AN ASSESSMENT OF PROBATIONARY FIREFIGHTER TRAINING FOR THE NAPERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The successful integration of new employees into an organization lays the essential groundwork for personal development and forms the starting point of a productive career. Indeed, a new employee’s early experiences with an organization have considerable impact on the filters through which they view the firm and their relationship within it. This in turn affects their job productivity and even their potential to remain with the organization for any length of time. Managing the development of new employees serves as the most basic cornerstone of long-term succession planning by building organizational capability through competent performance.

The Naperville Fire Department does not provide a structured, program for the training and development of new firefighters over the course of their 18-month probationary period. This inhibits the organization's ability to provide uniform and consistent information to recruit firefighters and restrains efforts to chart their progress against established norms of behavior and standards of performance.

This research project sought to analyze the need for the Naperville Fire Department to implement a formal and structured probationary training and development process for recruit firefighters. The effort utilized methods of descriptive research to identify perceived levels of effectiveness and satisfaction with the present training and development program on the part of current and recent recruit firefighters and their supervising company officers. It will also made use of the literature review process to identify essential components of successful initial employee training programs.

This project attempted to answer the following research questions.
1. Does the Naperville Fire Department orientation/training program adequately prepare recruit firefighters for entry-level work demands?

2. Does follow-up training provided to new firefighter employees during their probationary period prepare them to fulfill the minimum job performance requirements of the position of firefighter/paramedic?

3. What are the key components for a new firefighter training and development program?

In order to garner feedback on the adequacy of the instructional method used by the Naperville Fire Department for the training and development of new firefighters, two survey questionnaires were distributed to a study population of members from within the Naperville Fire Department. Survey evaluation monitored the responses of two non-randomly selected populations identified through a purposive sampling method. These population groups consisted of a sample of all company officers of the Operations Division of the Fire Department (n=33) and all new firefighters hired by the Department since May 1, 1999.

Results indicated a high level of satisfaction from the firefighter population with all aspects of the training process investigated. This included orientation and initial training, organizational socialization, and on-the-job training. Among the officers, responses suggested general satisfaction with the method and results for providing new employee orientation and initial basic training. Regarding organizational socialization, the officers expressed dissatisfaction with the degree to which the Department clearly communicates role expectations for probationary firefighters. The results also expressed a general level of dissatisfaction among the officer corps with the on-the-job aspect of the probationary firefighter-training program.

These results indicated a need to improve the structure and organization of the on-the-job training program in order to provide wider acceptance and greater uniformity.
Recommendations stemming from this research called for retention of the structured and effective orientation/basic training program, implementation of a uniformly, structured training and development process throughout the remainder of the new firefighter’s probationary period, and provision of training for company officers on process and objectives of the program.
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INTRODUCTION

The successful assimilation of new individuals into a group serves as the foundation of personnel development within an organization. A comprehensive selection and integration process should implement a staffing method that seeks to select the right person, with the right skills, at the right time, and the right place for the right job. Once chosen, these personnel, these precious resources, require nurturing in the form of orientation, initial instruction, and continuing professional education in order to fully develop the necessary competencies to fulfill their potential and serve the best interests of the organization and the citizens it serves. The key competencies addressed in such a program of new employee development should include not only the appropriate knowledge and skill prerequisites of a position, but the acceptable values, behaviors, traits, social roles, and projected images desired by the organization.

New employees, especially those at entry-level positions, represent the raw materials of organizational staffing. Their initial experiences with the organization, indeed their first impressions, may have a strong impact on their perceptions, productivity, and their propensity to remain with the firm. Administrative staffs must decide whether to accept by default a Darwinian type of employee development process where new hires blaze their own trail to acceptance and competence or to manage a structured program of orientation and instruction to promote organizational goals and employee potential. New employee development, successfully done, serves as the most basic cornerstone of long-term succession planning by building organizational capability through competent performance.

The Naperville Fire Department does not have a comprehensive program to address the training needs of new firefighters nor to chart their progress against established norms of behavior and standards of performance during their probationary period. The term of the new
firefighter’s probation runs for 18 months. As new employees, recruits undergo a thorough orientation and initial training period. During this time they receive extensive instruction on City and Fire Department policies and relevant job tasks and behaviors. This initial course of instruction typically runs eight to ten weeks. Upon completion of this course work, recruits receive their assignment and placement to shift.

Once assigned to shift, the Department’s structured program for new employee development effectively ends. Company officers receive insufficient direction and little coaching from administrative staff regarding the training and development of recruit firefighters. As a result, supervisors must discern for themselves an appropriate program of skill development. This may suffice when the new employee comes to the organization with relevant experience from a previous employer, but it falls short when the new recruit joins the organization with no previous firefighting or emergency service experience.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the need to implement a formal and structured probationary training and development process for firefighter recruits of the Naperville Fire Department. This effort makes use of descriptive research to identify perceived levels of effectiveness and satisfaction with the present training and development program on the part of recent recruit participants and their supervising company officers. It also makes use of a literature review process to identify essential components of successful initial employee training programs.

This project attempts to answer the following research questions.

1. Does the Naperville Fire Department orientation/training program adequately prepare recruit firefighters for entry level work demands?
2. Does follow-up training provided to new firefighter employees during their probationary period prepare them to fulfill the minimum job performance requirements of the position of firefighter/paramedic?

3. What are the key components for a new firefighter training and development program?

**BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE**

The Naperville Fire Department provides fire and EMS coverage to the City of Naperville, Illinois, an upscale suburban community located approximately 31 miles due west of the City of Chicago, Illinois. Situated in southern DuPage County and northwest Will County, the community sits astride Interstate 88 and the Burlington Northern spur of the METRA commuter railway system. The service area covers more than 53 square miles, encompassing the corporate limits of the City of Naperville as well as surrounding unincorporated areas of DuPage and Will Counties that lay within the City’s planning boundaries. The protected population exceeds 147,000 residents.

Operating out of eight fire stations, the Department utilizes 6 ALS ambulances, 8 ALS engine companies, 1 ALS ladder company, and 2 BLS ladder companies to deliver primary fire and emergency medical response on a 24-hour basis. The Department functions with a staff of 189 officers and firefighters.

Identified as one of the fastest developing communities in Illinois as well as one of the fastest growing municipalities in the United States with a population in excess of 100,000, the City of Naperville has experienced explosive development in residential and commercial property over the past 20 years. From a residential population of 42,601 in 1980, the City grew by 100 percent to 85,351 in 1990 and by another 50.5 percent in 2000 to 131,455. Factoring in
additional residential growth since 2000 plus the relatively stable population of approximately 11,000 from the surrounding unincorporated areas serviced by the Fire Department, totals a protected population 147,601. The City’s Comprehensive Plan projects a continuation in this growth and development cycle over the next 10-15 years with an eventual build out population in excess of 170,000.

Likewise, the Fire Department has experienced similar burgeoning growth in order to meet the emergency service needs of a rapidly expanding business and residential community. In 1983, the Fire Department served the community from two fire stations with a total paid staff of 35 firefighters and support personnel. Contrasting that figure with the eight fire stations and 199 firefighters and support personnel employed by the organization today provides insight into the scope of the hiring and training challenges faced by the Naperville Fire Department.

Prior to selection and hiring, recruit firefighters undergo a rigorous examination process administered by the City of Naperville Board of Fire and Police Commissioners. This independent appointed Board, nominated by the Mayor and approved by the City Council in compliance with Illinois State Statute, administers all Fire Department hiring and promotional testing for the ranks of Fire Captain, Fire Lieutenant, and Firefighter. Every two years, the Board conducts the following evaluative procedures to establish an initial hiring eligibility list for the position of Firefighter.

- Written examination (objective scoring)
- Physical agility test (pass/fail)
- Oral interview (subjective scoring)
- Medical fitness evaluation (pass/fail)
- Psychological evaluation (pass/fail)
Polygraph Test (pass/fail)

Background investigation (pass/fail)

New firefighter recruits are selected from the eligibility list in rank order and offered positions with the Naperville Fire Department to fill available openings as determined by Department administrative staff and the City Manager. In addition to successfully completing the battery of screening tests, new recruits must also fulfill several additional prerequisites in order to qualify for hiring eligibility. These include;

- Age of 21 or older,
- Citizen of the United States,
- High school diploma or GED equivalent,
- Licensure by the Illinois Department of Public Health as an emergency medical technician-paramedic (EMT-P).

Upon hire new recruits are assigned to the Training Bureau for their initial course of training. This consists of a structured orientation and instructional program that provides indoctrination and tutoring in the following areas.

- Compensation and benefits
- City of Naperville personnel policies
- Naperville Fire Department (NFD) policies and procedures
- Introduction to NFD equipment and facilities
- Assessment of EMS skills
- Competence testing by the local EMS System authority

An additional mandate for entry level personnel requires all new recruits to successfully complete a firefighter II training course presented by either the Fire Department Training Bureau
or by a State certified regional training academy as part of their initial training regimen. This training course must comply with the requirements established by the Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshall. The initial course of indoctrination and orientation typically runs eight weeks.

Upon successful completion of the initial training program, new firefighter recruits receive their shift assignment to the Operations Division. Naperville firefighters work a 24 hour on / 48 hour off shift rotation. During the remaining 16 months of their 18-month probation, new firefighters serve two 8-month terms, each under a single but different company officer. Throughout this time, recruits receive additional instruction from their supervising officers on still district orientation, company operations, equipment familiarization, and apparatus operations. As an accountability measure, company officers complete a monthly evaluation for each probationary firefighter. This evaluation provides feedback to the recruit and to administrative staff on progress in five different areas; attendance and appearance, job knowledge, performance skills demonstrated, interpersonal skills, and communication skills.

Unfortunately, the Department provides little to the company officers in the way of structured guidelines for additional training development or performance benchmarking. This makes the monthly probationary evaluation process, as well as the continued new employee training and development instruction, largely subjective based on the perceptions and prejudices of 33 different company officers. As a result, there exists wide variation in the scope of training and evaluation provided to new recruits. This lack of consistency poses problems in ensuring uniform performance of entry level personnel who come to the Fire Department from a cross-section of society with a wide range of relevant experience. Just as important but perhaps more problematic, this lack of standardized instruction and evaluative criteria compounds the issues
associated with remediation of poor performance when officers have judged an assigned recruit firefighter as not measuring up.

