Let's Make a Difference

Best practices to minimize injuries and deaths while using POV for ESO responses

Volunteer & Combination Officers Section

A joint project between the International Association of Fire Chiefs – Volunteer & Combination Officers Section, Safety, Health & Survival Section, and the National Volunteer Fire Council

Let's Make a Difference

Best practices to minimize injuries and deaths
while using privately owned vehicles (POV) for ESO responses

www.vcos.org www.nvfc.org www.iafcsafety.org

This was a joint effort between the International Association of Fire Chiefs' (IAFC) Volunteer and Combination Officers Section (VCOS), Safety, Health and Survival Section (SHSS), and the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC). The need for this resource became clear after the NFFF's Tampa2 meeting. Thanks to everyone that helped and contributed to this document. We appreciate the support from the leadership of the IAFC and the NVFC.
Published: August 2015

IAFC's Volunteer and Combination Officers Section's Board of Directors

- *Chief Jason Catrambone*
- *Chief Norvin Collins*
- *Chief Shane Crutcher*
- *Chief Dan Eggleston*
- *Chief Charles Flynn*
- *Assistant Chief Randy Larson*
- *Chief Edward Rush*
- *Chief James Seavey, Sr.*
- *Chief Timothy S. Wall*
- *Chief Fred Windisch*

IAFC's Safety, Heath and Survival Section's Board of Directors

- *Chief Brett Bowman*
- *Chief David Daniels*
- *Chief John Eisel*
- *Chief Billy Goldfeder*
- *Chief Rick Kane*
- *Chief Scott D. Kerwood, PhD*
- *Chief Danny Kistner*
- *Chief Todd LeDuc*
- *Chief Gary Morris*
- *Chief Shawn Oke*
- *Chief Jake Rhoades*
- *Chief John Sullivan*
- *Chief Tracy Thomas*
- *Chief John Tippett*

NVFC

- *Chairman Kevin Quinn*
- *First Vice Chairman Steve Hirsch*
- *Second Vice Chair Dallas Renfrew*
- *Secretary/Treasurer J. Allen Metheny, Sr.*
- *Chief Executive Officer Heather Schafer*

IAFC

- *Chief G. Keith Bryant, President and Chairman of the Board*
- *Mr. Mark W. Light, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director*

Written and prepared by Dan Eggleston – edited by VFIS, Provident Insurance, VCOS, SHSS, and the NVFC.

Introduction

On June 16, 2003, at 1830 hours, during a heavy rainstorm, a fire department was dispatched to a high-water emergency. At the same time, a 30-year old male volunteer firefighter was in his privately owned vehicle (POV) on his way to the fire department to pick up a fire apparatus. He was heading east on a two-lane paved road when, according to the state police report, he drove over a large pool of water, causing him to hydroplane and lose control of his POV. He traveled off the westbound shoulder of the road and struck a billboard signpost. A civilian motorist that the victim had passed about one mile back came upon the crash scene and called 911.

At approximately 1832 hours, the volunteer fire department was dispatched to this motor-vehicle crash. Within about six minutes, the victim was extricated, given advanced life support and transported via ambulance to a regional trauma center approximately 30 miles away. He was pronounced dead at the hospital at 1940 hours. (Health, Volunteer Fire Fighter Killed After his Privately Owned Vehicle Hydroplaned and Struck a Billboard Signpost - Kentucky, 2004)

On July 28, 2003, a 23-year-old male volunteer lieutenant (the driver) was killed and a 19-year-old male volunteer firefighter (a passenger) was seriously injured during a single-vehicle rollover crash while responding in a POV to a confirmed trailer fire. At approximately 1730 hours, the vehicle was traveling southbound at an estimated 80 MPH on a two-lane state road when it drifted off the right side of the roadway. While attempting to bring the POV back onto the roadway, the lieutenant apparently overcorrected and lost control. The POV rolled several times, struck a wooden utility pole and ejected both firefighters.

EMS responded within minutes of the incident and the driver was flown via life-flight helicopter to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The passenger was transported to the hospital via road ambulance. (Health, One Volunteer Lieutenant Dies and a Volunteer Fire Fighter is Seriously Injured in a Motor Vehicle Rollover Incident While En-route to a Trailer Fire - North Carolina, 2004).

