

THE AMERICAN FIRE SERVICE: A PROFESSION?

Executive Leadership

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Abstract

The American Fire Service purports to be a profession, whether the membership in question is comprised of career or volunteer firefighters. However, if we consider the way a profession is described by sociologists, notably E.A. Krause in his seminal work, Death of the Guilds, one can see that the fire service in this country is a far cry from being a true profession. There is no overarching regulatory body, no licensing requirements, no uniform code of ethics, little ongoing research, and few peer-reviewed journals, all hallmarks of a profession.

The dichotomy between perception and the reality of the fire service should be of concern for its members because it speaks specifically to the legitimacy of the practice as a profession. By examining the traits of a profession and critiquing the standing of the fire service, recommendations can be made to attempt to move the practice closer to meeting the criteria of a profession. This should lead to strengthening the overall quality of service delivery and political standing when competing for limited tax dollars with other agencies.

The only way to effectively change the fire service paradigm is to have a centralized organization with strong, dynamic leaders focused on logical change. Change should focus on modifying the institution of the fire service to address the deficits outlined. The recommendations for improving the status of the fire service as a profession include: empowering an overarching regulatory body, such as the United States Fire Administration, developing licensing for firefighters and officers, publishing peer reviewed journals and funding ongoing research applicable to the fire service.

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Introduction

Professionalism is a word used often in the American fire service. Career fire fighters describe themselves as being professional as do volunteer personnel. Many have argued that only people receiving a paycheck can be professionals and others argue that a profession encompasses a set of behaviors and therefore volunteers can also be classified as professionals if they model the behaviors. This tension is a symptom of the root question. Is the fire service a profession? My contention is that the fire service does not meet the tests outlined in the social sciences literature to be considered a profession, yet would benefit from addressing the criteria not met.

This paper will use a descriptive methodology to answer the research questions with two purposes in mind. One, determine if the fire service meets an accepted sociological definition of a profession, and if not, what steps should be taken to move towards satisfying that criteria? This issue affects all fire departments in the country as it directly addresses the legitimacy of the fire service as a professional institution in America.

The Executive Leadership course at the National Fire Academy stressed leadership as the core principle of the course. Professions must have leaders to help vocations evolve from jobs to guilds to professions and to serve as the exemplars of the profession. Leaders must be able to guide change and encourage discourse. Unfortunately, given the large number of firefighters in America, there are few nationally recognized leaders. Chief Alan Brunacini of the Phoenix, Arizona Fire Department is probably the most recognized fire service

leader in the country. Why do we not have dozens of leaders that even recruit fire fighters are familiar with? The fire service needs to be less parochial in its culture.

The following research questions are posed to examine the transition from job to guild to profession and the overall professional status of the American fire service. This paper will not address the emergency medical service component that is part of many departments, although it can be stated that the emergency medical services are farther along the professional continuum than is the fire service.¹

- What criteria constitute a profession?
- What criteria associated with a profession does the American fire service meet?
- Which criteria, if any does the fire service need to improve or adopt to become a profession?

Determining where the fire service fits along the guild/vocation/trade/profession continuum should provide incentive for members to attempt to address their shortcomings and improve the overall quality of the fire service as a practice.

Background and Significance

The American fire service generally purports itself to be a profession. There are “professional” fire fighter associations, associations of chief officers, volunteer groups claiming to be “professional” and other organizations who

¹ The emergency medical services in most states at least having licensing requirements to sanction their practice in the field under the auspices of a true professional, a medical doctor.

support the professionalization of the vocation. However, according to eminent sociologists, the fire service model in America does not fit the definition of a profession (Caplow 1954; Wilensky 1964; Black 1984; Freidson 1994; Krause 1996; Rossides 1998). While the exact definition will be explained in the literature review section and addressed in the first research question, there are some other issues that not meeting the criteria of a profession causes for this field. One is the lack of mobility between departments at ranks lower than chief. For instance, a lieutenant in one department is hard pressed to move to another jurisdiction and obtain work at the same rank. Indeed, he or she will most likely find himself or herself starting over at the entry-level firefighter position. This alone can discourage mobility, and indeed, encourages parochialism.

Another issue is the lack of emphasis on education and licensing. While many classified ads for chief officers indicate a requirement for a college degree, they are rarely more than baccalaureates. A lot of advertising also mentions the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy as if these classes can replace a full degree program. These fall far short of the credentials required for the heads of most other municipal departments, such as personnel or budget directors, where master's degrees are preferred.

