



# 2022 U.S. Fire Administrator's Summit on Fire Prevention and Control

A National Roundtable

October 11, 2022  
National Emergency Training Center  
Emmitsburg, Maryland



**FEMA**



U.S. Fire Administration  
Working for a fire-safe America





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# Welcome Letter

Welcome to the **2022 U.S. Fire Administrator's Summit on Fire Prevention and Control**. You are taking part in a historic meeting of governmental officials, notable fire service leaders, and expert scientists, gathered with the collective purpose of combating the fire problem in America and keeping firefighters safe and healthy.

The federal government's involvement in fire protection began with President Woodrow Wilson's first proclamation of fire prevention week in 1922. Today, as we commemorate that proclamation's 100th anniversary, we will carry on that tradition.

The fire problem in America was also addressed in 1947 by President Harry S. Truman after several horrific fires with tremendous loss of life. It is a true honor for this Summit to have President Truman's grandson, Clifton Truman Daniel, with us today.

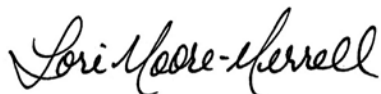
In 1968, the Fire Research and Safety Act created the National Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, whose mandate was to examine the nation's fire problem and formulate recommendations for improving fire safety. This led to the formative 1973 America Burning document, which set the course for efforts in the latter part of 20th Century to reduce the effects of fire. We are now nearly one-quarter of the way through the 21st Century, and **America is still burning**.

In fact, the United States continues to have the highest per capita death rate and property loss of all major industrialized nations. This Summit is an opportunity for you to join me in reducing the effects of fire loss as envisioned by President Woodrow Wilson and President Harry S. Truman.

I challenge you to lean in and support this effort with all your might. Individually, we have limited impact. Collectively, we can save lives and property and preserve the nation's infrastructure for future generations ... and protect our responders. The task is daunting but not insurmountable.

It is my pleasure to have you join us in our renewed effort to make America fire safe, and I look forward to working with you to make our country a model for fire safety that other nations will aspire to emulate.

Sincerely,



Lori Moore-Merrell, DrPH, MPH  
U.S. Fire Administrator  
U.S. Fire Administration



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# Agenda

## **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell  
U.S. Fire Administrator

Mr. Clifton Truman Daniel

## **National Roundtable**

Chief Donna Black  
President, International Association of Fire Chiefs

Chief Kevin Quinn  
First Vice Chair, National Volunteer Fire Council

General President Edward Kelly  
International Association of Fire Fighters

Chief Ernest Mitchell, Jr.  
Board of Directors Member, National Fallen Firefighters Foundation  
Former U.S. Fire Administrator

Mr. James Pauley  
President and Chief Executive Officer, National Fire Protection Association

## **Presidential Proclamation of the 100th Fire Prevention Week**

## **Closing Remarks**





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# A National Roundtable





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## Chief Donna Black

### President, International Association of Fire Chiefs

I am honored to speak with you this morning. As Fire Chief of Duck, North Carolina, I have witnessed the effects of climate change. I have seen hurricane-driven storm surges and wind endanger our residents and visitors and damage our buildings, beaches, and roads.

As climate change drives extremes in weather, we see extremes emerging in our nation's fire problem. Due to climate change, more fire departments are responding to an increasing number of wildland-urban interface and suburban conflagration fires.

The wildland-urban interface is where suburban and rural areas merge with the wildland. About one-third of our population lives in this built environment. My state ranks fourth in terms of houses in the wildland-urban interface, trailing only California, Texas, and Florida.

Fires in the wildland and wildland-urban interface are also larger and more destructive. The Western states continue to experience significant impacts, including increases in fires so severe that they threaten forest recovery. These fires are not limited to the western U.S. — the southeast may see large fires increase by 300 to 400% in the next 30 years.

Nor are these fires limited to a season. Colorado's Marshall Fire burned 6,000 acres, destroyed more than 1,000 homes and businesses, and caused over \$500 million in damages in December, well outside the traditional wildland fire season.