Background

To prevent injuries and deaths resulting from accidents involving POV responses, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health recommends that, in general:

- Emergency-service organizations (ESOs) should review and revise, as appropriate, standard operating guidelines to explicitly make mandatory the use of seatbelts in POVs during emergency response.
- ESOs should develop or revise, as appropriate, standard operating guidelines for the use of POVs for emergency response and provide training on the guidelines in all new-member orientation and driver-training sessions.
- The ESO should thereafter enforce all items stipulated in the standard operating guidelines.

With an increased focus on safety and new recommendations put into place by NIOSH subsequent to these two incidents, one must ask if the problem has been addressed. Sadly, it has not been adequately managed. According to the U.S. Fire Administration:

- Since 2003, 52 volunteer/paid-on-call firefighters have been killed responding to or returning from calls in POVs. Of the activity types defined, the highest percentage (13.4%) of volunteer fatalities is related to POV responses.
- 32.1% of those killed in POV responses were 21 years of age or younger.

In 2004, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation convened the first Firefighter Life Safety Summit. From that historic event, the 16 Firefighter Life Safety initiatives were created. Initiative #11, *National standards for emergency response policies and procedures should be developed and championed* calls for a minimum set of

activities to be developed that are universally recognized and understood to ensure life safety. Too often, the emergency being responded to is in fact not a high-priority, life-safety issue, and yet such events claim far too many responders.

POV Responses as a Deployment Model

America's volunteer fire and emergency service is deeply woven into the fabric of our nation. According to the National Fire Protection Association, there are close to 800,000 volunteer firefighters across the United States, and the majority of this nation's geographical area is protected by volunteer ESOs: 73% of all ESOs in the United States are all-volunteer departments.

It is common practice for volunteers of ESOs to respond to the station (and in some instances to an incident location) using their POV. Many departments rely on a POV deployment model mainly out of necessity. It may be impractical for departments to staff their stations with duty crews due to low call volume and a lack of accommodations.

Many rural departments respond to fewer than 100 calls annually; requiring volunteers to staff the station is not a viable option for such a low call volume. It is not uncommon for a volunteer to commit 250 plus hours just to be certified as a firefighter, and this does not include additional training time for EMS certification. Add on additional time for continuing education, meetings and responses and a typical volunteer usually commits a significant amount of their discretionary time to help the community. We must maximize the use of a volunteer's time, considering the challenges of retaining and recruiting volunteers.

A volunteer who is able to donate time to help the community will be more likely to do so if there is a good balance of time available for family, work and everyday chores.

Lack of station amenities may prevent some volunteer departments from staffing their stations. Many volunteer stations lack proper overnight accommodations, such as dorms, showers and kitchens. Some rural departments are challenged just to have accommodations to properly house apparatus to protect them from the elements. Additional accommodations for living quarters are just not within reach of some rural stations.

Consequently, as some rural areas become more urbanized, call volumes grow and citizen expectations in terms of faster response times increase. It is no longer acceptable for firefighters to drive to the station, assemble crews and respond. Therefore, the need to begin staffing on a full-time or limited basis increases and an opportunity is presented to reduce risk by modifying existing policies on POV responses.

Is our POV in a safe condition to respond?

The fire service has made tremendous strides in fire apparatus safety. Enclosed cabs, rollover protection, enhanced suspension and braking systems are just a few advancements. There is no doubt that today's fire and EMS apparatus are safer and better performing compared with technology used 25 years ago.

So what about personal vehicles used by ESO volunteers? There are a wide range of vehicles from the newest, most technology advanced to vehicles with high mileage that have been passed down among family members. Some members may even use their work vehicle as a response vehicle – truck, van, utility vehicle, etc.

Regardless of the type of vehicle used, the vehicle must be mechanically safe to respond to emergency incidents. Are the tires, brakes, suspension, lights, and other safety items in working order? Are loose items such as your turn out gear, flashlight, tools, kid's toys, etc. secure so as not to interfere with sudden stops, stops, or turns?

Some ESOs stress that POVs are not to be used in an emergency response mode. Most states consider warning lights are for courtesy and do not grant responding volunteers special privileges. Volunteers responding in their POV *must* abide by all traffic laws.

In reality, is this rule followed, or ignored for the sake of an emergency? The real question to ask is, "What service are volunteers rendering if they never arrive at the scene?"

The problem cannot be ignored since many volunteers deaths in the line of duty are the result of POV responses. While it may be impractical to totally eliminate POV responses, there is a moral responsibility to focus on solutions to solve this issue.