These shortfalls should be of some concern for those members who want to elevate the service to something more than a blue-collar trade. There have been efforts by some organizations to address some of the shortcomings and promote actions such as accreditation and education. However, until there is a concerted effort to address these concerns across the country and across the divide between

career and volunteer personnel, the fire service will continue to struggle with the status quo of being something less than a profession. This will continue to hurt the fire service in its quest for funds to improve services. The police have traditionally fared much better at the national level, consistently obtaining grants and other funding from Congress. Could this be because of their ability to project themselves as professionals better than the fire service with its decentralized organization and large volunteer contingent? Such a conclusion is mere speculation, but it is certainly plausible. Only the recent Fire Grant Act and the attention the fire service has received in the wake of 9/11 has shown increased federal government interest.

Literature Review

The issue of professions and professionalization falls under the purview of the social sciences. Webster's dictionary defines a profession as " **a**: a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation **b**: a principal calling, vocation, or employment **c**: the whole body of persons engaged in a calling"(_____ 1994), p. 930. This definition does not solve our question for the fire service. Definition "4a" only partly fits the fire service, and "4b" and "c" do not adequately define the "calling" aspect of a profession. The literature will help to clarify what scholars feel constitutes a profession.

Guilds were the first iteration of professions and were a step above having a routine job, such as operating an inn or tavern, or planting crops in the landlord's fields. Indeed, guilds still exist in some places much as they did during the Middle

Ages. A guild has been described as having a mystery of craftsmanship that was known only to the members that was passed on to persons selected to apprentices. Examples include goldsmiths, barbers (early surgeons), accountants, alchemists and various merchants. This process developed a strong social bond among the guild members. It also gave them a type of social power, a power drawn from exclusive knowledge (Black 1984). Krause's model states that the guild must have power over the membership, the workplace and the market. The guild must also have a relationship with the state, that is the government (capital 'S' state) (Krause 1996). The possession of expert knowledge and how it was shared formed the guilds' power base. Having control over the practice was (is) paramount.

The change over to professions began when lawyers and doctors began exercising their guild power in a way that gave them monopoly status, self-regulation and autonomy over their scope of work. Their associations acquired the power to exclude members, dictate their training and status and take legal action against someone practicing their profession without being a recognized member of the that profession (Caplow 1954; Wilensky 1964).

Kraus argues that state power and capitalism has encroached on the power of guilds and professions to self regulate (Krause 1996). An example of this erosion of power would be a state board of health licensing medical practitioners rather than relying on the American Medical Association to perform the licensing function. Bar associations (lawyers) and engineers are regulated by the various states as well.

Max Weber and Karl Marx were both concerned with the relationship of capitalism, the state and the professions and where the power was controlled. Weber thought that bureaucratization would weaken the power of the professions by shifting the power to the bureaucrats and their administrative mechanisms (Gerth and Mills 1958). Marx thought that the progression from guild control to professional control of the workplace would ultimately be supplanted by capitalist control (Marx 1976). One could argue that this has occurred as we enter the 21st century, especially looking at the commercialization of medicine and law, but economic debates are beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that the control of the economics of a profession has influence on its ability to survive and can alter the power base within the profession.

Another question to be considered is whether there has been a market failure that would merit the Federal government or a state government stepping in to regulate the field (Smith 2000). It is easy to argue that the delivery of fire suppression services is a public good. The fire service is generally operates in a “not for profit” mode.

Rossides also argues that America’s professions are profoundly different from the rest of the world because of the loose political constraints found in an democratic society and a faith in capitalism that has negated some of the elitist trappings of the European model (Rossides 1998). The European model of professions has evolved from an emphasis on academic credentials. Someone who has graduated from University², a French *Grandes écoles*, or a Russian or

² The English model is a little different as the aristocracy maintained control over professions for many years.

Scandinavian *gymnasium* is considered a professional, regardless of his or her vocation or association (Krause 1996). The American model is more concerned with the monopoly of power and autonomy as described by Marx (1976).

Professions are normative structures that set the values and standards of behavior for its members. Several theorists have set the basic view that the following two major components, monopoly, or the exclusive right to perform tasks, and autonomous self-regulation are the core values of a profession (Freidson 1994). Other important traits include the exclusive power to train members and admit them to the practice, the power to rate the performance of its members, a code of ethics, an altruistic claim and a pledge to perform competently (Wilson 2001). Some theorists also add peer-reviewed journals, a wide body of literature and ongoing research as key components as well (Krause 1996).