Since 1999, the Naperville Fire Department has hired 28 new personnel. Internal projections for community and Department growth, as identified in the Fire Department Master Plan, indicate the size of the workforce could expand by another 25-30 firefighters by 2010 in order to keep pace with community growth and development. This does not take into account the fact that nearly one-half of the Department will become eligible for retirement benefits over that same time period.

This project correlates with the Executive Development course of the Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) by identifying and addressing the need for succession/replacement planning within the Naperville Fire Department. Specifically it attempts to address identified deficiencies in new employee/workforce development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Career Development

Completion of a formal training need assessment serves as a critical effort in instituting an employee development and training program. A basic definition identifies a need as a gap between something currently in place and something necessary to fulfill a particular end. In order to fulfill the basic requirements of the organization, all training programs must begin with a need assessment in order to determine the who, what, why, when, where, and how of training. Need assessments help identify gaps between organizational expectations and organizational attainments, between projected job accomplishment and existing performance achievements, and between desired skill competencies and actual abilities.
Miller and Osinksi (1996) identified three levels of need assessment; organizational analysis, task analysis, and individual analysis. Organizational analysis evaluates a number of environmental factors to assess their potential impact on the organization and to determine the need for and conditions of training. At a minimum an organizational analysis should examine the following issues.

- Regulatory – the impact of statutes and administrative regulations on the conduct of business and the need for employees to have awareness of and conform to the same.
- Economic – the state of the economy, its impact on revenue, operating costs, and resources available.
- Work force demographics – the need to address generational, educational, cultural, and social barriers amongst employees and assimilate them into the organization.
- Technological – the ever increasing pace of technological change, its effect on basic tools, equipment, and processes of the industry and its impact on the skills competencies of employees.
- Social/Political – the influence of current social/political trends such as issues regarding respectful workplace (harassment) and worker safety (workplace violence).
- Organizational goals – the effectiveness of the organization in attaining established goals and objectives.
- Climate and Support – the willingness of management and employees to support and participate in training activities and to take responsibility for their outcome.

A task analysis develops data regarding the knowledge, skills, aptitudes, and competencies necessary to achieve acceptable performance in a particular job. The process inventories the skills specific to the primary activities involved in performance of a given job. It
identifies changes in equipment and technology, which factor into the efficiency and
effectiveness of job performance. The analysis also attempts to assess employee attitudes and
satisfaction within the job and to identify the source of such content or discontent. Sources on
data for a training task analysis include current and relevant job descriptions, professional
performance standards, actual observed performance, and literature review on industry best
practices.

Individual analysis provides information on how well individual employees perform their
job. Such evaluations help to identify which employees require additional training and may help
to define the nature and scope of that additional training. Informational sources for individual
analysis include feedback from individual performance evaluations, identification of
performance deficiencies as outlined by supervisors, observation of work behavior, sampling of
work product, and questionnaires completed by employees and customers.

Based on the information gleaned from a training needs assessment, organizational
administrators may develop instructional objectives for a training and development program
prioritized by the urgency and extent of the needs identified and the resources available for
implementation. Today, fire service administrators recognize that survival of their organization
requires an awareness of their competitive environment. Not only do they justify their “market
share” of the municipal budget by articulating the emergency service needs of the community,
but they must demonstrate accountability for meeting those needs in a most effective and
efficient manner. Being a service organization, the competencies of its employees represent the
embodiment of the product a fire department provides to its citizens and a considerable
investment in personnel resources. As the service expectations of citizens increase and the
nature of service delivery evolves, fire service organizations must address these changes through better employee development programs.

Prochaska (2001) identified numerous elements of a comprehensive career development program which include the following.

- An orientation program providing detailed information about the organization.
- A training program which trains managers to coach employees.
- A performance appraisal system that provides employees with consistent feedback.
- Access to job descriptions that clearly identify performance competencies.
- Internal training programs that build on employee skills, teach new ones, and prepare the individuals for potential promotion.
- A mentoring program where employees learn from others who have succeeded.
- A succession planning program that identifies competencies for higher positions and develops potential employees to fill such positions.
- A tuition reimbursement program for college or professional development courses.
- A program for job rotation where employees have opportunities for on-the-job experiences working in different settings utilizing multiple skills.

In addressing the need for employee career development within an organization, fire service administrators must understand the basic stages of a career and the interplay between the organization and the individual in the context of his career. The six basic stages of an employee’s career with an organization (Schein, 1971) consist of the following; pre-entry/entry, basic training, first regular assignment, second assignment, granting of tenure, and post-exit (Table 1).
TABLE 1
Basic Stages, Positions, and Processes In A Career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Transactions Between Individual and Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Pre-entry</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td>Preparation, education, and anticipatory socialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruit</td>
<td>Recruitment, testing, screening, acceptance, induction, and orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Basic Training</td>
<td>Trainee</td>
<td>Training, indoctrination, socialization, testing by the organization, tentative acceptance into the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>Passage through first inner inclusion boundary, acceptance as a member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. First Regular</td>
<td>New Member</td>
<td>Granting of real responsibility, passage through functional boundary with assignment to specific job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Indocctrination and testing by immediate work group (acceptance or rejection), further education (learning the ropes), preparation for higher status, coaching, seeking visibility, finding sponsors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Learning the job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Maximum Performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Becoming obsolete</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Learning New Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Second Assignment</td>
<td>Legitimate Member</td>
<td>Fully accepted, process under # 3 repeats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Granting of tenure</td>
<td>Permanent Member</td>
<td>Passage through another inner inclusion boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termination and Exit</td>
<td>Old-Timer</td>
<td>Preparation for exit, rites of exit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Post-Exit</td>
<td>Alumnus, Emeritus</td>
<td>Granting of peripheral status, consultant or senior advisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two kinds of psychological and organizational processes influence the interaction between the individual and the organization, socialization and innovation. Socialization or acculturation deals with the influence of the organization on the individual, whereas the process of innovation concerns the influence the individual has on the organization. Both processes involve a relationship between the employee and the organization. Both coexist within any organization but occur with greater or lesser dominance at different points in the life of a career. Socialization, initiated by the organization, reflects the power of the social system to induce change in the individual. Innovation, initiated by the individual, contemplates the power of the employee to change the social system.
Schein characterized career movement as a series of steps beginning with socialization or learning, which finds organizational influence at maximum. The next step, the process of performance, finds individual influence on the organization at a maximum. The final step finds the employee either learning new skills, which leads to further movement or becoming obsolete. The learning process at each end of this model suggest a cyclical nature to this relationship and highlights the need for organization initiated training to further the process of socialization and innovation.

**Orientation**

The first step in the acculturation and development of new employees begins with their indoctrination or orientation to the organization at the very beginning of their career. Orientation introduces the new employee to the job and provides the employee with their first impression of the organization. Brown (2000, p. 6) did not understate the importance of this concept when he noted; “You will find it exceedingly hard to bring about professional fire service behavior if no formal process is in place to indoctrinate your newest firefighters.” As defined by Roderer and Hickman (2000), organizations should consider orientation as a process, not an event. Orientation serves as part of the overall integration of new employees into the organization, not a one-day dog and pony show. Successful orientation programs help new employees adapt to the work environment and provide a training opportunity to promote organizational effectiveness from the start of an employee’s career.

Orientation provides identity and identification to the new employee within the context of the organization. As root constructs in organizational phenomena (Albert, Ashforth and Dutton, 2000) the concepts of identity and identification serve to situate the organization, the group, and the person. If successfully presented, they convey a distinctiveness and oneness to the
organization and the individual and provide a means for the assimilation of diverse groups. Orientation programs are commonplace in business, education, and the military. A 1994 survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management found that 87 percent of respondent organizations provided an orientation process to new employees.

Wanous and Reichers (2000) defined the conceptual domain of orientation by answering four questions; who, when, what, and how. The “who” question pertains to the subject participants of an orientation program. By definition this encompasses new employees of the organization, but it also should include internal transfers who experience a dramatic transition similar to that experienced by newcomers due to reassignment or promotion. The “when” of orientation involves the timing of program presentation. Most literature agrees that orientation should constitute the first or one of the first events to occur in a new employee’s entry into the organization. Wanous (2000) asserted that the orientation includes the first day and up to the first week after entry. “What” refers to the content of orientation. New employee orientation programs should provide information on the following (Arthur, 1998).

- History and current status of the organization
- Overview of the company’s overall functions
- Outline of the organizational structure
- Description of the organization’s philosophy, goals, and objectives
- Explanation of the employee’s role and fit in the organization
- Clarification of compensation, benefits, and employee services offered
- Identification of organizational performance standards, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures
- Briefing on safety and security practices
“How”, the final element of new employee orientation, deals with the presentation of the information. Because the focus of orientation deals with an individual’s adjustment to a new and unfamiliar environment, the presentation approach should not only impart information, but it should teach skills to address two specific areas; stress coping and interpersonal skills related to performance. Stress coping skills help to deal with the high stress and anxiety associated with entry shock. Behavior modeling aids in teaching acceptable behaviors and assists with the establishment and maintenance of new interpersonal relationships.

The acronym, ROPES, was coined by Wanous (1992) to describe a model for orienting new employees to the organization because newcomers need to “learn the ropes”. ROPES stands for realistic orientation programs for new employee stress. ROPES focuses on six principles. First, include realistic information at the orientation regarding the adjustment problems typically associated with organizational entry. Two, provide general support and reassurance to new employees. Three, use behavior models to show coping skills. Four, discuss model actions with new employees. Five, rehearse behaviors as necessary. Six, teach self-control of thoughts and feelings.

Orientation programs may take on a variety of permutations to allow for organizational fit and uniqueness, all programs should achieve the following outcomes (Roderer and Hickman, 2000).

- New employees should feel welcomed.
- New employee should understand the organization (its history, its goals, its structure, and its policies and procedures).
- New employees should have a clear understanding of their performance expectations in terms of work and behavior.
Socialization

Once new employees complete the basic prerequisites for employment, as mandated by the organization, and receive their initial first assignment within the organization, they begin the process of socialization. Schein (1968, p. 53) defined socialization quite simply as the process by which a new employee adapts to the value system of an organization. “Organizational socialization is the process of ‘learning the ropes’, the process of being indoctrinated and trained, the process of being taught what is important in an organization or some subunit thereof.” Socialization starts in earnest when new employees begins their initial job assignment with an organization. It happens again when the employee switches from one job to another within the organization. The process occurs throughout an employee’s career, yet the subtlety of it makes it easy to overlook. Nonetheless, the process takes on such importance that it serves as a primary influence on the success of individual careers and organizational systems. The effectiveness of the socialization process influences employee loyalty, commitment, productivity, and turnover to such an extent that the basic stability and efficacy of an organization depends on its ability to socialize new members. Organizational socialization occurs inevitably. The issue administrators must decide is whether they want the formal organization to actively structure the experience and manage the information disseminated to new employees or whether they want the organization’s informal social network to serve as the primary agent for the indoctrination of new personnel.