There are basically two broad choices to reduce risks related to POV responses:

- Completely eliminate POV responses
- Allow POV responses only after attending proper training programs to reduce risk and institute methods of individual accountability

Completely Eliminate POV Responses
Some volunteer and combination departments prohibit POV responses to the station or to the scene. In most cases, the decision to eliminate POV responses was implemented over a period of time as departments began using duty crews to staff the apparatus (volunteer or a combination of volunteer and career staff that work certain hours and are required to staff the station). Establishing duty crews is mainly implemented in response to an increase in call volume and community urbanization. In general, duty crews help to reduce response times and ensure more reliable and consistent responses.

Duty crews allow volunteer and combination departments to dispatch staffed apparatus and no longer rely on volunteers to respond to the station or to the scene. Many departments that have eliminated POV responses continue to page out incidents, but POV responses are not allowed unless the on-scene commander determines they are needed. Obviously, totally eliminating POV response by using a duty crew concept requires planning and thoughtful implementation to sustain the program over time.

Allow POV Responses but Develop Proper Training Programs to Reduce Risk and Institute Methods of Individual Accountability
Completely eliminating POV responses may not be an option for many ESOs. These ESOs may have to allow volunteers to drive POVs to the station or directly to the emergency scene for the reasons cited above. When POV response is a necessity, there are a few key elements to properly and safely ensure POV response:

- ESO leadership must emphasize that even though volunteers are responding using POVs, they are expected to comply with all applicable traffic laws, as well as departmental safety policies and standard operating procedures at all times. There are no special privileges associated with POV response.
- Policies that regulate POV response must align with local and state laws.
- Volunteers must be properly trained on, and held accountable, to follow policies that regulate POV responses.

Motor Vehicle Laws & Warning Lights

The laws and regulations that apply to the use of privately owned vehicles (POVs) to respond to emergency incidents vary from state to state. While the specific regulations and requirements for each individual state must be consulted, the IAFC's *Guide to IAFC Model Policies and Procedures for Emergency Vehicle Safety* states that basic requirements can be described within three categories:

- States where POVs may be equipped with warning devices and recognized as emergency vehicles
- States where POVs may be authorized to use warning devices (courtesy lights), but are not authorized to be operated as emergency vehicles
- States where POVs are not authorized to use warning devices and may not be operated as emergency vehicles

Model SOP/SOGs for each category are listed in Appendix A. In some cases, an ESO's policies may be more restrictive than the state law. While the state may allow POVs to be equipped with warning devices, the ESO may prohibit or restrict their use by its members. The ESO directives should also specify whether members are permitted to drive POVs to an incident scene or if they are only permitted to drive to the firehouse in response to an alarm.

POV Recognized as Emergency Vehicle

Several states permit POVs to be equipped with warning lights and sirens and be operated as emergency vehicles or public safety vehicles. In these states, the traffic laws and regulations that apply to emergency vehicles also apply to properly designated POVs.

For those states that permit POVs to be operated as emergency vehicles, an official authorization from the Fire Chief or a designated local official is usually required before a permit is issued. The authorization form is submitted to a state agency, such as the department of motor vehicles or the State Fire Marshal, to certify that the vehicle and the vehicle owner have met the necessary requirements. In most cases, a special registration sticker is issued by the state and must be applied to the vehicle.

The authorization process makes the ESO responsible for ensuring that the vehicle meets the state requirements to be designated as an emergency or public safety vehicle. This would include verification that the vehicle is in proper mechanical condition and the warning devices are compliant with the applicable laws.

The ESO also has a duty to ensure that the driver of a designated POV has been properly trained and is capable of safely operating the vehicle in an emergency response mode. In the absence of specific state regulations, the fire chief should apply the same standards to qualify a driver to operate a POV or an ESO vehicle in an emergency mode. Drivers should be required to complete an emergency-vehicle driving course and submit to a medical examination, skills evaluation and a driving-record check before being authorized to operate POVs as emergency vehicles. Periodic refresher training, skills evaluations, medical examinations and driving-record checks should all be required to maintain this authorization.

It is very important to determine ***the insurance requirements*** that apply when a POV is designated as an emergency or public safety vehicle. There could be special coverage requirements imposed by the state as a condition of designating a vehicle. The vehicle owner's insurance company must be aware that the vehicle is being used for emergency response. The ESO's insurer or risk-management agency should also be consulted to determine if additional coverage is required.