If change is entertained by the various actors in the American fire service, one must remember that such change will be incremental and at a fiscal cost (Wildavsky 1992). This means that long range planning will be necessary. As Kuhn pointed out, changing a paradigm may only happen as the dinosaurs of a particular culture die out and are replaced by new blood (Kuhn 1962). Iterative, deliberate change is difficult.

Procedures

A descriptive methodological process was used to research this paper. The literature review provided much of the information to support or rebut the theories used to define professions. A survey instrument was also sent out to the members of three EFO classes, which represents a small cross section of the management

and leadership population of the American fire service. The instrument is contained in Appendix A. Ideally, a larger sample size would be conducive to obtaining better data.

An important point to consider about this research is that the emergency medical service component of the United States fire service was not taken into account for two reasons. One, not every fire service in the country is providing emergency medical services. Two, the emergency medical services are further along the continuum towards being a profession than is the fire service. The emergency medical service has licensing, more research and peer reviewed journals to name a few advantages over the fire service. However, emergency medical personnel may find useful information herein to assist them towards becoming a true profession as well.

Research Questions

Question #1 – What is a profession?

We looked at the dictionary definition of a profession earlier in the paper (_____ 1994). However, that definition is not very useful in terms of addressing the fire service because it is so vague.

There is no one set of criteria agreed upon by the prominent sociologists covered in the literature review. However, Wilson (2001) seems to encompass most of the major theorists' traits with the stipulation that professions must have autonomy and a monopoly over their domain as argued by Friedson (1994). The ability to control licensing (or other credentials such as college degrees), regulate

membership, support ongoing research for the particular field reported in peer reviewed journals, formulate and adhere to a uniform code of ethics are the supporting pillars of a profession (Krause 1996).

Any vocation or avocation that does not meet all of these criteria cannot, therefore, be classified as a profession, but must be considered something less sophisticated, such as a trade, guild, vocation or practice. This does not mean that the practice in question is any less important, but that its members do not have as much control over their work environment as do the members of a profession (Freidson 1994). This can lead to a situation where the market controls the environment of the job and practitioners have little control over their scope of work or who is performing the work (Marx 1976). Workers in this situation tend to rely on politics and union contracts to give them some semblance of control over their work and this certainly reinforces the assertion that they are without workplace autonomy (Gerth and Mills 1958). Their perception may be that they have some control because of the participatory nature of contract negotiations.

Given the large number of fire departments and fire personnel in this country, over 26,000 fire departments and a million firefighters (_____ 2002), gaining any autonomous control under a single overarching, regulating body would be difficult, though not impossible. It can be done. There are models of national fire services that accommodate career and volunteer components with unified standards, such as England.

There is also the problem of the American fire service being so highly decentralized. There are more than a dozen "professional" fire service related

associations in the country, including the International Association of Fire Fighters, The International Association of Fire Chiefs, and the National Volunteer Fire Council (_____ 2002). All regard themselves as representatives of professionals. This is evidence of a fractured community of practitioners, which divides the million plus actors in the system. It is also interesting that 95% of the country's population is served by career firefighters because of the concentrations of population in urban areas.

To gain some perspective on a true profession, consider medical doctors. To become a doctor, one must graduate from medical school, serve a residency (equivalent of an apprenticeship) and then pass the medical board examination to receive a license to practice. If the doctor has a specialty, that may entail more training and another residency requirement as well as more examinations. Licensing is controlled by the various states using guidelines promulgated by the American Medical Association.

Question #2 - What criteria associated with a profession does the American fire service meet?

The American fire service does not meet any of the criteria of a profession as defined by Krause (1994) and others. Each of the criteria will be examined in turn and the deficiencies will be enumerated.

Does the fire service enjoy autonomy? To some small degree it does. In general terms, volunteer companies may operate completely outside of the purview of political authority, and they select and control their membership much like guilds. Career departments generally operate under the regulatory authority of

a local, state, or Federal government that takes away autonomy, much as described by Weber (Gerth and Mills 1958) and Marx (1976).³

One could argue that there is a degree of monopoly in the delivery of services, but there are several examples of private businesses, such as Rural/Metro and Wackenhut successfully bidding to provide fire services in various localities around the country. They have not been very pervasive but are occasionally used as threats against volunteers and union fire fighters by politicians.

Some volunteer departments rely on subscribers for funding and may not provide services to non-subscribers beyond assuring that the fire threatens no lives. Large industries may provide fire brigades for self-protection and yet still rely on assistance from volunteer or career departments in the area. Citizens and businesses may, therefore, have some choice of service dictated by the market, so monopoly status is tenuous at best (Marx 1976).