Individuals new to an organization are highly susceptible to influence during such role transitions. The process of organizational socialization facilitates the adjustment of newcomers by focusing on how individuals learn the beliefs, values, behaviors, and skills necessary to fulfill their new roles and to function effectively within an organization’s social environment (Ashforth...
and Saks, 1996). Research on organizational socialization identify two main characteristics of the process (Nelson, 1987); the process is an important part of organizational entry and the process is stressful for newcomers.

The Stress Socialization Model identified by Nelson divides the socialization experience into three major stages; anticipatory socialization, encounter, and change/acquisition. Anticipatory socialization involves all learning that occurs before a new employee joins an organization. During this stage, the prospective employee develops expectations based on his perceptions of what he has learned about the job and the organization prior to entry. Two important variables influence these perceptions; how realistic is the individual’s assessment of the organization and how realistic is the individual’s assessment of the job. Realistic assessments benefit the prospective new employee by reducing anxiety and providing an awareness of the interpersonal demands of a particular position. The organization has an opportunity to influence the individual’s perceptions by providing appropriate information during the recruitment and selection process.

The encounter stage of socialization begins on the individual’s first day of employment with the organization. This phase may last 6 to 9 months. At this time the employee’s expectations meet the reality of organizational demands and the employee experiences entry shock. During the encounter stage, the employee engages in basic activities, which constitute the source of stress in the socialization process. These activities include the following.

- Task learning – the employee learns about the new skills, procedures, equipment, and environmental setting necessary to perform the required job tasks.
• Role clarification – the employee attempts to clarify his role and the role of the organization. This often requires resolving conflicts between formal roles and informal expectations.

• Establishing new relationships – new employees establish relationships in performing their jobs and in the organization’s informal social network.

The change and acquisition stage of socialization completes the new employee’s transition into the organization. During this stage the employee masters the cognitive and behavioral tendencies to cope with the demands of the new job. Elements of personal control and social support play an important role in helping an employee cope with the stressors of a new situation.

Because the process of organizational socialization entails how individuals learn about the organization and how to fulfill their role within the context of the organizations, administrators have a vested interest in managing and influencing the adjustment and socialization outcomes of new employees. They best accomplish this by developing an understanding of the process of organizational socialization. One of the best theoretical models of this process is the typology of socialization tactics developed by Van Maanen and Schein (1979). This model proposes six tactics for organizations to employ in structuring the socialization experiences of new employees. Each tactic consists of a bipolar continuum and includes the following.

• Collective vs. Individual

• Formal vs. Informal

• Sequential vs. Random

• Fixed vs. Variable
• Serial vs. Disjunctive

• Investiture vs. Divestiture

The tactic of collective (vs. individual) socialization involves grouping new employees together and running them through a common set of experiences. This contrasts the effort of handling new employees individually and putting them through a relatively unique set of experiences. The practice of formal (vs. informal) socialization segregates new employees from regular organization members during a defined orientation period as opposed to making no clear formal distinction between new and regular employees. Sequential (vs. random) outlines a fixed sequence of steps that leads to conferring of job assignment and status rather than an ambiguous, changing sequence or no sequence at all. Fixed (vs. variable) socialization consists of setting a definitive timetable for learning and assuming the role while a variable process does not. In the serial (vs. disjunctive) process an experienced employee serves as role model to socialize the new employee. The disjunctive tactic does not provide role modeling. Lastly, the tactic of investiture (vs. divestiture) affirms, validates, and assimilates the identity and personal traits of the new employee instead of stripping them away.

Building on this model, Jones (1986) postulated that the six tactics of collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture formed a unique pattern of experiences he termed institutionalized socialization. Jones contended that this process of institutionalized socialization encouraged new employees to more passively accept roles and accept the status quo of the organization. At the polar opposite of the scale the pattern of individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture tactics grouped together formed the process of individualized socialization. This process tended to encourage new employees to question the status quo of the organization and to develop their own approach to fulfilling the requirements of
their roles. The six-tactic model of institutionalized socialization reflects a more structure program of socialization, while the process of individualized socialization demonstrates a relative absence of structure. (Ashforth, Saks, and Lee, 1996) Furthermore, research (Ashforth and Saks, 1996) has confirmed the process of institutionalized socialization to be positively associated with the following new employee behaviors.

- acceptance of organizational goals and objectives
- conformity with emergent group norms, attitudes, and beliefs
- negatively related to role ambiguity, role conflict, stress symptoms, and intentions to quit
- positively associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational identification.

The process of organizational socialization for new employees is analogous with three types of outcomes (Nicholson, 1984); 1.) Affective states and their associated coping responses necessary to deal with the stress of transition, 2.) Identity changes, where the adoption of new skills, values, and dispositions result from the employee’s effort to meet new situational demands, and 3.) Behavioral outcomes resulting from the employee’s adaptations to new situational demands that either reinforce or transform parts of the organizational culture.

**On The Job Training**

Once posted to their initial position assignment within the organization, new employees begin the process of on-the-job training. This occurs simultaneously with the process of organizational socialization. The duration and scope of this process depends in large part upon the complexity of the assigned position as well as the educational, experience, and skill prerequisites mandated for aspiring candidates. Regardless, the process should contain a number
of universal components that include elements of the following; supervised instruction and role modeling guidance, demonstrating and reinforcing competence in professional performance standards, evaluative feedback on observed job performance, and documentation of progress through the training sequence.

Organizational training programs should consider adopting an educational model to achieve the goals of the on the job instructional program. Since much of the firefighter’s training involves the initial learning and continual reinforcement of a wide range of affective, cognitive, and psychomotor skills, a model that emphasizes the role of education as part of a continuum of life long learning would appear to serve fire organizations best. The U. S. Department of Transportation National Standard Curriculum for EMT-Paramedic provides just such a model. It provides education and skill reinforcement that run along a continuum from basic education to mastery of skill competencies and prerequisites through a course of professional education, and onto an ongoing regimen of continuing education. Furthermore, training programs for new employees should contemplate some of the basic principles of adult learning. This contemplation should recognize that adults prefer a clear and structured approach to learning, that they want to take part in decision-making that effects them, and that as adults they have the ability to relate their own experiences to situations they study.

In addition to a supervised course of instruction, on-the-job training of new employees should involve a degree of role modeling. Role modeling accomplished by teaming a new recruit with a seasoned veteran of the organization helps the new employee learn the appropriate organizational and social behaviors deemed acceptable to the organization and to the social groups within the organization. Combined with instructional training, such role modeling offers an opportunity to provide relevant, tailored instruction to individual employees. It also permits
the employee to learn and demonstrate competence with organizational performance standards as well as gain the confidence of seasoned coworkers. The need to promote mastery of performance skills by new employees and to integrate them socially into a tight knit work group, like a fire company, presents a situation well suited to the mentoring process.

Mentoring programs allow employees to learn and refine skills, to gain confidence and learn relevant “street smarts” under the oversight of a seasoned successful employee, a “mentor”, of the organization’s choosing. A mentor is defined by Funk and Wagnalls as “a wise and trusted teacher, guide, and friend; an elderly monitor or adviser.” The first mention of mentoring in literature was in Homer’s *Odyssey*, when Odysseus appointed Mentor as the sage guardian of his son Telemachus before he departed for the Trojan War. At its core, mentoring seeks to further the professional development of a protégé through the counsel and guidance of a mentor.

By fostering such relationships organizations seek to achieve several potential outcomes (Hutchins, 2001).

- To enhance protégé performance excellence
- To build protégé self-confidence
- To improve organizational performance
- To strengthen organizational communication
- To promote creativity and idea exposure
- To develop a cooperative, productive, and service oriented environment

Poe (2000) identifies seven key populations to look at when searching for mentees or proteges; minorities and women, new recruits, recent college graduates, promising employees, satellite employees, inter-office transferees, and interdepartmental transferees. Mentoring minorities and women helps to promote diversity throughout the organization. Providing
guidance to new recruits helps these new employees become acclimated to the performance requirements of the job and to the company culture. Recent graduates benefit from the relationship as they make the transition from academia to their first real job. Mentoring promising employees helps to promote succession planning and prepare them for promotion. Satellite employees, cut-off from the office and the social and professional loop, benefit from a home base mentor that keeps them grounded and in contact with the pulse of the organization. Inter-department transferees derive advantages from brief mentoring experiences by helping them blend into the existing operation with as little disruption as possible.

When an organization accepts the philosophy of mentoring, it should work to establish a program framework that identifies roles and responsibilities. Meston (1991) lists several concepts to assist in the development of a mentorship framework.

- Identify target groups or individuals as candidates for developmental assistance.
- Develop and prioritize the training needs of the individual proteges.
- Recruit, screen, and select candidates to act as mentors.
- Train mentors to serve in their role.
- Orient proteges to the mentoring process.
- Execute a written or oral agreement outlining the understood responsibilities of each party. This should include an explicit provision for confidentiality.
- Implement the employee development plan.
- Hold regular, periodic meetings for coaching and feedback.
- Forward written progress reports to the program coordinator.
- Provide for conclusion of the relationship upon the attainment of specific goals/objectives or upon the passage of a specified period of time.
The objective of the on-the-job training is to produce competent, productive employees. Competent employees possess the ability to demonstrate the accomplishment of specific work related activities to an identified performance standard. Productive employees have the ability to further the goals and objectives of the organization by applying their skills and knowledge to situations encountered in the work environment. Professional performance standards play a key role in on-the-job training programs. Such standards help to define minimum job performance requirements for a particular job or position. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications (1997) outlines specific knowledge requirements, skill requirements, and operational competencies to function at a given level of certification and expertise. Established and published professional performance standards, whether the product of a consensus process or the enactment of an individual organization, serve as a benchmark for developing the content of an employee training program by providing a recognizable and uniform level of achievement for all employees. Performance standards applied to on-the-job training programs dovetail into a type of employee development training program known as apprenticeship.