Courtesy/Warning Light Permitted

Many states allow firefighters and emergency medical personnel to use colored warning lights on POVs to request the right-of-way when responding to emergency incidents. The use of a courtesy/warning light does not provide any special privileges or exemptions to traffic laws. Other drivers are not required to yield the right of way to a vehicle that has a courtesy light in operation. The only purpose of the warning light is to *request* that other drivers yield the right of way; the POV driver is required to comply with all traffic laws.

The ESO should establish procedures to regulate the installation and use of warning lights on POVs, in accordance with state laws and regulations. A member who is authorized to install and use a courtesy light must be made aware of the rules and legal limitations for its use. The ESO should retain the right to revoke the authorization to use a courtesy light if a member fails to comply with all of the requirements.

No Warning Devices Permitted or Authorized

In states where warning devices are not permitted or members are not authorized to install or use warning devices on their POVs, the ESO should ensure that all members understand and comply with the laws and regulations. Unauthorized installation or use of warning devices should be addressed as a disciplinary issue.

In each of the situations described above, the ESO should clearly specify when members are permitted or authorized to drive POVs to the fire station or to an incident scene in response to an alarm.

The ESO should also determine the insurance regulations that apply to members using privately owned vehicles to respond to alarms or conduct other ESO business.

Suggested Requirements

A volunteer responding in a POV is acting as an agent for the ESO and thus the ESO may be liable for the volunteer's actions. Therefore, it is the ESO's responsibility to develop and enforce policies and procedures to govern the use of POVs during emergency responses. Many ESOs recommend that before volunteers are allowed to respond using their POV, members must meet some or all of the following requirements:

- Be at least 18 years of age; some ESOs require a minimum of 21 years of age
- Complete the department's probationary period before being issued a lights and siren permit
- Complete at least one year of satisfactory performance
- Must have a current state-issued driver's/operator's license valid for the type/class of the member's POV
- Must have safe driving record & safe vehicle
- Show proof they have personal auto liability Insurance
- Must successfully complete an emergency vehicle driving course or a defensive driving course or both
- Must successfully demonstrate the understanding of applicable department policies and local/state law

Driving Record Review

The ESO should obtain and review a copy of the member's motor vehicle record from the state Department of Motor Vehicles. Each authorized driver's motor vehicle record should be reviewed annually to ensure that the individual maintains safe driving habits. This review should be completed at least annually.

If a current member is charged with an offense that could result in a suspension or revocation of driver's license, the member should be required to notify a supervisor or chief in a timely fashion. ESOs should suspend the member from driving emergency vehicles pending judgment, depending on the circumstances and existing department policy. Such charges could include, but are not necessary limited to:

- Driving while intoxicated or under the influence of drugs
- Negligent homicide or gross negligence
- Aggravated assault with a motor vehicle
- Reckless driving
- Leaving the scene of an accident

- Speeding citations are subject to scrutiny based on severity and number

Vehicle Safety Checks

Some departments have implemented a process requiring the department representative to periodically survey a volunteer's vehicle for safety features. While not intended to be a mechanical inspection, an inspection helps to ensure that certain safety items are in working conditions. An inspection process should be conducted at least annually and include a verification of the current state vehicles, inspection, availability of required motor vehicle documents, and verification of working lights, tires, and safety accessories. If items are found in need of repair or replacement, correction action should be taken and any restrictions of use should be consistent with the ESO's SOPs/SOGs. ESOs should validate that the vehicle has a current state registration and, for those states that require it, a current vehicle inspection. The ESO should also ensure that the vehicle is insured to state requirements.

Driver's Training

In states that recognize POVs as emergency vehicles, some ESOs require that responders complete an EVD course before they can respond to incidents using their POV. EVD courses usually involve a combination of lecture and driving practical applications followed by a written and skills test.

Some ESOs require responders to complete a defensive driving course. Defensive driving is essentially driving in a manner that utilizes safe driving strategies to enables motorist to address identified hazards in a predictable manner.

With defensive driving courses, responders learn to improve their driving skills, thereby reducing their driving risks, by anticipating situations and making safe, well-informed decisions. Such decisions are implemented based on road and environmental conditions present when completing a safe-driving maneuver. In some states, students have the option to take defensive driving courses online or by watching a video tape or DVD, while other states only allow students to take defensive driving in a classroom setting.