A profession has power over its practice by licensing and regulatory mechanisms. The American fire service does not have licensing. Anyone can find a department or volunteer company and offer their services and go right on the line fighting fires. It really does not matter if they have had any training or not. By comparison, a doctor or certified public accountant must possess a license from the jurisdiction having authority where they intend to set up their practice. To obtain the license they must produce proof of training, education and testing to obtain the license.

³ Many volunteer departments are chartered by political subdivisions as well, which infringes upon their autonomy.

There are voluntary standards for firefighters and officers that have been promulgated by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and supported by curriculum developed by institutions such as Oklahoma State University. However, survey data collected for this paper shows that just over half (58%) of the departments surveyed recognize NFPA standards for their personnel.

There is no licensing in the American fire service. There is also the National Board of Fire Service Professional Qualifications that bases its certifications on NFPA standards. Its web site advertises that these certifications are portable, allowing individuals to move between departments easily (____ 2002). Many states, such as Virginia, do not transparently accept pro board certifications. In many cases, certificate holders must take the test in the new jurisdiction for the certification in order to receive a state certification. This lack of reciprocity hampers certificate portability.

The Commission of Fire Accreditation International offers a Chief Fire Officer Designation (____ 2002). The process for receiving this designation is rigorous, but has not become very widespread across the country yet. There are currently only 64 people with this designation (____ 2002). Out of 26,000 fire departments and a million firefighters, this is a statistically insignificant number (____ 2002). There is no data to indicate whether this designation is helpful when job hunting.

Another component of a profession is a body of ongoing research. There is not a lot of dedicated fire service research in the United States. The National Institute of Standards and Technology is one institution undertaking fire-related

research. Of note is their research on fire behavior computer modeling that allows scientists to study flame propagation and smoke movement. Virginia Tech's computer engineering department is adapting that research to their total immersion virtual environment with the ultimate goal of allowing the user to manipulate air currents, fuel loading, structural layouts and other variables while applying extinguishing agents to the fire (_____ 2002). Underwriter's Laboratories and other industry institutions carry out fire related research, but this generally happens at the behest of the insurance industry or model fire code organizations. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is also involved in ongoing research.

Other countries, such as England and Sweden with their compartment based fire-training (CBFT) simulators and deliberate fire stream training, are far ahead of the United States in terms of ongoing, applied research. One could argue that the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program's applied research requirement for students is expanding fire related research, but few papers are technical in nature and do more to contribute to the woeful lack of literature on the fire service than to scientific research.

In general, American fire service journals are not peer reviewed. The *Fire Technology* journal published by the NFPA is and there are foreign journals, such as the *International Journal of Wildland Fire* that is peer reviewed. The popular fire journals in the United States, *Fire Chief*, *Fire Engineering*, and *Firehouse* are not.

Academic and professional journals use peer review processes to ensure the validity of research. The peer review process is generally a blind review process, meaning three or more reviewers read the paper and offer critiques without knowing the identity of the author. Professions must have journals and research that are peer reviewed to aid in the legitimization of their practice. The peer review process validates the information and data contained in articles and the results of research. Some journals are also having data reviewed by statisticians to ensure that the data used in articles has been obtained using valid methods.

Ethics is the final pillar of a profession. Many individual departments and fire service organizations have codes of ethics. Unfortunately, there is not a unified code of ethics for the country's fire service. On the other hand, many departments or their parent government organizations do have codes of ethics for their personnel to follow. If you consider the amount of trust the public places in fire service personnel, ethics play an important part in maintaining a good relationship with the citizens. Violations of trust, whether from fire service personnel setting arson fires to respond to, stealing or causing unwarranted damage during overhaul operations, can erode public support and trust. Ethics and good values to guide members and promote positive behaviors are necessary to sustain a successful organization. These must be inculcated from the beginning of the individual's relationship with the organization.

Question #3 - Which criteria, if any, does the fire service need to improve or adopt to become a profession?

As discovered in question 2, the American fire service meets none of the criteria of a profession. According to Friedson (1994), Wilson (2000), Krause (1996), Marx (1976) and Weber (Gerth and Mills 1958), among others, the fire service falls short in all of the identified areas. What, then, must the fire service do if it desires to be identified as a true profession?

As far as autonomy for the profession and being able to control membership and scope of work, the fire service needs much work. There is not a governing body over the practice and the scope of work varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Is this something to be considered in this time of focus on homeland security? Bringing the American fire service under the auspices of a single authority would have command and control benefits and a massing of resources in time of national need.