With suburban conflagration fires in the wildland-urban interface, structural firefighters are not fighting a single-family house fire. Instead, they are responding to entire neighborhoods and communities under threat. The NFPA's needs assessment found that while 88% of structural fire departments respond to interface fires, only 50% have training on interface fires involving multiple structures.

This must change. We need funding to provide all firefighters — career and volunteer — with the training and equipment necessary to meet these challenges.

Properly equipped and trained firefighters can conduct rapid fire attack operations, reducing life and property loss, preserving scarce firefighting resources, and lessening environmental impacts.

Finally, water is a critical issue as droughts continue. Limited water for firefighting is not something that may happen someday. It is happening now, today. In July, firefighters in Pembroke, Massachusetts could not use their fire hydrants because of a water shortage. Officials in Las Vegas, New Mexico announced they had about 20 days of water left as ash and debris from the state's largest wildfire contaminated the supply. Without readily available water, firefighters may not be able to stop a small brush fire from becoming a disaster.

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In closing, we cannot continue this cycle. Our current system, while much improved, cannot overcome climate change, population growth, and complex changes in both our society and the built environment. **We must prepare all firefighters for the climate-driven increase in wildfires in the wildland-urban interface by providing them with the proper training and equipment.**

Thank you again for this opportunity.

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## Chief Kevin Quinn

### First Vice Chair, National Volunteer Fire Council

In my opinion, being a firefighter represents one of the most significant ways to serve a community.

Sadly, the number of people interested in becoming firefighters is declining. While we must study why this is happening, I can share with you the challenges I've seen and heard from firefighters across the country.

Over the past 2 1/2 years, there have been mass retirements in fire departments due to the COVID pandemic. A number of other factors contributed to the decline in recruitment and retention of firefighters, including civil unrest, active shooters, and mass casualty events. Both career and volunteer departments are affected by this.

In order to maintain services within their communities, fire departments are requiring mandatory overtime, and they are having difficulty recruiting and retaining employees. In Minneapolis, for instance, the fire department normally receives about 2,500 applications per year. But this year, they received only 700 applications.

While there has been a decline in the number of volunteer firefighters over the past 30 years, call volume has more than tripled, primarily due to increased emergency medical calls. Increasing time demands, time-consuming training requirements, and aging communities make finding and keeping new volunteers challenging.

The fire service struggles to recruit and retain women and people of color. The most recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 11.6% of career firefighters were Hispanic or Latino, 8.5% were African-American, and 1.3% were Asian. Women represent 11% of volunteer firefighters and 5% of career firefighters, according to the NFPA's 2022 "U.S. Fire Department Profile" report based on 2020 data.

As Dr. Moore-Merrell mentioned earlier, we are here to provide some solutions. **One solution is to invest in a national apprenticeship program to address the shortage of firefighters and to make the fire service more diverse and inclusive.** A fire service apprenticeship program could mirror the Registered Apprenticeship Program and the Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Program administered by the Department of Labor. Fire departments can benefit from apprenticeship programs by attracting people who might not have considered the fire service originally as a career or as a way to serve their community.

The recent grants awarded under the Apprentice Building America program are grounded in equity, job quality, sustainability, and evidence-based practices. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are vital to the longevity of the fire service, and these types of grants support these factors.

The fire service occupies a unique place in American society – trusted and often welcomed. We need to do everything we can, on every level of government, to attract firefighters to serve in their communities. Thank you for being here today.

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## General President Edward Kelly

### International Association of Fire Fighters

**We ask the federal government to establish a comprehensive firefighter cancer strategy that invests in research, provides access to cancer screening for all firefighters, and reduces and eliminates PFAS exposure.**

In 2010, NIOSH found firefighters have excess cancer risk compared to the general population for multiple cancers, including testicular, brain, prostate, colon, mesothelioma, multiple myeloma, and leukemia. Recently, the International Agency for Research on Cancer declared a firefighter's occupational exposure as "Class 1, threat, carcinogenic to humans."

Given that there is now little doubt that the higher risk is due to our occupational exposures, what we need now is to further understand the link between these exposures and cancer development. There has been some critical research into the connection between exposures and genetic mutations, and that research must continue and expand until we know enough about the impact of cancer on firefighters. Thus far, what we are learning from science about this matter is of great concern to our profession.

