are shining stars the CRR world, and their programs are being used as a model for the rest of the country. To learn more about the efforts taking place here in Illinois, visit illinois.crr.com.

James A. Rivera
Illinois State Fire Marshal

Illinois Fire Service Institute



Fall is always a busy time for the Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI) Team and this year is no exception. We will continue to work through weekly training deliveries in Champaign and across the state through late December. These efforts include training from our Academy, Basic Operations Firefighter (BOF) Blended, Structural Collapse, Rope Rescue, Vehicle Rescue, Confined Space, Hazardous Materials, Wilderness Search and Rescue, Leadership Development and Decision Making, RIT, and Officer Programs. IFSI also is supporting industrial training activities

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for Canadian Pacific Railroads and 3M this fall.

It is beyond question that all these activities are made possible through the tremendous efforts of our team and the trust given to IFSI by participating students and fire departments.

2025 Winter Fire School

The course lineup is now available for the 2025 Winter Fire School. Participants may choose from eleven unique course options to create a personalized schedule of hands-on, live fire, or classroom training activities. Registration for the January 18-19 event opens on November 10.



The 2025 Winter Fire School course offerings are:

- Respectful Entry
- Elevator Equipment, Function and Rescue Considerations
- Ice Rescue Awareness
- iPumps
- Renewable Energy
- Response to Battery Electric Vehicle Incidents
- Rope Operations Recertification Skills for Trained Rescuers



IFSI congratulates the 2024 Fall Academy and BOF graduates and wishes them well as they return to their home departments.

- Multiple Occupancies Fire Attack
- Leadership Development and Decision Making
- Engine Company Winter Operations
- First-In Officer

Online registration is strongly encouraged at fsi.illinois.edu.

Basic Firefighter / NFPA Firefighter I and Basic Operations Firefighter Blended Courses

The IFSI 2024 Fall Academy has wrapped up with candidates completing the seven-week program. A commencement ceremony was held on October 25 in Champaign. Students were honored for their outstanding performance during intense, hands-on training.

The IFSI Basic Operations Firefighter Blended course also wraps up later this month. On November 24 candidates from across Illinois will complete the program after 18 weeks of blended training.

Congratulations to the 2024 Fall Academy and BOF Grads. *(Photo below)*

IFSI 2025 Calendars

The annual IFSI calendar will be released in late November and mail to all Illinois fire departments in early December. This yearly publication is a highlight of IFSI programs, training activities, students, and staff. Individuals wishing to receive a copy of the calendar can request to be added to the mailing list by emailing: fsi-marketing@illinois.edu. Please provide name, address, and number of copies requested in the email correspondence.

Jim Keiken
Director

Illinois OSHA

Where are your firefighters obtaining knowledge?



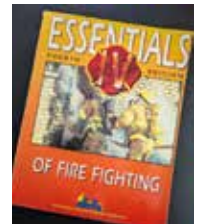
Back in the day, to get the latest news, you would turn on the TV and watch channels two, four, or five. Today, you can get news, of varying quality, from an almost unlimited number of sources on demand. In 2005, as a volunteer firefighter, my learning of the job primarily came from or through my fire department. I went through an excellent training program, read my trusty IFSTA Essentials IV textbook, attended courses at the local community college and IFSI, and read articles by Brunacini, Norman, Goldfeder, and other respected leaders.

Today, firefighters have access to an almost unlimited amount of knowledge far beyond the walls of their fire department. To be clear, there are many excellent knowledge options out there. However, there are also knowledge options of varying substance and quality that push mindsets or strategies to firefighters that may not be supported by their fire department. Now more than ever, to prevent fireground chaos, fire department leaders must communicate the mission and mindset, set expectations, use SOGs to drive incident operations, implement and enforce incident action plans, and assess and respect the actual capabilities of their organization.

Talk with your firefighters. Where do they get their knowledge? It could be the latest article published by the Fire Safety Research Institute, or, it could be the newest firefighter "influencer" on YouTube.

New resource page

IL OSHA has created a new, "one stop shop" resource page for fire departments. Please check out osha.illinois.gov/fire for all of our sample programs, guides, reports, and more!