Some departments perform fire suppression activities and then add emergency medical duties, hazardous materials response, bomb squad duties, heavy and tactical rescue, marine activities and other non-suppression jobs. This scope of work may be negotiated by union contract, they may be voluntarily acquired as a way to increase the budget, or they may be unfunded mandates handed down from political bodies (Marx 1976). No matter what the constraint or tension of the work obligation, there is little professional control over the workplace. It is extremely difficult to account for all possible externalities.

Monopoly is also precarious as mentioned in question number two. While on the surface there is little competition to provide fire services, it is not non-existent. Rural/Metro and Wackenhut were mentioned earlier, but they control an insignificant part of the country's fire suppression responses. However, that they exist at all is an infringement on the autonomy of the fire service and proof that Marx's assertion that the market affects autonomy (Marx 1976). Still, since the overall fire service does not fall under one regulatory body, there is, in fact, no semblance of autonomy.

Licensing and job movement is an area that needs attention. Career firefighters are generally stuck with one department until they become a chief officer. Then, they have some options to move to another jurisdiction without starting their career over again. Some departments, especially large municipal ones such as New York City's fire department (FDNY), the Los Angeles Fire Department, or the Chicago Fire Department, do not consider outside applications for positions other than entry level firefighters. There is no mechanism in place for licensing fire fighters and officers that allows for easy movement that is necessary for a profession. A doctor can move from state to state by presenting his last license to the state examining board for review.

Given the prevalence of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program's inclusion in desirable credentials for advertised chief positions, some form of licensing might easily gain acceptance. However, in the five years that the Chief Fire Officer Designation program has been offered by the Commission of Fire Accreditation International, acceptance has been slow in coming. Currently,

there are only 64 people in the country with that designator and 19 (28%) of them were named in 2002 (_____ 2002). That is not a great indicator of the likelihood of licensing having a promising future. Again, a fix to this issue would be to have an overarching regulatory body to administer such a licensing program and enforce the possession of said license as authority to practice.

The events of 11 September 2001 have pointed out the shortcomings of the fire service and the research that has been conducted over the years in the areas of building construction and fire behavior, equipment, turnout gear, communications equipment, and so on. The fire service needs more research that is focused on the job and enhancing the efficiency and safety of the fire fighters and the citizens. The soft sciences, such as sociology and behavioral science should not be neglected either.

The main problem is the economy of spending research money in this area. The fire service has a relatively specialized and small base of customers to draw upon. How many people go to the hardware store to purchase a Haligan™ bar to use around the house? The evolution of most of the equipment used by fire fighters can be traced to industry or other professions. Self-contained breathing apparatus was first used extensively in the mining industry. Early extrication equipment was bodywork gear that was carried on tow trucks. Good heat protective clothing was developed for the steel industry for use in smelting operations. Why? Because the fire service has never been in a position to fund a great amount of research, it has traditionally been more cost effective to borrow ideas from others. The widely decentralized character of the service has hindered

effective research. This must change as we can see how economics has had a negative impact on the development of a “profession” (Marx 1976).

Results

A ten-question survey was sent out to 63 fire service personnel from the author’s past Executive Fire Officer Program classes. Nineteen surveys were returned for a 30% return rate. The sample was chosen to represent a cross section of fire service managers from across the country and is statistically sound. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the prevalence of higher education, codes of ethics, use of NFPA standards, mobility between departments at the junior officer level and continued education in the form of professional readings. A final question was related to leadership styles using two television icons from STAR TREK®, Captains Kirk and Picard.

Survey development is an art that requires a lot of instruction. This survey could certainly have provided better information if a professional survey writer had been retained. However, despite the limitations of the survey, some interesting insights were gained. It is assumed that there was some bias in the responses, especially about the leadership question.

The persons responding to the survey were mostly career fire fighters (84%). The education results were higher than expected as only 16% had a two-year degree, 58% reported holding a Baccalaureate degree, 21% with a Master’s degree and one respondent holds a Juris Doctorate (Law) degree. This gave an overall figure of 84% of these fire officers holding at least a four-year degree.

A little more than half (58%) indicated that their department based qualifications for fire fighters and officers on NFPA standards. This is significant when considering a profession needs an overarching licensing body to qualify its membership. This may have a bearing on the result that only 16% stated that their jurisdictions allowed for entry at the Lieutenant and Captain ranks. This is interesting because 58% of the respondents indicated that they would have considered changing departments at some point of their careers if they could have done so without losing their rank.