Second, we need access to health screenings for all firefighters, throughout their time as a firefighter and in retirement when the chronic exposures usually manifest. For example, firefighters have a higher risk of lung cancer, yet it is often difficult for individual firefighters to get lung screenings due to existing recommendations that do not take into account that our profession is a significant risk factor for cancer. We must direct medical professionals and insurance companies to account for this occupational risk when making coverage decisions. A comprehensive, aggressive screening program will help us find and treat cancer early, when there is a greater likelihood of a positive outcome.

Finally, we need to reduce PFAS exposures. Because of the slow rate in which they degrade, PFAS have been termed "forever chemicals." None of the over 12,000 types have proven to be safe. PFAS are in some foams we use to put out particularly difficult fires and we urge action to ban the production and use of these foams, as they have in European countries.

PFAS accumulate in our bodies, compounds our exposures, and contribute to higher rates of several cancers. They can pass in utero and via breastmilk to the children of female firefighters. And PFAS are a driver of higher rates of testicular and prostate cancers in male firefighters.

Most concerning, our bunker gear contains PFAS. The very gear we rely on to protect us is making us sick. Next-generation PPE must be developed, evaluated, and manufactured as quickly as possible. Most departments cannot afford to replace their gear and we need to make sure that funding isn't a barrier to replacement. We must also plan for the safe disposal of our existing gear.

Time is of the essence, and we must act now. Together, we can ensure other families do not experience the pain we have felt.

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## Chief Ernest Mitchell, Jr.

### Board of Directors Member, National Fallen Firefighters Foundation

As my esteemed colleagues have discussed, preventing and mitigating fires is crucial to protecting the lives of citizens, and protecting firefighters from a toxic environment is vital. Today, I want to share another issue affecting families and fire departments across the country, the increased number of firefighters dying by suicide and suffering from behavioral health issues. It is our position, that we need to provide behavioral health resources and suicide prevention initiatives for all firefighters.

According to organizations tracking the issue, the number of firefighter suicides is estimated to be at least 100 per year. Additionally, the “Ruderman White Paper on Mental Health and Suicide of First Responders” noted that the suicide rate for firefighters is 18 per 100,000 compared to 13 per 100,000 for the general public.

We are responsible for protecting those who protect us by investing in their mental health, including collecting accurate data. According to evidence-based research, behavioral health awareness campaigns provide effective intervention methods. It is our collective responsibility to provide those who serve with the tools they need to help themselves and each other.

The fire service, as well as our brothers and sisters in blue, are both dealing with occupational-related behavioral health issues. The FBI launched the Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection on January 1, 2022, to help improve understanding and prevent suicide among law enforcement officers. We applaud this effort and see this data collection as a model of what is needed in the fire service. Federal agencies have poured millions of dollars into addressing the suicide problem for our colleagues in blue, but there is no comparable effort for the fire service.

As policies and programs are developed by federal agencies on first responder behavioral health and other topics, **it is time to involve the fire service in federal policy development on an equal basis with law enforcement.** Nearly every Cabinet-level department in the federal government plays a role in addressing the fire problem in America. Each has programs to address fire safety issues in keeping with its specific mission. Our Fire Administration must be elevated to adequately represent the more than 1.1 million firefighters serving in this country.

Where relevant issues touch law enforcement, emergency medical services (EMS), and the fire service, it is essential that the federal government gives equitable consideration to each discipline. Initiatives addressing sustainable infrastructure, resiliency in the built environment, or public health initiatives cannot operate in silos. Public safety must be approached holistically, which requires equal support to all first responders — the fire service, EMS providers, and law enforcement.

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## Mr. James Pauley

### President and Chief Executive Officer, National Fire Protection Association

More than 300 codes and standards influence fire and life safety in the built environment. We can create safer communities by assisting local jurisdictions in implementing and enforcing these codes and standards, which will keep Americas safe from the “menace of fire,” just as Mr. Daniel’s grandfather spoke of in 1947.

State and local governments are responsible for promoting the use and enforcement of current codes and standards. The federal government can help by incentivizing compliance and providing funding to local jurisdictions for code implementation, inspection, and enforcement.