“Apprenticeship in simplest terms is training in those industrial occupations requiring a wide and diverse range of skills and knowledge, as well as maturity and independence of judgement. It involves on-the-job training and experience under proper supervision, combined with technical studies related to the trade.” (IAFC/IAFF, 1980, p. 6) The apprenticeship model outlines a training process suitable for ensuring employee proficiency in the many varied skills and related practices associated with jobs requiring extensive knowledge and skill. Apprenticeship programs strive to provide uniform and effective training to develop the skills
required of journeymen, in this case firefighters. Programs, regardless of skill orientation,
typically employ a number of common work training and administrative standards.

Training Standards relate to the specific requirements of the new employee’s instruction
and work experience. Administrative standards address the logistics of program management
and implementation.

Training Standards include:

1. **Work Processes** outline the scope and nature of the supervised work experience, allocating
   minimum time stipulations for area or division of the job.

2. **Planned Related Instruction** identifies related and supplemental instruction required to
   provide cognitive knowledge related to the job. This may include structured classroom
   learning or supervised self-study.

3. **Progress Evaluation and Records** encompasses the provision of regular, periodic review and
   evaluation of an employee’s progress in both job performance and job knowledge. It also
   includes the appropriate documentation of progress records.

4. **Number of Apprentices Employed** incorporates measures to establish a maximum ratio of
   apprentices to journeymen in order to assure proper supervision and training.

5. **Equal Opportunity** initiatives create equal opportunity in recruitment, selection, employment,
   and training and provide for compliance with applicable Federal regulations and State
   statutes.

6. **Term of Apprenticeship** is defined for the process consistent with training requirements
   established by industry practice.

7. **Probationary Period** of reasonable duration is established in relation to the apprenticeship
   term.
8. **Safety Training** ensures the promulgation of safe work practices and appropriate protection for the employee.

Administrative Standards involve the following.

1. **Labor-Management Cooperation** elicits the cooperation and, where a collective bargaining agreement exists, approval of labor representatives in the administration of the program.

2. **Wage** stipulations enumerate the compensation aspects of the program.

3. **Recognition of Completion** provides identification and acknowledgement to employees who successfully complete the course of instruction.

4. **Qualifications for Apprenticeship** establish and apply prerequisites for apprenticeship applicants equally.

5. **Minimum Age** limitations identify a minimum age requirement for applicants.

6. **Apprenticeship Agreements** between the apprentice and the employer provide for compliance with applicable State laws and regulations where appropriate.

7. **Credit for Previous Experience** allows for the evaluation and acknowledgement of relevant previous work experience and demonstrated skill and knowledge proficiency and permits conference of credit towards completion of the apprenticeship program.

Fire Service organizations have a peremptory duty in managing the successful assimilation of new firefighters. Considering the costs associated with recruitment, screening, selection, and initial training, new employees represent a significant financial investment by the organization. The accomplishment and future productivity of new employees depends on successful assimilation. The loyalty and commitment of new employees to the organization depends on successful assimilation. The safety and welfare of new employees depends upon their successful assimilation. Employees comprise the value-added component of all fire
department services. Employees serve as the instruments by which organizational goals reach fulfillment. Employees, loyal and committed employees, compose the essential component for the perpetuation of the organization.

By demonstrating attentiveness to the details of new employee transformation, by establishing pertinent employee training programs, by providing relevant employee orientation, by managing the social integration of new employees, and by structuring a comprehensive initial training process, administrators nurture and protect the most vital assets of their organization.

PROCEDURES

This project attempted to analyze the need to implement a formal, structured development program for new firefighters during their probationary period. In so doing, it strove to identify the key aspects of new employee assimilation into an organization with the aim of potentially incorporating these elements into a comprehensive training and development program for probationary firefighters of the Naperville Fire Department. The study employed descriptive research to

- Examine the current research and business world philosophy on the topic of new employee integration.
- Determine how well the Naperville Fire Department new firefighter orientation program prepares candidates to fulfill the entry level work demands of their position.
- Determine how well the Naperville Fire Department prepares new firefighters during their probationary period to fulfill the minimum performance requirements of their position.

A literature review was conducted. References included sources identified through the learning resource centers of the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, MD and Governors State
University in University Park, IL as well as on-line information obtained through the Society for Human Resource Management (www.shrm.org).

**Study Population**

Two surveys were distributed in conjunction with this research in order to gain feedback on the adequacy of the instructional method presently utilized by the Naperville Fire Department for the training and development of new firefighters. Both surveys confined study to a population of members of the Naperville Fire Department. Survey participants were selected non-randomly through a purposive sampling of Fire Department employees. Sample selection divided the study population into two groups. Group one consisted of all the company officers of the Operations Division of the Fire Department (n=33). This included all individuals at the rank of Captain or Lieutenant who potentially serve as front-line supervisors to new recruit personnel. Several key considerations justify the selection of this population for study. Captains and Lieutenants function as the direct supervisor of probationary firefighters assigned to their companies. Company officers have responsibility for continuing the development of new personnel assigned to their supervision once they have completed recruit academy training. Company officers complete monthly evaluation reports on the progress of new personnel assigned to their supervision throughout their probationary period. As key participants in the assessment and development of new personnel, the observations of company officers on the adequacy of present methods are essential to any evaluation and potential revision.

Group two encompassed all firefighters hired by the Department within the previous two years, since May 1, 1999 (n=28). This selection provided a sampling of all individuals subject to the new employee training and development process. As the primary objects of that process, the feedback from new employees offered a unique perspective on the effectiveness of the current
process. The restriction on looking back only two years served to limit feedback from individuals whom had current or recent experience with the process.

**Instrument Design**

The survey instruments used in evaluation of the sample populations consisted of two, two-page questionnaires distributed to all Fire Department company officers and all firefighters with less than two years of employment with the Naperville Fire Department. These questionnaires are reproduced in Appendix A. The survey instrument issued to company officers consisted of 18 close-ended questions with an additional section provided for further comment as deemed appropriate by the respondent. Question number one requested information on the number of probationary firefighters supervised by the respondent within the last 2 years. Questions 2 through 18 consisted of a series of declarative statements. Responses to these questions required survey participants to choose from one of five pre-selected answers arranged on a Likert Scale. Choices included the following responses and corresponding point values.

- 5 – Strongly Agree
- 4 – Somewhat Agree
- 3 – Neutral
- 2 – Somewhat Disagree
- 1 – Strongly Disagree

The declarative statements addressed three different aspects of the probationary firefighter training experience. Questions 2-6 sought to clarify officer’s perceptions of the effectiveness of the orientation and initial recruit training academy in preparing new personnel to assume the duties of their position. Questions 7-12 inquired about the degree to which socialization efforts welcome new employees and clarify roles and expectations. The final six
questions, 13-18, attempted to measure the officers perceived efficacy of the on-the-job training process provided by company officers to new personnel during the remaining 16 months of their probationary period after they leave the recruit training academy.

The questionnaire circulated to the recruit firefighters differed only slightly from that provided to the officers. It consisted of 22 close-ended questions. Questions 1-4 attempted to establish a body of demographic information about the sample recruit population. These inquiries sought background information from the respondents relative to their length of employment with the Naperville Fire Department, their previous relevant experience and certifications, and the recruit-training academy they attended. The remaining 18 questions mirrored those posed in the officer surveys with one exception. An additional question was added to the recruit survey in the orientation/recruit training section asking participants to indicate the clarity of the initial information provided to them about benefits and compensation. A full text copy of both questionnaires is found in Appendix A.

**Limitations**

The questionnaires utilized in this study attempted to gather data regarding the Naperville Fire Department’s effectiveness in training and assimilating new personnel into the organization. With a study population confined to members of the Naperville Fire Department only, the results depict circumstances unique to this organization. They provide a limited view of one aspect of training within this agency and afford a restricted opportunity for generalization to the experiences of the fire service as a whole.

Several procedural considerations limit the effectiveness of this survey. The first involves dropout bias. Distortions in results tabulated due to non-returned questionnaires are always a possibility, especially with small sample populations and/or low response rates. A
second concern deals with the nonrandom selection of survey participants. Purposive sampling, though relatively all encompassing in this circumstance, provides a weak basis for generalized conclusions beyond the specific study population. Lastly, the information gleaned from this survey instrument deals primarily with the perceptual interpretations of the participants. It measures their subjective evaluation of and satisfaction with the effectiveness of the training process currently in place for new recruits.

RESULTS

This project attempted to gather information regarding the perceived levels of effectiveness and satisfaction with the present training and development program provided to recruit/probationary firefighters by the Naperville Fire Department. Survey instruments assessed the observations of first-line supervisory personnel as well as probationary firefighters hired with the Naperville Fire Department over the previous two years. The research effort also undertook to identify essential components, benchmarks, of successful new employee training programs through the literature review process.

Survey questionnaires were distributed to all 33 Fire Captains and Fire Lieutenants within the Operations Division of the Fire Department. As company officers these individuals serve as the front-line supervisors to all firefighters and probationary personnel assigned to engine, ladder, and ambulance companies. Surveys were also disbursed to 28 probationary and former probationary personnel hired with the Naperville Fire Department since May 1, 1999. Candidates for this sample population were selected from the official Fire Department roster, which lists date of hire for all personnel.

Response rates for the questionnaires generated a 91 percent return rate (30 of 33) from the officer sample while the recruit sample provided a 75 percent return rate (21 of 28). Twenty-
two of the respondent officers indicated that they had supervised one or more probationary personnel within the previous two-year period. Eight indicated that they did not have the opportunity to regularly work with probationary personnel as members of their company in the last two years. The highest number of probationary personnel supervised by one respondent totaled 5. The cumulative average (mean) for all officers amounted to slightly more than 2 (2.11).

The demographic information obtained from the probationary firefighter surveys listed in Table 2, shows that recruit candidates came to the Naperville Fire Department with a wide variance of previous experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>TABLE 2</strong></th>
<th><strong>Recruit Demographics</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Months Employed With NFD</td>
<td>Average: 9.86 Range: 7-24 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit Academy Attended</td>
<td>Naperville: 20 Oak Lawn: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Relevant Experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Firefighter</td>
<td>Average: 4.9 yrs. Range: 0-10 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Firefighter</td>
<td>4.6 yrs. 0-8 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Firefighter Experience</strong></td>
<td>6.5 yrs. 0-12 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer EMT-P</td>
<td>2.8 yrs. 0-7 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career EMT-P</td>
<td>4.3 yrs. 0-9 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total EMS Experience</strong></td>
<td>4.3 yrs. 1-10 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Certifications Attained</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firefighter II</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firefighter III</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Apparatus Engineer</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roadway Extrication</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical Rescue I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haz Mat Awareness</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haz Mat Responder</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haz Mat Operations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trench Rescue I</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Instructor I</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCUBA Certified</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACLS</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PALS</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHTLS</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPR Instructor</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAS Degree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This group of recruit personnel hired on to Naperville with an average of 6.5 years of previous firefighting experience and 4.3 years of experience functioning as a licensed EMT-P. Despite these mean totals, 8 candidates had less than five years total firefighting experience, 10 had no previous experience as career firefighters, and three had no preceding exposure to firefighting at all. On the EMS side 14 had less than 5 years experience as an EMT-P while 5 had no prior career employment as a paramedic. Due to the EMT-P licensure prerequisite for initial hire, all had some level of antecedent EMS experience.