Questions? E-mail us at DOL.Safety@illinois.gov call us at 217-782-9386 or visit us at osha.illinois.gov

Erik Kambarian
Chief, Division of Occupational Safety and Health (IL OSHA)
Illinois Department of Labor

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Illinois Fire Chiefs Association



On behalf of the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association, I want to thank the IAFFD for the opportunity to update Fire District members. We certainly appreciate the great relationship we have developed with the IAFFD over many years. The combined conference this September was a great opportunity to work together and learn from each other. At the Conference, we installed the 2024-25 Illinois Fire Chiefs Association Executive Board led by, President Chad Hoefle (Stillman FPD), First Vice President Brian Lambel (Wilmette FD), and Second Vice President Kent Adams (Romeville FD). We also installed five Directors and twenty-four Area Representatives, representing twelve Areas. To learn who is the Area Representative for your IFCA Area, check out "Who We Are" at www.illinoisfirechiefs.org.

The IFCA is dedicated to helping our members serve their communities. We do this by providing regular information to keep the Fire Chiefs informed, advocating with the Illinois Legislature - and Federal Legislators as well, providing training and education opportunities, and conducting promotional and consulting efforts. The IFC Educational and Research Foundation provides educational programs, funds research and training grants, and provides scholarships to firefighters throughout Illinois. Watch for the scholarship application period to open right after the first of the year.

Our members are Chief Fire Officers from across Illinois. They serve on volunteer, part-time, paid-on-call and career organizations. Our members come from both Fire Departments and Fire Protection District. This provides for a membership that is very diverse, providing the opportunity to help in a wide variety of ways. Our mission is to support the fire service leaders in Illinois.

As part of this mission, we have organized a few events for the Illinois Fire Service Leaders in 2025. We will kick off the new year with our Volunteer and

Combination Officers Committee (VCO) Conference beginning the evening of Friday January 10th and running through the evening of January 11th in East Peoria. In May we will be back in East Peoria to hold our annual Symposium beginning the evening of May 13th through noon on May 15th. The Illinois Firefighter Memorial is May 13th in Springfield and we encourage Chief Officers to attend ahead of the Symposium. And then on October 12th through the 15th, we will be hosting our Annual Conference in Peoria. The Conference is open to all those involved in the Illinois Fire Service, so save the dates on your calendar. For more information, go to www.illinoisfirechiefs.org.

We are always looking for ways to help the Illinois Fire Service provide for the protection of their communities. If there is something we can do to help you, never hesitate to contact us at info@illinoisfirechiefs.org or 847-966-0732. Or you can email me directly at execdir@illinoisfirechiefs.org.

John Buckley
Executive Director, IFCA

IL Fire Inspectors Association



Our 48th annual conference is on March 26 – 28, 2025, in East Peoria, and there is a great line-up of speakers. On our website is a one-page flyer of the event. A full preconference program with class descriptions and speaker bios will be available towards the end of the year. Registrations for attendees and for sponsor/exhibitors is now available on our website.

If your organization is not a member of the IFIA, consider becoming one for only \$100. That will enable anyone who attends to receive the member pricing.

Our opening speaker will be the Clark County Fire Chief at the time of the Las Vegas 2017 country music festival. This case history will provide some good information that can benefit your organization, your EMA people, and emergency room directors/supervisors. Make sure you invite them to this presentation. If you happen to have a large mass casualty event in your town, they will all be involved, as well as agencies many miles away.

If you are a business that would like to support education of fire inspectors and fire and life safety educators, there is a way to do that. The IFIA Board has developed bronze, silver, and gold level sponsorships. These are good for a calendar year. Specific details are available on our website.

Dues notices will be coming out shortly. For a fire department the dues are only \$100, and makes everyone in the organization eligible for discounted pricing on event. This is a great value.

Our November mini seminar will be the popular VIRTUAL Did You Know? This is a high-level view of a series of topics. Contact information will be provided following each presentation, if you would like to follow up for additional information on the topic.

In November we will be offering a PFLSE class. This is OSFM approved. **Please note that scholarships are available!** A short scholarship application is available on our website.

See the IFIA website for more information and to register for all of our classes.

Mark your calendars. Our annual Holiday Party will be on December 5th at 6 pm. All are welcome, and more information will be coming out soon. Appetizers will be provided and a cash bar will be available. Also, we will be collecting new or gently used winter clothing to give to those less fortunate than us. If you are unable to make the meeting and have something to donate, just contact our office and we will make arrangements to get your donation.