Proper use of life-saving technology, like smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, and automatic fire sprinkler systems, is proven to save lives. All modern buildings require these systems, and the fire codes must be consistently and aggressively enforced.

In addition, we strongly urge that all federally funded construction projects be required to comply with current fire and building codes and that federal housing assistance needs to be tied to the use and compliance of current fire, life safety, electrical, and building codes.

Fire disproportionately impacts our vulnerable populations — older adults, children, people of color, low-income populations, and people with disabilities. This is an equity issue. Safe housing and affordable housing should not be mutually exclusive concepts.

Nearly a million households live in public housing units in the United States, and fire safety improvements in public housing must receive heightened attention.

In 1992, Congress passed the Federal Fire Safety Act, requiring newly constructed multi-family housing units to have fire sprinklers. HUD estimates that approximately 570,000 multi-family public housing units are still in the inventory constructed before the sprinkler requirement, of which a significant portion still lacks fire sprinklers.

We must make investments in retrofitting public housing with fire sprinkler systems. An NFPA study found that in buildings with sprinkler systems the civilian fire death and injury rates were 89 percent and 27 percent lower.

Additionally, HUD must ensure all public housing units are equipped with working smoke alarms that are installed and maintained under the relevant codes and standards.

Nearly three out of five home fire deaths are caused by fires in properties without smoke alarms or smoke alarms that failed to operate. HUD must provide resources to public housing authorities to either retrofit housing units with hardwired smoke alarms or require the installation of tamper-resistant long-life battery-powered smoke alarms.

By embracing current fire and life safety codes and standards at all levels of government, we can make great strides in addressing the fire problem in our nation.

**Together we can create safer communities by implementing and enforcing codes and standards, especially in the wildland-urban interface and underserved and vulnerable populations providing affordable and fire-safe housing.**



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It is important to note this year marks the 100th Anniversary of the National Fire Protection Association's Fire Prevention Week. The theme is 'Fire Won't Wait, Plan Your Escape.' This theme clearly applies to all communities, including the urban interface. Each year, the President of the United States signs the proclamation of Fire Prevention Week, signaling the federal government's support of saving lives and property.



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# Fire Prevention and Control Fact Sheets





# Impact of Climate Change



**Prepare** all firefighters for the climate-driven increase in wildfires in the wildland urban interface (WUI) by providing them with the proper training and equipment.

## Issue

WUI fires are one of the most devastating fire problems in the United States. Currently, most structural firefighters receive little to no training on how to respond, remain safe, and/or how to operate effectively in an extremely dangerous and dynamic fire environment.

## Impact Areas

### Occurrence of Wildfire

According to a June 2022 U.S. Congressional Budget Office report, the intensity of wildfires has increased, as has the number of wildfires impacting the built environment over the past 30 years. As our nation continues to grow and develop in the WUI, our communities are faced with increased wildfire threats associated with:

- ▶ **Increased populations.**
- ▶ **Reduced land management practices.**
- ▶ **Dangerous increase of fuel buildup.**
- ▶ **Climate change.**

The fire service today is faced with three main fire types:

1. **Structural fires** — fires involving built construction where trained firefighters have specific strategies and tactics to maintain life safety and gain control of a fire, including interior attack, exterior attack, search and rescue, ventilation, salvage, and overhaul.
2. **Wildland fires** — fires typically involving trees and other vegetation where wildland trained firefighters use specific strategies and tactics to gain control and suppress the fire, including offensive (direct attack) and defensive (indirect attack), backfire burning, and trenching. These strategies use equipment and/or resources such as bulldozers, aircraft, hand crews, and fire engines to construct fire lines that provide control and containment of the fire.
3. **WUI fires** — fires occurring in the built (structural) environment directly adjacent to or intermixed with a wildland area. WUI fire operations have non-standardized and relatively new and different strategies and tactics when compared with either strictly structural or wildland firefighting. Firefighters operating in the WUI use primary and secondary tactics typically conducted by structural engine crews attempting to adapt these tactics to fit the wildland fire situation.