Most had previously attained some basic level of exposure to formal firefighter training as evidenced by the 16 individuals noted to have certification from the Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshall at the Firefighter II (12) and Firefighter III (4) level. When considering more advanced types of training, only one-third of the respondents identified having additional forms of official certification. Regarding previous EMS training, more than half had achieved advanced certification in courses such as Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), or Prehospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS). This wide divergence in the previous relevant experiences of new firefighter buttresses the argument for a uniform, consistently applied training process for all “entry level” personnel.

Research Question 1: Does the Naperville Fire Department orientation/training program adequately prepare recruit firefighters for entry level work demands? Questions from the section identified as Orientation/Recruit Training on the survey undertook to gauge survey participants level of satisfaction with the initial recruit-training program. These questions sought responses rating the recruit firefighters understanding of the history of the organization, understanding of their roles and responsibilities, their degree of preparation to assume the task and social aspects of the job, and their understanding of compensation and benefits. The results of the Likert scale
scoring of responses were averaged separately for each sample population with values of 5.0 equating with strong agreement with survey statements, 3.0 indicating a neutral assessment, and 1.0 equalizing to strong disagreement.

The results, listed in Table 3, indicate a favorable impression of Fire Department efforts in this area amongst both officers and firefighters though the probationary firefighters as a group tended to rate the process much more favorably than the officers. Firefighters scores for the six statements ranged from a low of 4.38 to a high of 4.81 representing relatively strong satisfaction with the recruit training process. This may be due in large part to their active participation in the process. Overall scores for officer responses ranged from a low of 3.19 to a high of 3.70 relating general satisfaction. In this section, excepting the statement about knowledge of the history of the organization, officers who did not supervise probationary personnel indicated higher levels of satisfaction with this aspect of the training process as evidenced by their higher scoring responses. This may be due in part to the fact that as lesser participants in the supervision of probationary personnel (i.e., not having had any direct reports to oversee) they had a more objective view of the process. The opposite could also be argued that as bystanders of the process they might not have been attuned to the problems inherent to the it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>All Recruits</th>
<th>All Officers</th>
<th>Officers Reports</th>
<th>Officers No Reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruit firefighters demonstrate a clear understanding of the history and present status of this organization.</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit firefighters demonstrate a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of their position.</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit firefighters are adequately prepared to assume the firefighting duties of the job.</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recruit firefighters are adequately prepared to assume the EMS duties of the job.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recruit firefighters are adequately prepared for the social aspects of shift assignment.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I was given a clear understanding of compensation and benefits that accrue to my position.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 2: Does follow-up training provided to new firefighter employees during their probationary period prepare them to fulfill the minimum job performance requirements of the position of firefighter/paramedic? The second section of the survey questionnaire required the participants to respond to a series of six statements regarding the effectiveness of Fire Department efforts to socialize new employees. As with the tally of results in the previous section of the questionnaire, the recruit firefighters responded with much more positive ratings than the officers. Unlike the scoring for the orientation/training section, officer’s ratings showed little divergence between those who supervised personnel and those who did not. Table 4 lists the results of these responses.

Recruits indicated strong agreement that as new firefighters, they received an open welcome from other members of the organization, providing their highest scoring, 4.86, of the entire survey to this statement. Officers also indicated agreement with the statement. Though not nearly as strong in agreement as the recruits, the score of 3.96 proved to be their highest of all questionnaire statements.

Recruit firefighters gave their second highest rating (4.81) to the next statement in this section, strongly agreeing that coworkers proved supportive in helping them adjust to the organization. Officers also indicating strong agreement, duplicating their 3.96 high score for this statement as well.
TABLE 4
Socialization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>All Recruits</th>
<th>All Officers</th>
<th>Officers Reports</th>
<th>Officers No Reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• As new employees recruit firefighters are openly welcomed by members of this organization.</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Coworkers are supportive in helping recruit firefighters adjust to this organization.</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recruit firefighters typically have to change their attitudes and values to be accepted by coworkers and supervisors</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recruits demonstrate a clear understanding of the acceptable behaviors as viewed by this organization.</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Role expectations for recruit firefighters are clearly communicated to company officers (and recruit firefighters).</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Role expectations for recruit firefighters are consistent among company officers throughout the organization.</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With respect to the degree to which they had to change their attitudes and values, recruit firefighters showed general disagreement that they needed to change their behaviors in order to be accepted by coworkers and supervisors. Scoring 2.24, this proved to be the only statement they indicated disagreement with as a group. Officers demonstrated a relatively neutral opinion regarding this statement with an average score of 3.00 to the statement.

Continuing their pattern of strong agreement, the recruit firefighters showed strong consensus with statements concerning their understanding of acceptable behaviors of the organization (4.43), the degree to which they understood role expectations (4.71), and the extent to which their role expectations were consistent among company officers (4.52). Officers again
demonstrated a lesser amount of agreement. For the remaining three statements their responses averaged 3.39 for recruit understanding of acceptable behaviors, 3.07 for recruit role expectations were communicated to them, and 1.75, their lowest score and strongest disagreement for how consistent role expectations of recruits are held by company officers as a whole.

These results appear to indicate that the recruit firefighters had a generally favorable impression of the process of organizational socialization and their assimilation into the Naperville Fire Department. The prevailing opinion amongst officers with respect to socialization emerged as less favorable. Excepting the statements on the openness and supportiveness of coworkers, officers appear more ambivalent on the subject of behavior and value changes required on the part of recruits as well as the understanding and communication or recruit role expectations. They demonstrate generally strong disagreement towards the consistency with which officers apply role expectations towards recruit firefighters. The final section of questionnaire statements on the survey dealt with the on-the-job training component of the recruit firefighter’s probationary period. As with the previous sections, the recruit firefighters indicated strong agreement with all six statements as ratings ranged from 4.48 to 4.71. Officers once again did not indicate as strong agreement, though the responses from officers who supervised probationary personnel and those who did not demonstrated relatively close correlation. Table 5 lists the results of the post recruit academy training evaluation.

Officer’s scores indicated weak agreement that they understood the minimum job performance criteria for probationary personnel (3.29). They showed only slightly stronger consensus on whether the Training Division provided adequate preparation to recruit firefighters to fulfill the established performance criteria (3.64) and on the adequacy of feedback provided to
recruit firefighter’s (3.48). These findings contrast sharply with the recruit firefighter responses for the same statements.

TABLE 5
Post Recruit Academy Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>All Recruits</th>
<th>All Officers</th>
<th>Officers Reports</th>
<th>Officers No Reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• I have a clear understanding of the minimum job performance criteria proscribed by the NFD for recruit firefighters to pass probation.</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Training provided during the probationary period adequately prepares recruit firefighters to fulfill the minimum job performance criteria.</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recruit firefighters receive adequate feedback regarding job performance as measured against Department standards.</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evaluation criteria are applied consistently by company officers throughout the probationary period.</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The content of training instruction provided to recruit firefighters is consistent throughout their probationary period.</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Department gives adequate direction to company officers regarding the training and development of recruit firefighters.</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The quality of training instruction has been of high caliber throughout my probationary period.</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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The final three statements correlated to the consistency of evaluation criteria applied by company officers, the content of training instruction offered by officers, and the adequacy of direction given by the Department regarding the training of new recruits. Officers indicated general disagreement with each statement, inferring that company officers apply evaluation
criteria differently, that they provide training of varying content levels, and that the Department does not provide adequate direction regarding the training and development of new firefighters. The officer’s responses indicated a general level of dissatisfaction among the officer corps with the on-the-job aspect of the probationary firefighter training program. Besides showing the widest divergence between recruit firefighter’s responses and officers replies, these results indicate a need to improve the structure and organization of the on-the-job training program in order to provide wider acceptance and greater uniformity.

The final section of the survey questionnaire provided an opportunity for both recruit firefighters and officers to offer additional written comments as they deemed appropriate. Among the two survey populations, 8 of 21 recruit firefighters (38.1%) documented written observations while 12 of 30 officers (40%) provided comment. Recruits indicated overall satisfaction with all aspects of the training process while officer commentary related in general to the need for consistent, uniform training standards for officers to apply and evaluate on. Comment section results are found in Appendix B.

Research Question Three: What are the key components for a new firefighter training and development program? Information gathered from the literature review provides adequate reference to assist in identifying the key components of a training and development program for new firefighter personnel. The body of previously researched and developed data suggests that such programs should configure the process to manage the entry experience of new employees and to direct the effort towards a desired outcome. Such processes should exhibit four common key components.

- Organized program with a conventional structure and outline
- Induction/Orientation phase
• Basic initial training phase
• Learning the job phase

In order to manage new employee development, organizations should develop a program of formalized structure, consistently applied to all new employees, that proceeds in a serial fashion from beginning to completion. Program modules should present content and objectives based on an analysis of specific organizational exigencies, realistic task demands, and common individual training and performance requirements.

The induction/orientation phase provides new personnel with an overview of the history and structure of the organization. During this phase employees should receive instruction on the organization’s mission and values. They should become familiar with the formal policies and procedures of the firm; administrative, operational, and personnel; as well as the specific performance standards and evaluative criteria that apply to their position. No employee should complete the induction/orientation phase without being thoroughly versed in the benefits and compensation that accrue to their particular job. Much of this training addresses concerns of a global nature within the boundaries of the formal organization.