Just a reminder that we accept nominations for our awards year-round for anyone who is deserving recognition for going above and beyond. It is also possible to nominate civilians or businesses. Check out our webpage for the different awards and their descriptions, and submit them now.

Upcoming events:

- Nov 15 - [Virtual](#) Did You Know?
- Dec 5 – Holiday Party

Robert Morris
Executive Director, IFIA

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Illinois Fire Safety Alliance

Camp I Am Me | \$299,000
FEMA Grant Received to Support Smoke Alarm Installation Programs



Camp I Am Me by Illinois Fire Safety Alliance is proud to announce that it has been awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG) program. This \$299,047 grant will enable Camp I Am Me to purchase 16,000 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms and nearly 400 bed shaker smoke alarm aids for hard-of-hearing and deaf residents.

The AFG grant provides 95% of the funds of \$299,047 with a 5% match of \$14,952 from Camp I Am Me. These devices will support the Be Alarmed! Smoke Alarm Installation Program, which is a fire safety education and smoke alarm installation program administered cooperatively between Camp I Am Me and the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal. The program distributes fire safety education materials and 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms to fire departments in the state of Illinois. The departments then deliver the education while installing smoke alarms in at-risk homes within their communities.

This grant will make it possible to provide these critical devices to more than 300 Illinois fire departments currently participating in the Be Alarmed! program, equipping thousands of homes with smoke alarms and ensuring that countless residents can be alerted swiftly in the event of a fire. To learn more about the Be Alarmed! Program, visit www.IFSA.org/alerts.

2025 Summer Camp Volunteer Requests Now Being Accepted

Even though the 34th annual Summer Camp program will not be taking place until June of 2025, preparations are already underway for the signature event. Camp I Am Me's Summer Camp is Illinois' camp for young burn survivors which provides a special and unforgettable one-week experience for approximately 60

children each year. Through the generosity of donors, supporters, sponsors, and volunteers, Camp I Am Me offers this unique experience at no-cost to the campers, including lodging, meals, all of the special activities, events, and transportation to and from the camp.

Whether you have been attending camp as a volunteer for 10 years or are looking to become involved for the first time, completing the Summer Camp Request to Volunteer Form is the first necessary step to becoming involved in next year's camp. This allows Camp I Am Me to properly identify volunteers to staff the cabins and activities, ensuring the kids have the best week of their year!

If you are interested in volunteering at the 2025 Summer Camp, which requires being at camp for eight days and nights (Saturday-Saturday), visit www.IFSA.org/get-involved. The deadline to submit your request is Friday, February 7, 2025.

Philip Zaleski
Executive Director

Illinois Fire Service Administrative Professionals

Happy Fall From IFSA!



Summer flew by and we are well on our way to cooler nights and beautiful Fall colors. Before we know it the hustle and bustle of the holiday season will be upon us. The anticipation of the upcoming season changes can also bring on feelings of stress, anxiety and mental fatigue.

With that said, I'd like to touch on a topic near and dear to many Administrative Professionals in the Fire Service. The mental health of the men and women who work within our departments.

As Administrative Professionals in the fire service, we often observe the dedicated men and women who serve as firefighters/paramedics. These individuals work long hours under extreme physical and emotional stress, responding to emergencies that demand quick thinking, strength, and resilience. Their courage and commitment are undeniable, but it is important to remember that behind their bravery, they are human—susceptible to the mental and emotional toll that their work takes on them. This is why mental health should be a priority within the fire

service.

Firefighters deal with life-threatening situations daily. Whether it's extinguishing dangerous fires, rescuing victims from accidents, or providing medical assistance, they are constantly exposed to trauma. These experiences often result in psychological challenges, such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and burnout. Over time, if left unaddressed, these issues can lead to decreased job performance, strained relationships, cognitive fatigue, impaired decision making and even more severe mental health conditions.

As Administrative Professionals, we see the impact this stress can have—not just on individual firefighters, but on the entire department. A firefighter struggling with mental health issues may become withdrawn, irritable, or fatigued, which can affect the morale and efficiency of the team. Additionally, mental health challenges can lead to higher absenteeism and increased turnover, both of which strain the department's resources. Let's face it, mental health directly affects job performance and safety.

One of the biggest barriers to addressing mental health in the fire service is the stigma that still surrounds it. Many firefighters feel pressure to appear strong and resilient, even when they are struggling internally. The "tough guy" culture can discourage them from seeking help, fearing that they will lose their job, be seen as weak or unable to perform their duties.