## Firefighting Resources

Wildfire knows no boundaries. Fires can start and burn across federal, tribal, state, local, and private lands. That means fires are often fought with a combination of agencies and firefighters from different training backgrounds and employers. These differences include seasonal federal and state wildland firefighters, state and local career firefighters, and volunteer firefighters from community-based fire stations. While some firefighters trained to operate in the built environment are also specifically trained to engage in wildland firefighting, the majority have little to no training for operating in an urban or suburban conflagration with multiple structures burning simultaneously.

Advances in command and coordination, especially at large, long-duration wildland and WUI fire events, have improved resource deployment and operations on the ground. However, these resources often take time to get into place. Therefore, initial response often comes from state and local fire departments, many of which are already dealing with limited and overworked staff.

## Training, Equipment, and Water

Local fire department responders are typically trained as structural firefighters given that single family dwellings are the most common fire risk they encounter. Structural firefighters, accustomed to fighting one structure fire at a time, are now being confronted with multiple structures burning simultaneously. They must react and respond with uncharacteristic tactics and strategies to successfully mitigate the event by reducing or eliminating fire spread. The reality is that they must add urban interface wildfire strategies and tactics to their operational repertoire.

As the risk of losing entire communities from wildfire extends to a year-round threat, staffing resources, proper training, and equipment are necessary to fight these WUI fires.

## Training and Equipment

Communities across the nation are experiencing an increasing number of larger and more destructive wildland, urban interface, and suburban conflagration fires. Because these fires are occurring more often in both suburban and rural areas adjacent to or intermixed with the wildland, structural firefighters are regularly involved in suppression efforts and responsible for defending homes and critical infrastructure. According to the National Fire Protection Association Needs Assessment, 88% of structural fire departments in the U.S. respond to urban interface fires, but only 40 percent of those fire departments provide training on urban interface strategy and tactics.

Additionally, there is often difficulty accessing wildland firefighting equipment including PPE and proper footwear, for both women and men who attend training and are involved in WUI firefighting.

## Water Access

Particularly in the West, water is a limited and often contested resource. Drought conditions elsewhere in the country are causing similar effects to spread eastward. Scarcity of water has a severe impact on firefighting efforts. Additionally, fire in watershed areas and burn scars following a fire can contaminate water resources as debris and other contaminants affect both availability of potable water and treatment efforts.

More Information



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# Fire Service Apprenticeship Program



**Invest** in a national apprenticeship program to address the shortage of firefighters and to make the fire service more diverse and inclusive.

## Issue

In recent years there has been a steady decline in the number of firefighters in the nation. This decline is impacting both career and volunteer departments, leaving the communities they serve vulnerable to threats, and increasing the stresses among firefighters and the municipalities. It is imperative that we invest in programs to incentivize individuals to join volunteer and career fire departments.

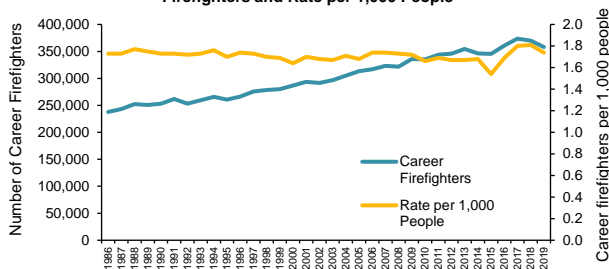
## Impact Areas

Local communities are facing numerous challenges when it comes to staffing local fire departments. The COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest, active shooter, and mass casualty events have all contributed to recruitment and retention challenges for career and volunteer fire departments. In addition, increasing emergency call volumes, greater time demands, time-consuming training requirements, aging communities, and the physical and behavioral risks of the occupation create further challenges to fire departments struggling to maintain sufficient staffing levels.

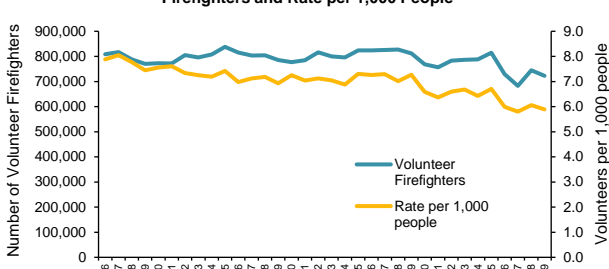
The fire service struggles to recruit and retain women and people of color. The most recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2019 reported that 11.6% of career firefighters were Hispanic or Latino, 8.5% were African American, and 1.3% were Asian-Pacific Islanders. Women represent 11% of volunteer firefighters and 5% of career firefighters, according to the NFPA's 2022 "U.S. Fire Department Profile" report based on 2020 data.