The basic initial training phase focuses more narrowly on position, unit, or division specific information related to individual job performance. Depending upon the individual and job task needs, as well as the educational and skill prerequisites of the position, this phase should identify and develop the individual’s cognitive and skill competencies relative to an established acceptable standard. New firefighters should receive coaching in behavior modeling in order to promote desired affective competence. Prior to passage through this phase, employees must demonstrate mastery of the identified minimum performance standards. Employees may or may not function within their specific job assignment during this training phase.
Depending upon job complexity and the established term of any probationary or apprenticeship periods, the learning the job phase will typically encompass the most time of the process. This phase addresses two parallel processes; socializing the new employee into the organization and training and developing the new employee’s skills to a point of desired competence. With respect to socialization, the process indoctrinates the employee further by providing role clarification within their given position, work unit, or division. Through adequate supervision, instruction, and appropriate social-psychological support the employee learns to cope with the stress of transition and any discrepancies in pre-entry expectations and present situational realities. Peer mentoring programs assist the new employee in developing beneficial relationships, provide an opportunity for role modeling, and help them to navigate the intricacies of the informal organization.

The education and development component of this phase identifies a specific body of knowledge and skill elements that constitute an established and objective performance standard. The process allows for supervised instruction and practical application of this information in the work environment. Employees receive regular evaluative feedback regarding their progress that serves to document their progression through the program. Mentoring programs also provide for individualized tutoring and instructional guidance.

**DISCUSSION**

Considerations regarding the survey methodology and the size of the sample population limit the ability to generalize the results of this project beyond the experiences of the Naperville Fire Department. The survey questionnaires, sent to a non-randomly selected population, illuminate the subjective assessments of the new employees and front-line supervisory personnel of the Department with respect to the training and assimilation of recruit firefighters.
Having underscored these limitations, the study results provide two divergent views of the training process. The recruit firefighters demonstrated strong positive attitudes about all phases of the probationary training process addressed in the questionnaire; orientation training, organizational socialization, and on-the-job instruction. These results are likely due in part to several important contributing factors. The first involves the active role recruits play in their initial training. As active participants in their own development process, recruit firefighters are presumably inclined to view their role and the resultant experience as positive. As new employees, they are also probably not likely to offer negative commentary on the organization. Finally, the long period of highly structured initial orientation and training (2-month recruit academy) may have a significant affect on the manner in which they view the organization. This initial training component contains all six elements of Jones’ (1986) institutional socialization model. The consuming process may provide a gestalt that generates strong influence over their attitudes and behaviors. This is consistent with Schein’s (1971) assertion that the socialization process, which reflects the power of the organization’s social system to induce change in the individual, has a dominating effect on employees at the beginning stages of their career.

The initial training appears to impart on recruit firefighters sufficient information about the conceptual domain of orientation as defined by Wanous and Reichers (2000) by answering the who, when, what, and how of the process. Based on the survey results, the orientation process appears to satisfy the outcome objectives for success listed by Roderer and Hickman (2000). The recruits perceive they are welcome, feel they understand the organization, and have a comprehension of their performance expectations. Survey results also appear to indicate that the socialization process fulfills the needs for task learning, role clarification, and establishment of new relationships outlined in Nelson’s (1987) Stress Socialization Model. Recruit firefighters
also seem to hold positive opinions regarding the on-the-job training aspect of the probationary instructional period. Although the Department has admittedly not provided a comprehensive training program for probationary personnel, the survey responses infer that company officers have independently filled this gap to the satisfaction of the trainees they supervise. Purely from the standpoint of the recruit firefighters, the study results offer a basis for concluding that the Naperville Fire Department provides an adequate program of orientation, training, and socialization for probationary personnel. The comment portions of the survey instrument seem to validate this observation based on the statements citing satisfaction with all aspects of the training process.

Results from company officer surveys register a more discriminate view of the probationary training process. Like the recruits, the officers denote agreement, though less strong agreement, that the orientation/recruit training adequately prepares recruit firefighters to assume their initial assignment with the Department. Based on the relative consensus of both surveyed populations regarding this process, the results suggest that the orientation/training part of the probationary period is the most successful in meeting the needs of both officers and new firefighters.

The more ambivalent responses of the officers concerning the socialization of new recruits offer a more critical assessment of the process. This is pointedly demonstrated by the degree of collective agreement with respect to value adaptations by recruits, their understanding of acceptable behaviors, and the clarity with which Department staff communicates role expectations for recruits to company officers. Most critical of all, officers perceive a significant discrepancy in the uniformity of role expectations for recruit firefighters among company officers.
These indicate areas of potential improvement for the socialization process, perhaps beginning with an effort to clarify recruit firefighter role expectations and behavioral standards to the officer core. The perceived view of these deficiencies by the officers suggests a possible benefit from a more institutionalized socialization process beyond the orientation period. The six-tactic model identified from the Van Maanen and Schein (1979) model and quantified by Jones (1986) as institutional socialization, provides a structured pattern of unique experiences that encourages more uniform behaviors in new employees in the acceptance of roles and organizational status quo.

The unique aspects of the fire department work environment necessitate a certain degree of uniformity of behavior within the work group. It is vitally important that new employees demonstrate an understanding and acceptance of organizational goals, exhibit conformity with emergent group norms and beliefs, and illustrate organizational commitment. The Department must also eliminate ambiguities in role expectations and organizational identity. Ashforth and Saks (1996) have identified the process of institutionalized socialization to be positively associated with the behaviors noted above.

Officers indicated their strongest disagreement with survey statements relating to the post recruit academy (on-the-job) training of recruit firefighters. They registered mild but general agreement with statements postulating they have a clear understanding of the minimum job requirements for recruits, that training provided on-the-job adequately prepares recruits to fulfill minimum job performance criteria, and that it provides them with adequate feedback. Since the Department, as stated previously, does not provide a structured regimen of post-academy training, these functions fall to the officers to develop and implement individually. In essence, these statements ask the officers to evaluate the success of task functions they do. A bias
reflecting a positive assessment would be expected. It is perhaps more revealing that as a group their ratings hover between ambivalence and only somewhat agreement in this area.

Perhaps this low rating is a by-product of their much stronger negative appraisal of the remaining statements of the section. These results indicate that the officers as a group feel they do not apply evaluation criteria consistently to recruit firefighters, that the content of training instruction they provide is not consistent, and that the Department does not provide adequate direction to company officers regarding the training and development of recruits. This assessment attests that the officers recognize the deficiency of the less structured approach to on-the-job training. Furthermore, it strongly implies that the training for and evaluation of recruit firefighters is far from analogous during the post recruit academy period of their probation. Such a glaring discrepancy makes it difficult for the Department to guarantee the delivery of consistent and uniform training to new personnel. This, in turn, potentially short changes new employees by making it hard to vouch for the quality of their instruction and generates a high degree of subjectivity into the employee evaluation process. It also provides a stark contrast to the highly structured and relatively effective program covering initial training and orientation during the employee’s first two months on the job.

These results indicate a need for a recruit firefighter on-the-job training program that contains aspects of uniform progress and evaluation documentation, planned related instruction to a professional standard, and a supervised work experience. The remarks of the 12 officer participants who amplified their responses in the comments section of the survey questionnaire, clearly imply a desire by officers for more structured guidelines for job performance, training content, and employee evaluation. Patterning the program after an apprenticeship model such as the IAFC/IAFF Firefighter Apprenticeship Program offers one means to facilitate the
implementation of such training standards. Development of a new employee-mentoring program could provide another. Poe (2000) identified new recruits as one of seven key populations appropriate for participation in a mentoring program. Mentoring would provide additional structure and guidance to the employee development process that might also positively address the reservations officers expressed with the communication and clarification of role expectations throughout the organization.

The results of the literature review suggest four common aspects of new employee training programs; that they consist of an organized structure and conventional outline and that they include an orientation phase, a basic training phase, and a learning the job phase. The Naperville Fire Department recruit firefighter training program only addresses two of these aspects. The Department provides a structured program of training for the initial orientation phase and basic training of the recruit. That the Department does not apply such structure to the learning the job phase is plainly acknowledged in the context of this research. Survey results of the officer questionnaire suggests that this is a source of dissatisfaction among the supervisors who play a key role during employee development in this phase. It is also a potential source for ineffectiveness in the overall process of developing and evaluating new employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this project was to analyze the need to implement a formal and structured probationary training and development process for firefighter recruits in the Naperville Fire Department. In doing so, the process acknowledged that the Department applies a structured, formalized training program for the first 2 months of the 18 month probationary period but permits officers to work out a less structured and more subjective process for the remaining 16 months. Through literature review the project attempted to identify the key aspects of and
considerations for new employee training programs. The research undertook to explore the perceptions of key players, the fire company officers and recruit firefighters, who participated in this process over the past two years. Through use of survey questionnaires, participants were quizzed on their opinions regarding the orientation, initial instruction, socialization, and on-the-job training of new firefighters. Based on the analysis provided, the following recommendations evolve from this research regarding the need for implementing a formal and structured probationary training program for the Naperville Fire Department.

1. Continue the structured program of new employee orientation and basic training for recruit firefighters.

2. Identify knowledge and skills performance objectives relevant to the general job orientation of a City of Naperville employee and the specific task functions of a Naperville firefighter.

3. Develop content for training modules to be presented sequentially to recruit firefighters during the 16-month period that constitutes the remainder of the new employee probationary period after the initial orientation and training of the recruit academy.

4. Create a method for evaluating probationary firefighter compliance with relevant performance standards in affective, cognitive, and psychomotor behaviors.

5. Establish a mentoring program for new employees to promote effective socialization and to assist with the teaching of appropriate training topics.

6. Provide training to company officers regarding new employee training program content, performance standards, role expectations, and application of evaluation criteria.
7. Codify the contents of the training program to allow for more uniform application and continuous replication over time.

The existing program of initial firefighter training consisting of new employee orientation, organizational familiarization, EMS review/system entry testing, and firefighter II academy instruction should continue in its present format. The process has proven effective as evidenced by survey responses provided by both the firefighter and supervisory sample populations. It presents a poignant introduction to the organization and delivers consistent instructional content that provides a benchmark for evaluating new employee progress.

In order to implement a structured program of instruction for the development of recruit firefighters, the Department must identify the role behaviors, knowledge expectations, and skill objectives relevant to their position. This includes not only those functions specific to emergency medical and firefighting duties, but to the basic knowledge and skills sets expected of all City of Naperville employees. The objective identification of organizational performance expectations serves as a catalyst for developing appropriate training content and evaluative criteria.