Only 47% of those surveyed indicated that their department or parent political entity had a code of ethics. This is another important requirement for a profession to possess.

All of the respondents indicated that they regularly read some of the popular fire service journals, such as *Fire Engineering*, *Fire Chief*, and *Firehouse*. However, that number drops to 68% when asked if they also read leadership and management literature.

Identifying a single nationally recognized fire service leader is difficult and the survey gave some insight. It did not give a clear picture of who is THE fire service figure in the country. Alan Brunacini and Ron Coleman both were picked by 32% of those surveyed. Five other names received no more than two mentions in the surveys are not statistically significant. It is interesting that both Brunacini and Coleman are from the western part of the country.

The leadership question was interesting because of the comments people added to the survey about this question. Many explained their answer and were

rather passionate about their choice. Just over half (52%) selected Jean Luc Picard and 37% picked James Tiberius Kirk. This question was asked because of the dichotomy of the leadership styles. Kirk is rash, bold and decisive whereas Picard is cool, poised and deliberate, carefully considering options and input. Each style brings a unique perspective to leading and managing people and organizations.

Discussion

The status of the American fire service is far from that of a profession as compared to the sociologists' definition of what constitutes a profession. At best, it is a vocation. Does this conclusion negate the effectiveness of the fire service? Not at all, however, addressing the shortcomings identified by the sociologists' definition of a profession could enhance overall legitimacy and effectiveness of the fire service. Recommendations for action will be enumerated in the next section.

Why is this question important to the fire service? One, it will reduce the amount of parochial differences from state to state and region to region around the country. This should enhance the ability of persons wishing to move to other fire service jobs without starting over. Further, having a united fire service allows for economies of scale in training, apparatus and equipment purchases, cohesive, seamless mutual aid and incident command possibilities and consistency in service delivery. Think about how our military works and operates around the world. An infantry sergeant at Fort Benning, Georgia can fly to Afghanistan, Germany, or Japan and step right into the same role, he merely has to learn his troops' names and the specific mission. His job, his training, the organizational

culture and all other aspects of his world, with the exception of the physical environment, is the same. The fire service can not make that claim. Doctors, lawyers and other true professionals can.

We can use a simple market model to address the shortcomings of our “profession”. There has been a market failure. The fire service, as a whole, has failed to aggressively find support for sustained applied research in fire behavior, building construction, fire suppression, protective clothing and other facets of the job. This means that the Federal government should step in and assume a regulatory role for the fire service. The purpose is two-fold. One, promote homogeneity across the country and licensing could play a part in that endeavor. Second, grants and other funding could be funneled to research laboratories and academia to promote specialized research into this field. The resulting data could greatly enhance the safety of fire fighters and citizens alike.

Since we are faced with new challenges in post 9/11 America, a well prepared, consistent and professional fire service must be part of the front line defense for the public’s safety.

Recommendations

There are several areas that need to be addressed to strengthen the argument for considering the American fire service a profession. The recommendations will be listed following the criteria for a profession.

- An overarching regulatory body needs to be established to nurture and develop the fire service and promote homogeneity across the country. The United States Fire Administration or a standards writing body, such as the NFPA,

might provide the nucleus of such a body which could be chartered by the United States Congress.

- Licensing should be established to ensure competent fire fighters and officers are practicing. Higher educational requirement need to coupled to higher level positions in the hierarchy of departments. This would also enhance mobility between departments.
- A uniform Code of Ethics for the fire service should be written, published and endorsed by the overarching regulatory body.
- Fire service specific research should be ongoing and supported and sustained by the overarching regulatory body with support from the Federal government.
- Peer reviewed journals should be established and published.

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Appendix A – Survey Instrument

ARP Survey for Warren Whitley

Paper: Is the American Fire Service a profession?

1. Are you a career or volunteer fire service member? Both?
2. What is your highest level of education?
3. Does your department recognize NFPA based fire fighter and fire officer certifications?
4. Does your department allow entries into your system in positions other than recruit fire fighter or chief? If so, what positions?
5. Would you have considered going to another department if you could have gained entry at a level such as Lieutenant or Captain?
6. Does your department have a Code of Ethics?
7. Do you read fire service journals? If so, please list them.
8. Do you regularly read management and leadership literature?
9. Name someone you think is a nationally recognized fire service leader.
10. Who is the better leader, Captain James T. Kirk or Captain Jean-Luc Picard?