However, from an administrative perspective, I see mental health support as essential to a well-functioning department. Firefighters who prioritize their mental well-being are better equipped to handle the challenges of the job, and departments that foster a culture of openness about mental health see better overall performance and satisfaction among their teams.

As part of the administrative team, we play a crucial role in supporting mental health within the department. This begins by creating a Health and Wellness committee, including all ranks and personnel and even including spouses, to ensure that firefighters have access to the

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resources they need, such as counseling services, vetted practitioners, quality debriefings, Chaplin services, mental health days, and peer support programs. Furthermore, administrative professionals and the Health & Wellness Committee can help create an environment where mental health is discussed openly and without judgment. We can encourage supervisors to check in with their teams regularly and ensure that firefighters/paramedics know they have support if they need it.

While we are all in the mist of our 2025 budgeting season, it is crucial for Chief Officers to budget to support their departments mental health initiatives. This budget number can vary from department to department as long as that number reflects supporting the programs in place. Mental health in the fire service should never be an afterthought. It's as critical as any physical training firefighters undergo. From my vantage point in administration, I see that supporting the mental health of our first responders not only improves their quality of life but also ensures that they are best prepared to serve our communities. By continuing to break down stigmas and provide necessary resources, we can ensure a healthier, more resilient workforce.

Mental health is not a weakness; it is a vital part of ensuring that our firefighters remain strong and resilient in the face of the demands of their profession.

Visit us at: <https://www.ifsap.org>

Kris Murphy

Illinois Fire Service Administrative Professionals President

Illinois Firefighter's Association

Hello! Registration is open for the Illinois Firefighters Down & Dither Directors. Contact information is listed in the Bulletin. Elections for Directors are held at our annual meeting every year during the Down & Dirty weekend. ■

Terry Ford

IFA President



MABAS

MABAS Swiftwater Rescue Teams Deployed to North Carolina In Response to Hurricane Helene



The Illinois Task Force One (IL-TF1) and Illinois Water Rescue 1 (IL-WR1) have safely arrived in Conover, North Carolina, approximately 50 miles northwest of Charlotte. The teams were deployed to assist with search and rescue operations in the Asheville area.

This request was made through a State-to-State mutual aid network called EMAC. The Governor approved the deployment and the call was made to area fire agencies to release the designated personnel to staff these Teams. Those departments who are providing personnel will be reimbursed for any overtime or backfill costs they incur while their personnel are away. The initial deployment was scheduled for seven days. But due to the extent of the damage, and work still needed to be done, the deployment was extended another week. Each team member gladly volunteered to stay.

Helene caused significant impacts, including flash flooding, landslides, damaging debris flows, slope failures, and riverine flooding across western and central North Carolina. The heaviest rainfall took place in the mountains and foothills, with totals of 9 to 14 inches and some areas receiving up to 20 inches. Widespread power outages and life-threatening landslides were major concerns. The storm caused historical and catastrophic impacts. Our people report that they could never have imagined the amount of destruction the hurricane caused.

North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper declared a State of Emergency on Wednesday, stating: "Helene is an unusually dangerous storm that threatens to bring heavy rain and potentially catastrophic flooding tonight and tomorrow for central and particularly western North Carolina."

Personnel from the following fire agencies are part of the deployment:

- **Arlington Heights FD**
- **Carol Stream FD**
- **Chicago FD**
- **Deerfield-Bannockburn FD**

- **Des Plaines FD**
- **Downers Grove FD**
- **Hoffman Estates FD**
- **Lisle-Woodridge FPD**
- **Morton Grove FD**
- **Mount Prospect FD**
- **Naperville FD**
- **Orland FPD**
- **Palatine FD**
- **Rolling Meadows FD**
- **Skokie FD**
- **Wheeling FD**
- **Wilmette FD.**

Illinois Water Rescue 1 is staffed with specially trained personnel from MABAS Divisions 1 and 3. Illinois Task Force 1 Urban Search & Rescue Team has a trained Swiftwater Rescue component that responded. Both of these Teams are supported financially by Urban Area Security Grant funds through the Cook County Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security.

One team has been housed at a local fire station and the other in a Baptist church. The support from the local residents given to our people has been fantastic given the difficulties they are facing. The Illinois Teams have been truly appreciated by the distressed residents of North Carolina.