Development of content material for sequentially presented training allows for the methodical delivery of pre-established job knowledge. Such an outline serves as an instruction manual for company officers in charting the development of assigned probationary firefighters. It addresses the issue of inconsistency in the content of training instruction provided to recruit firefighters by company officers throughout the organization. It also serves to give adequate direction to company officers on what, how, and when to provide appropriate training to firefighters during their probationary period. Furthermore, it helps to ensure a comprehensive coverage of relevant materials and facilitates the abridgement of gaps in training as the recruit
firefighter transitions to a new supervisor between month 10 and 11 of the probationary period. Officers will understand the status and skills of their new charge more readily and will continue the training sequence more efficiently.

Concomitant with the development of uniform subject matter for new firefighter training, the organization must create a consistent and nondiscriminatory process for evaluating compliance with performance standards and mastery of required job knowledge. One process logically enables the other. Validated professional performance standards such as the NFPA 1001 Standard for Firefighter Professional Qualifications, the NFPA 1002, Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications, and the U.S. DOT National Standard Curriculum for EMT-P (paramedic) provide a foundation for establishing training requirements and evaluative criteria. The Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshall publishes curriculum guidelines that include reading lists, knowledge objectives, performance standards, and certification requirements. With such model programs, the Department still retains the ability to include additional qualifying factors addressing conditions or needs unique to the organization as appropriate.

Establishment of a peer-mentoring program for new employees promotes the assimilation of recruit firefighters into the social fabric of the organization. Peer mentors help to ease the stress of transition and may assist in the presentation and reinforcement of knowledge and skills training. Those senior firefighters participating in these programs as mentors might also derive benefit from their involvement due to their roles as advisors, confidants, and teachers of new employees.

Company officers clearly identified that the Department does not provide them with adequate clarification and direction regarding the role expectations of recruit firefighters,
training/development objectives, and evaluative criteria. Although establishment of a structured program for training and evaluation serves as the cornerstone of this process, successful implementation requires the participation of company officers. The Department must correct this deficiency by soliciting their input, addressing their needs, and communicating the desired results. Officer training is essential.

From an organizational standpoint, the concept of uniformity extends beyond program delivery to one individual or group. To maintain continuity of performance, organizational staff must have the ability to present their message consistently over time. With respect to training this involves being able to maintain program integrity despite the expected diversity of the intended audience and in spite of the anticipated turnover of instructional personnel. This requires that the organization codify the training program by integrating all elements; the orientation process, the basic training process, and the socialization and apprenticeship process into a training manual. The tangible document will help to ensure uniformity. Once published the manual will serve as a reliable guide to both those responsible to implement the tenets of the program as well as to those required to demonstrate compliance. It also aids the revision process when deemed appropriate.
REFERENCES


NAPERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
Probationary Training Program Evaluation – Officer

1. How many probationary firefighters have you supervised within the last 2 years? __________

Orientation/Recruit Training

Upon initial their assignment to shift; (circle the most appropriate answer)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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2. Recruit firefighters demonstrate a clear understanding of the history and present status of this organization.

3. Recruit firefighters demonstrate a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of their position.

4. Recruit firefighters are adequately prepared to assume the firefighting duties of the job.

5. Recruit firefighters are adequately prepared to assume the EMS duties of the job.

6. Recruit firefighters are adequately prepared for the social aspects of shift assignment.

Socialization

7. As new employees, recruit firefighters are openly welcomed by members of this organization.

8. Coworkers are supportive in helping recruit firefighters adjust to this organization.

9. Recruit firefighters typically have to change their attitudes and values to be accepted by coworkers and supervisors.

10. Recruits demonstrate a clear understanding of the acceptable behaviors as viewed by this organization.

11. Role expectations for recruit firefighters are clearly communicated to company officers.

12. Role expectations for recruit firefighters are consistent among company officers throughout the organization.

Post Recruit Academy Training

13. I have a clear understanding of the minimum job performance criteria proscribed by the NFD for recruit firefighters to pass probation.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</table>
14. Training provided during the probationary period, adequately prepares recruit firefighters to fulfill the minimum job performance criteria.

15. Recruit firefighters receive adequate feedback regarding job performance as measured against Department standards.

16. Evaluation criteria are applied consistently by company officers throughout the probationary period.

17. The content of training instruction provided to recruit firefighters is consistent throughout their probationary period.

18. The Department gives adequate direction to company officers regarding the training and development of recruit firefighters.

Please provide additional comments as you deem appropriate.

Return to District Chief Patrick Mullen
By September 27, 2001
NAPERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
Probationary Training Program Evaluation – Recruit

1. How long have you been employed with the Naperville Fire Department? _______________

2. What recruit academy did you attend upon initial hire with NFD? (check one)
   □ Naperville FD □ Elgin □ Oak Lawn □ Other

3. Previous years of EMS/fire service experience (prior to employment with NFD).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Firefighter</th>
<th>Volunteer</th>
<th>Career</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>EMT-P</td>
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4. Certifications/licenses held prior to employment with NFD (check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFI</th>
<th>FFI</th>
<th>FFI</th>
<th>FAE</th>
<th>Hazard Mat Awareness</th>
<th>Haz Mat Responder</th>
<th>EMT-P</th>
<th>ACLS</th>
<th>PALS</th>
<th>Trench I</th>
<th>Trench II</th>
<th>CPR Instructor</th>
<th>SCUBA Diver</th>
<th>AAS Degree</th>
<th>Bachelor Degree</th>
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   Other _____________________________________________________________________________________

Orientation/Recruit Training
(circle the most appropriate answer)

5. I was given a clear understanding of the history and present status of this organization.
   Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree
   5  4  3  2  1

6. I was given a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of my position.
   5  4  3  2  1

7. I was adequately prepared to assume the firefighting duties of my job.
   5  4  3  2  1

8. I was adequately prepared to assume the EMS duties of my job.
   5  4  3  2  1

9. I was adequately prepared for the social aspects of shift assignment.
   5  4  3  2  1

10. I was given a clear understanding of compensation and benefits that accrue to my position.
    5  4  3  2  1

Socialization

11. As a new employee, I have been welcomed by the members of this organization.
    5  4  3  2  1

12. My colleagues have been supportive in helping me adjust to this organization.
    5  4  3  2  1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. I have had to change my attitudes and values in order to be accepted into this organization.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. I have a clear understanding of the acceptable behaviors as viewed by this organization.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. I have a clear understanding of my role expectations within the organization.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. The role expectations communicated to me have been consistent throughout my probationary period.</td>
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**Post Recruit Academy Training**

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<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17. I have a clear understanding of the minimum job performance criteria required to pass probation.</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Training during my probationary period has adequately prepared me to fulfill the minimum performance criteria.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I have received adequate feedback regarding my job performance as measured against Department standards.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Evaluation criteria have been applied consistently throughout my probationary period.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. The content of training instruction has been consistent throughout my probationary period.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. The quality of training instruction has been of high caliber throughout my probationary period.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>

Please provide additional comments as you deem appropriate.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Return to District Chief Patrick Mullen

By September 27, 2001
APPENDIX B
Survey Comments - Officers

1. It takes 3-5 years to feel comfortable in this job. Training does an admirable job to teach all aspects of the job in the time allotted.

2. Officers apply training differently throughout this organization.

3. Officer development is non-existent.

4. Recruit firefighters tend to be low on skill level regarding driving ability and understanding of streets and maps.

5. Recruit experience varies to extremes regarding the training and evaluation provided by company officers.

6. The probationary firefighter I received has already been here past a full year. I cannot relate any areas for I did not have him initially upon assignment to shift.

7. We need overall department-wide standards that are outlined and written.

8. We need a probationary progress report with the overall standards listed so that each company officer knows where each probationary ff/pm is in their training. Also, it aids in the review process (i.e., if a section was marked completed and the probationary ff/pm still cannot do these tasks, it needs to be noted).

9. Hold probationary ff/pm in the academy until all special certifications and licenses are obtained (i.e., non-CDL driver’s licenses are very hard to complete on shift).

10. Recruits are well prepared during the NFD academy. After the academy, the consistency of instruction and direction vary greatly.

11. Recruit development for a large part is subjective.

12. Company officer priorities and level of standards vary significantly. This won’t change unless there is a monitored post academy training program that all company officers buy into.
13. Being newly promoted, I was given no information or training on how to prepare probationary employees. I sought information from other officers that I look to for advice, but officers don’t train probationary employees the same. Some officers focus in on fire skills only, some focus on EMS only, and some don’t do anything. I feel the Department should have a field training officer (FTO) program for new recruits like the police department. This is the only the department can be sure that training is balanced and the same from officer to officer. Some officers should not have probationary employees assigned to their stations.

14. I personally have a daily, written evaluation and a separate monthly objective sheet that the probationary employee is also evaluated upon. These are available to the employee and discussed monthly.

15. All recruits are not treated the same. Some of the recruits are not allowed to drive or be charge medic, thus they are not prepared when their probationary period ends.

16. No clear performance standards are in place. This makes it difficult to have consistency throughout the organization.

17. I usually have to retrain recruits during their second, nine-month tour because it is not clear as to what training has been covered by previous supervisors.

18. The Department does not have a clearly defined training program for recruits once they complete the academy. A program of clearly defined, attainable goals and performance objectives must be created so that a recruit receives a standardized training program during the 18-month probationary period.
Survey Responses – Recruits

1. Everyone here has always helped by answering questions, demonstrating skills, or finding the answer if the don’t know.

2. All in all, an extremely professional organization.

3. Thank you for helping me transition smoothly to Naperville. I look forward to a long career of service.

4. I am somewhat confused on what licenses I must have. I have a FFII and Haz Mat Awareness but I have been told different things by a few different people on what licenses I need next.

5. I feel the NFD’s probationary employee training program does an excellent job in preparing new recruits to fulfill the responsibilities of firefighter/paramedic.

6. It should be noted that the training being performed during my probationary period has involved numerous practical and educational activities that are needed to complete for firefighter certification above and beyond the department standard.

7. All people on shift are super helpful with procedures specific to daily operations. Maybe more scenario live training at the tower would help to keep skills fresh.

8. The training we received at the academy was very well presented to us. We were well prepared for what was expected, especially in EMS.

9. This is a great organization to work for.
APPENDIX C
NAPERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
Probationary Firefighter Training Outline

I. Orientation and Initial Training (months 1-2)

A. Goals

1. To make the employee feel welcome.
2. To give the employee a clear understanding of the organization (structure, culture, policies, and procedures).
3. To convey to the employee clear expectations of required work performance and behavior.
4. To assess the employee’s EMS knowledge base and prepare for EMS System entry testing.
5. To train the employee to function at an entry-level firefighter (firefighter II per Illinois OSFM) position.