The creation of a National Fire Service Apprenticeship program would assist local communities in addressing the shortage of firefighters in both career and volunteer departments and help make the fire service become a more diverse and inclusive vocation. The fire service apprenticeship program should be designed to mirror the Department of Labor's Registered Apprenticeship and the Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs.

**Figure 1. Number of Career Firefighters and Rate per 1,000 People**



**Figure 2. Number of Volunteer Firefighters and Rate per 1,000 People**



NFPA. US Fire Department Profile 2019 Rita Fahy, Ben Everts and Gary P. Stein, December 2021. <https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/News-and-Research/Fire-statistics-and-reports/Emergency-responders/osfdprofile.pdf>

More Information







# Impact of Occupational Cancer



**Establish** a comprehensive firefighter cancer strategy that invests in research, provides access to cancer screening for firefighters, and reduces and eliminates PFAS exposure.

## Issue

Firefighters have a 9% higher risk of developing cancer and a 14% higher risk of dying from cancer compared to the general public.

## Impact Areas

### Research

Greater investment in research will expand our understanding of the mechanisms between occupational exposures and cancer, why firefighters are at heightened risk from some cancers, and to better understand the cancer risks of our under-studied populations, including women and minorities.

### Access to cancer screenings

Preventive screenings can identify cancer in its earliest stages when positive treatment outcomes are more likely. However, it remains difficult for individual firefighters to receive early screenings as current screening guidance does not account for their occupational exposures. Revised screening guidance can help medical professionals and insurance companies understand the need to screen firefighters based on their higher cancer risk.

### Reduce and eliminate PFAS exposures

PFAS are likely carcinogenic chemicals that degrade very slowly, earning the label "forever chemicals." PFAS are found in a firefighter's blood, their firehouses, some firefighting foams, and perhaps most concerning, bunker gear. These chemicals are intensifying exposures, even though it is coming from the very gear meant to protect firefighters. Next-generation PPE can remove this risk.

## CANCER RESEARCH

### Fire Fighter Routes of Cancer Exposure



#### Inhalation

From breathing contaminants due to not wearing a SCBA, or to ill-fitting or defective SCBA



#### Absorption

From contaminants going through, around, or under gear and contacting the skin



#### Ingestion

From touching contaminated gear and not washing hands properly

Fire Service: Increase training and education about safe work practices to reduce cancer exposures.



Source: <https://www.fda.gov/oc/ohrt/occupational-exposure-to-pfas-and-cancer-risk>

More Information



FEMA

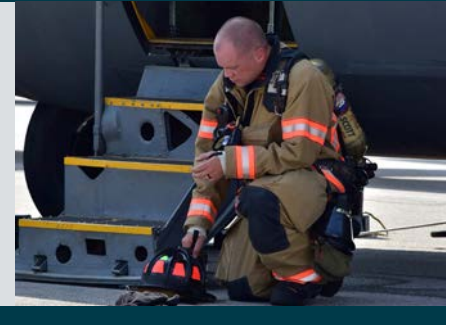


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# Impact of Behavioral Health



**Provide** behavioral health resources and suicide prevention initiatives for all firefighters.

## Issue

An increasing number of firefighters are dying by suicide suffering from behavioral health issues, including post-traumatic stress, from exposures that they have suffered while delivering emergency medical services to the public. There is a lack of culturally competent behavioral health specialists to assist firefighters, and local Employee Assistance Programs are ill-equipped to assist first responders.

## Impact Areas

Firefighters and other rescue personnel develop PTSD at a similar rate to military service members returning from combat, according to an August 2016 study from the Journal of Occupational Health Psychology. The report reveals that approximately 20 percent of firefighters and paramedics meet the criteria for PTSD at some point during their career.<sup>1</sup> This compares to a 6.8 percent lifetime risk for the general population. The connection between PTSD and traumatizing rescue work is clear.