B. Orientation

1. Personal information and paperwork
2. City and Fire Department background and history
3. Overview of services, facilities, and equipment
4. Performance expectations
   a. Recruit academy
   b. Probationary period
5. City of Naperville organizational competencies
   a. Communications - effective use of communication patterns to increase performance and productivity.
   b. Organizational effectiveness – ability to use time, financial, and human resources to add to the productivity of the organization.
   c. Customer Service – demonstrates willingness and skills in delivering great service.
   d. Respectful workplace issues – respects and values the opinions, perspectives, and differences of others.
   e. Knowledge of human resources and legal issues – knowledge in areas such as benefits, risk management, sick time usage, FMLA, and workplace safety.
6. Specific job performance requirements
   a. Official job description
   b. Monthly probationary evaluation
   c. Annual employee evaluation
   d. EMS and firefighting performance standards
      i. affective
      ii. cognitive
      iii. psychomotor
C. EMS System Entry

1. Personal information and paperwork
2. Medical testing and follow-up
   a. Hepatitis B vaccination
   b. TB testing
3. EMS System overview
   a. Key personnel
   b. Medical control
   c. Entry testing
   d. Twice yearly competency examinations
   e. Continuing education
4. Medical Standard Operating Procedures
5. EKG review
   a. 3 lead rhythm identification
   b. 12 lead interpretation
   c. Therapeutic treatments
6. Invasive skills testing
   a. Endotracheal intubation
      i. adult
      ii. infant
      iii. in-line
      iv. rapid sequence intubation
   b. Surgical cricothyrotomy
   c. Needle jet insufflation
   d. Intraosseous infusion
   e. Pleural decompression
   f. Nebulized medication delivery
7. Equipment skills
   a. Equipment introduction
   b. Practical application
8. Infection Control
9. Communications
   a. Patient care reports
   b. Data entry
   c. Radio/cellphone
10. Multiple victim treatment practices
11. EMS System policies and procedures
    a. Edward Hospital EMS System Policy and Procedure Manual
    b. Illinois EMS Act
c. Illinois Department of Public Health administrative rules

12. EMS System Entry Testing
   a. Written examination
   b. Practical skills evaluation
   c. Oral interview with EMS Medical Director
   d. Clinical practice assessment (remedial)

D. Firefighter II Academy (cognitive learning and skills training)

1. Orientation and terminology
2. Fire behavior
3. Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA)
4. Ladders
5. Fire hose and appliances
6. Personal safety and protective equipment
7. Portable fire extinguishers
8. Water supply
9. Nozzles and fire streams
10. Ventilation
11. Rescue
12. Forcible entry
13. Overhaul
14. Building construction
15. Fireground communications
16. Installed systems
17. Salvage
18. Fire prevention, public education, and fire cause
19. Ropes and technical rescue orientation
20. Hazardous materials responder
21. Trench rescue awareness
22. Defensive driving
23. Live fire training

II. On-The-Job Training

A. Goals

1. To socialize the employee to the fire department work environment.
2. To reinforce cognitive and practical skills presented in the recruit academy.
3. To increase the employee’s EMS and firefighting knowledge and skill base.
4. To provide clear expectations of required work performance and behavior.
5. To assess the employee’s work performance and behavior and to provide constructive feedback.
6. To train the employee to function at a firefighter III (per OSFM) level of performance.
7. To train the employee to function at the level of Fire Apparatus Operator.
8. To train the employee to assume the role of charge paramedic.

B. Instructional Guidelines

1. Policies (review selected policies monthly)
   a. Naperville Fire Department Administrative Manual
      i. administrative policies
      ii. operational policies
      iii. dispatch and response policies
   b. City of Naperville Rules
      i. Employee Handbook
      ii. Municipal code
      iii. Board of Fire and Police Commissioners
   c. EMS System Policies and Procedures
      i. EHEMSS SOPs
         • Treatment protocols
         • Drug information
      ii. EHEMSS Policy Manual
      iii. IDPH Rules

2. Operational Skills
   a. Module A (months 3-6)
      i. Firefighting (demonstrate OSFM firefighter II and III skill equivalencies)
         • Orientation/Organization
         • Fire behavior
         • SCBA
         • Ladders
         • Fire hose and appliances
         • Personal safety and personal protective equipment
         • Portable fire extinguishers
      ii. EMS Skills (demonstrate equipment skills and treatment procedures as identified in the Naperville Fire Department EMS Training Manual)
         • Patient assessment
         • Airway management
         • Communications
   b. Module B (months 7-10)
      i. Firefighting (demonstrate OSFM firefighter II and III skill equivalencies)
         • Water Supply
         • Fire Streams
         • Ventilation
         • Rescue
         • Building Construction
         • Forcible Entry
         • Overhaul
ii. EMS Skills (demonstrate equipment skills and treatment procedures as identified in the Naperville Fire Department EMS Training Manual)
   - EKG and cardiac monitor
   - Immobilization
   - Invasive treatment skills

C. Module C (months 11-14)
   i. Firefighting (demonstrate OSFM firefighter II and III skill equivalencies)
      - Communications
      - Installed Systems
      - Ropes
      - Salvage
      - Fire Prevention
      - Hazardous materials
   ii. EMS Skills (demonstrate equipment skills and treatment procedures as identified in the Naperville Fire Department EMS Training Manual)
      - Oxygen administration and equipment handling
      - Patient handling and conveyance
      - Splinting

D. Module D (months 15-16)
   i. Firefighting (demonstrate OSFM firefighter II and III skill equivalencies)
      - Driving
         - Emergency vehicle operators course
         - Driving practical
         - Vehicle components
      - Preventative maintenance
      - Pumping
         - Water supply
         - Hydraulics calculations
         - Operating practical
         - Supplying installed systems
         - Foam operations
         - Pump testing
      - Troubleshooting
      - Aerial ladder operations
      - Specialized equipment
         - Brush unit
         - Rescue boat and trailer
   ii. EMS Skills (demonstrate equipment skills and treatment procedures as identified in the Naperville Fire Department EMS Training Manual)
      - EMS call management
      - Mass casualty incidents
      - EMS safety
3. Apparatus and Familiarization (equipment location and maintenance)
   a. Module A (months 3-6)
      i. Engine companies
         • SCBA
         • Ladders
         • Hose and appliances
         • Extinguishers
      ii. Ambulance companies
         • Airway
         • Assessment
   b. Module B (months 7-10)
      i. Engine companies
         • Ventilation tools
         • Forcible entry tools
         • Specialized rescue tools
         • Overhaul tools
      ii. Ambulance companies
         • EKG and cardiac monitor
         • Immobilization
         • Invasive skills
   c. Module C (months 11-14)
      i. Engine companies
         • Communications equipment
         • Ropes
         • Salvage tools
         • Haz Mat equipment
      ii. Ambulance companies
         • Oxygen equipment
         • Immobilization equipment
         • Invasive skills equipment and supplies
      iii. Ladder company familiarization
   d. Module D (months 15-18)
      i. Engine companies
         • Pump
      ii. Ambulance companies
         • Radio equipment
         • MCI supplies
      iii. Specialized equipment familiarization
         • Brush Unit 5
         • Rescue Boat
         • Squad 7 MCI vehicle
         • Haz Mat 7
         • Technical Rescue Unit 7
         • Rescue 10 (specialized EMS vehicle)
4. City and District Familiarization (knowledge of streets, street numbering, and travel routes)
   a. Month 3 – identify
      i. Expressway (1)
      ii. Strategic Regional Arterials (2)
      iii. Major municipal arterials (13)
   b. Month 4 – identify minor arterials (16)
   c. Month 5 – identify 20 collector streets
   d. Month 6 – identify remaining 19 collector streets
   e. Month 7-17 – identify 20 neighborhood collector streets monthly (of 200)

5. Self-study Assignments
   a. Module A (months 3-6)
      i. IFSTA Manuals
         • Orientation
           Orientation and Terminology, 3rd Edition, Chapters 2-6
           Fire Department Company Officer, 2nd Edition, p. 250
           Fire Command, Chapter 3 (section 7)
         • Fire behavior
           Essentials of Firefighting, 3rd Edition, Chapter 1, 2, 3, and 12
           Orientation and Terminology, 3rd Edition, Glossary, Chapter 6
         • SCBA, 2nd Edition, chapters 1, 4, 7, 8, and 9
         • Ladders
           Essentials of Firefighting, 3rd Edition, Chapter 8
           Fire Service Ground Ladder Practices, 8th Edition
         • Fire Hose and Appliances
           Essentials of Firefighting, 3rd Edition, Chapter 11
           Hose Practices, 7th Edition
         • Personal Safety
           Essentials of Firefighting, 3rd Edition, Chapters 3, 15, 19
           Fire Department Occupational Safety, 2nd Edition, Chapters 1, 8, 9, and 10
           625 ILCS 5/11-205 and 206
         • Portable Fire Extinguishers
           Essentials of Firefighting, 3rd Edition, Chapter 2
      b. Module B (months 7-10)
         i. IFSTA Manuals
            • Water supply
              Essentials of Firefighting, 3rd Edition, Chapters 9 and 10
            • Nozzles and fire streams
              Essentials of Firefighting, 3rd Edition, Chapter 10 and 11
c. Module C (months 11-14)
   i. IFSTA Manuals
      - Communications
        Essentials of Firefighting, 3rd Edition, Chapter 17
        Private Fire Protection and Detection, 2nd Edition, Chapter 6
      - Installed Systems
        Essentials of Firefighting, 3rd Edition, Chapter 13
        Private Fire Protection and Detection, 2nd Edition, Chapter 1
      - Ropes
        Essentials of Firefighting, 3rd Edition, Chapter 4
      - Salvage
        Essentials of Firefighting, 3rd Edition, Chapter 14
        Salvage and Overhaul, 7th Edition,
      - Fire Prevention, Public Education, and Fire Cause
        Essentials of Firefighting, 3rd Edition, Chapters 17 and 18
        Fire Inspection and Code Enforcement, 5th Edition,
        Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10
      - Hazardous Materials
        Hazardous Materials for First Responders, 2nd Edition,
        Chapters 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7

d. Module D (months 15-18)
   i. IFSTA Manual
      - Pumping Apparatus
        Fire Department Pumping Apparatus, 7th Edition
      - Aerial Apparatus
        Fire Department Aerial Apparatus, 1st Edition