The number of firefighter suicides is estimated to be at least 100 per year. According to the "Ruderman White Paper on Mental Health and Suicide of First Responders," the suicide rate for firefighters is 18 per 100,000 compared to 13 per 100,000 for the general public.

The federal government has a responsibility to protect those who protect us by investing in the protectors' mental health. Grant programs funding peer-supported behavioral health and wellness programs within fire departments should be established by Congress. Resources should be available to health care providers highlighting best practices for addressing post-traumatic stress among public safety officers. Accurate data on the prevalence and causes of post-traumatic stress and suicide with the fire service must be collected. According to evidence-based research, behavioral health awareness campaigns provide effective intervention methods. It is our collective responsibility to provide those who serve with the tools they need to help themselves and each other.

The FBI launched the Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection on January 1, 2022.<sup>2</sup> to help improve understanding and prevent suicide among law enforcement officers. We applaud this effort, and a similar data collection model is needed at the U.S. Fire Administration.

It is our position, that we need to provide behavioral health resources and suicide prevention initiatives for all firefighters. Like other injuries, early detection, access to culturally competent behavioral health specialists and proper screening can help reduce the effects of post-traumatic stress. Many insurance providers cap the costs related to behavioral health assistance and treatment centers for behavioral health programs are often out of the reach of the average firefighter.



## More Information



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.iaffrecoverycenter.com/blog/trauma-firefighting-and-ptsd/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/ucr/law-enforcement-suicide-data-collection>



# Elevation of the Fire Service in Federal Policy Development



**Involve the fire service in federal policy development on an equal basis with law enforcement.**

## Issue

The fire service must be included in federal policy development on an equal basis with law enforcement when federal agencies develop policies and programs related to public safety, such as first responder behavioral health, building and fire codes, and the five mission areas of the National Preparedness Goal (prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery).

## Impact Areas

The White House Fiscal Year 2023 budget proposal includes \$1.97 billion in discretionary funding to support state and local law enforcement, an increase of 12% over the previous fiscal year.<sup>1</sup> This represents a significant investment in local law enforcement and is much needed. Despite the significant fire problem our nation faces, the Administration requested \$740 million for grants to local fire departments.<sup>2</sup> The National Fire Protection Association estimated the total cost of fire in the United States in 2014 was \$328.5 billion, approximately 1.9% of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product.<sup>3</sup> Federal investments in fire protection and response are not sufficient to address the scope of the problem.

In addition to supporting local law enforcement, federal law enforcement agencies have a significant presence in the federal government. These agencies include the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, Army Criminal Investigation Division, Defense Criminal Investigative Service, Naval Criminal Investigative Service, Coast Guard Investigative Service (Department of Defense), Customs and Border Protection, Federal Protective Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Secret Service (Department of Homeland Security), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Marshal Service (DOJ), U.S. Park Police (Department of Interior), IRS Criminal Investigations Division (Department of Treasury), U.S. Postal Inspection Service (U.S. Postal Service), Probation and Pretrial Services (Judicial Conference of the U.S.), and U.S. Capitol Police (United States Congress).

Nearly every department and agency in the federal government touches upon fire and emergency services. These departments are responsible for engaging with fire service stakeholders — inside and outside of the federal government — when developing policies and

<sup>1</sup>[FACT SHEET: President Biden's Budget Invests in Reducing Gun Crime to Make Our Communities Safer](#) (White House; March 28, 2022)

<sup>2</sup>[Fiscal Year 2023 President's Budget](#)

<sup>3</sup>[Total Cost of Fire in the United States](#) (NFPA; October 2017)

procedures impacting fire and life safety. Despite the fire service's significant footprint within these departments' mission, there is a lack of coordination and cohesive policy development among these agencies. Consistent, competent and effective leadership at the U.S. Fire Administration level can coordinate these policies and ensure that the fire service stakeholders can effectively operate at the national level.

More Information



The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) should be elevated within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and transformed into a multi-disciplinary response, preparedness, and mitigation agency. As many response agencies already have, each FEMA region should have a dedicated USFA specialist to assist in the planning and response to disasters. USFA must be fully funded and appropriately staffed in order to execute its mission.

The federal government has numerous agencies and programs impacting the nation's fire and emergency services. Nearly every department in the federal government touches upon fire and emergency services. Here is a snapshot of some of the various programs in the federal government impacting fire and life safety.

**Department of Defense**

- ▶ Military firefighter health and safety

**Department of Justice**

- ▶ Bureau of Justice Assistance
- ▶ Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program

**Department of the Interior**

- ▶ Bureau of Land Management
- ▶ Wildland firefighting

**Department of Agriculture**

- ▶ U.S. Forest Service
- ▶ Wildland firefighting

**Department of Commerce**

- ▶ National Telecommunications and Information Administration
- ▶ First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet)

**Department of Labor**

- ▶ Occupational Safety & Health Administration

**Department of Health and Human Services**

- ▶ Centers for Disease Control & Prevention/ National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health
- ▶ National Firefighter Registry

**Department of Housing and Urban Development**

- ▶ Public and Indian Housing
- ▶ Safe and affordable housing for our most vulnerable populations

**Department of Transportation**

- ▶ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- ▶ Office of EMS

**Department of Energy**

- ▶ Office of Environment, Health, Safety & Security
- ▶ Fire Protection Program

**Department of Education**

- ▶ Office of Postsecondary Education
- ▶ Campus Safety & Security

**Department of Veterans Affairs**

- ▶ Safe and affordable housing for veterans and their families

**Department of Homeland Security**

- ▶ Federal Emergency Management Agency/U.S. Fire Administration
- ▶ National Fire Academy
- ▶ Assistance to Firefighters/Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response/Fire Prevention & Safety Grants



FEMA



U.S. Fire Administration  
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# Impact of Codes and Standards



**Create** safer communities by implementing and enforcing codes and standards, especially in the wildland urban interface (WUI) and under-served and vulnerable populations providing affordable and fire-safe housing.

## Issue

State and local governments are responsible for promoting the use and enforcement of current codes and standards. The federal government can help by incentivizing compliance and providing funding to local jurisdictions for code implementation, inspection, and enforcement. This will increase fire and life safety in our communities, especially in the WUI and among under-served and vulnerable populations.

## Impact Areas

Model building codes improve building resilience to natural disasters and save \$11 for every \$1 invested.<sup>1</sup>

All nationally recognized modern building and fire codes require the use of life-saving technology, like smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, and automatic fire sprinkler systems.

Nearly a million households live in public housing units in the United States,<sup>2</sup> and fire safety improvements in public housing must receive heightened attention. In 1992, Congress passed the Federal Fire Safety Act (15 USC 2227), requiring newly constructed multi-family housing units to have fire sprinklers. HUD estimates that approximately 570,000 multi-family public housing units are in their inventory that were constructed before the sprinkler requirement. A significant portion of these units lack the protection offered by fire sprinklers.

In buildings with automatic fire sprinkler systems, the civilian fire death rate is 89 percent lower than non-sprinklered buildings and the injury rate is 27 percent lower. Furthermore, property damage decreases significantly in buildings protected by fire sprinklers.<sup>3</sup> Investments must be made in retrofitting public housing with fire sprinkler systems.

Nearly three out of five home fire deaths are caused by fires in properties without smoke alarms or smoke alarms that failed to operate.<sup>4</sup> HUD must provide resources to public housing authorities to either retrofit housing units with hardwired smoke alarms or require the installation of tamper-resistant long-life battery-powered smoke alarms.



Philadelphia Fire Department units operating at January 2022 multi-fatality fire in the city's Fairmount neighborhood. Photo credit: PFD Community Action Team

January 9th 2022: Bronx, New York: FDNY units operating at the Twin Parks Fire. Tragically, 17 people died at this fire. However, many more were rescued by the FDNY. Photo credit: Frank Leeb

More Information



<sup>1</sup>Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves: 2019 Report (National Institute for Building Sciences; December 1, 2019)

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, Office of Public and Indian Housing

<sup>3</sup>US Experience with Fire Sprinklers (NFPA; October 2021)

<sup>4</sup>Smoke Alarms in US Home Fires (NFPA; February 2021)



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