Alcohol and Drugs

Many ESOs have adopted policies that align with the IAFC's position statement, Zero-Tolerance for Alcohol & Drinking in the Fire and Emergency Service. In part, the position states that ESO members should not be permitted to be on duty, respond to emergency incidents, drive or operate fire department vehicles or POVs or perform any other duty-related functions while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This includes the routine and proper use of legally prescribed drugs that have the potential to impair driving. Responders should not participate in the delivery of services when they are under the influence of any drug, prescribed or otherwise, and chief officers have an obligation to ensure the public safety by not allowing their members to do so.

Reasonable Travel Distances

To assemble an effective force, ESO members responding in POVs must be within a reasonable distance to the incident or station to make a difference. Responding long distances, including across other ESO districts, puts the responder and others at risk. Most ESOs restrict POV responses within the boundaries of their district.

Staging POVs

If not managed properly, POV responses to the scene can cause problems for responding apparatus in terms of access and maneuverability. Many rural areas have small, unpaved roads or long driveways leading to the

structures which makes large apparatus placement such as tankers a challenge. Tankers need adequate room to off-load water and return to the fill site as quickly as possible.

POVs should be staged as far from the scene as practical and should be parked off the roadway out of the lane of travel. Members should be aware of their parking choices: avoid parking on top of vegetation that could catch fire from the vehicles' hot exhaust system and if practical, do not block driveways and business entrances/exits. Personnel responding in POVs should report to the staging area or to the incident commander depending on operational policy.

For vehicle accident responses, POVs should be staged off the road and ahead of the accident. Responding in POVs to accidents on limited access or major/interstate highways should be discouraged.

Use of Technology

A significant challenge for volunteer or combination departments that allow POV responses is the ability to know who is responding to the station or scene. Unless volunteers register ahead of time, the department can only guess who is responding.

Some departments issue radios to home responders, which allows members to communicate their current location and estimated time of arrival to the scene or station or the incident size-up if they arrive on-scene ahead of responding apparatus. Although radios can be a good choice in terms of communications, supplying radios to all potential home responders can be outside of the budgets of many departments.

Other systems exist that allow response efforts to be monitored in real time, including tracking the response of POVs. In some cases, the solutions use a combination of cell phones, smart phone applications or web-based applications to post the status of responding members. Regardless of the technology used, care should be taken to not distract responders who are operating motor vehicles.

Remember, as well, that no one should be using a hand-held phone while driving. Calls today can be connected with nothing more than a simple press of a single button on the member's phone, and calls are terminated (whether manually or automatically) within just seconds. This is a very important issue as well as radio usage.

Storage of Personal Protective Equipment

Many ESO members store their personal protective equipment (PPE), tools and other equipment in their POV for easy access. In practical terms, it makes sense to do that, especially if the member lives far from the station, making it impractical in some cases to respond to the station. However, all members should be aware of the dangers associated with this practice.

Taking Action against Cancer in the Fire Service is a guide published by the Firefighter Cancer Support Network (FCSN). FCSN states that storing PPE in a personal vehicle can be a threat to the member's health and safety. Many volunteers carry their PPE in their personal vehicle, often in the trunk or even in the vehicle's passenger compartment. Handling PPE in this manner facilitates the off-gassing of toxins and carcinogens, especially when the PPE is heated by elevated temperatures from the sun. To help address this problem, members should keep PPE in closed, zippered duffle bags or large sealed Rubbermaid-style storage bins and take contaminated PPE back to the fire station on the fire apparatus for washing, cleaning and decontamination.

In addition, responders should know through firsthand experience that loose objects inside cars cause hundreds of serious injuries and even deaths during crashes. Emergency responders are at even greater risk considering the mass of PPE, tools and equipment often carried by members in their POVs. It's vital that PPE and all loose tools

and equipment be secured and stowed for safety. We all know there is no simple answer to this issue, but we believe an ESO can work toward reducing the risk to our valuable personnel. Firefighters must arrive at the station or an incident to be of value to those in need of assistance. Committing to these best practices will keep us all safe. Do it for yourself and your family and do it as an example to your fellow firefighters.

INTERNATIONAL FIRST RESPONDER SEATBELT PLEDGE

BUCKLE UP! SO EVERYONE GOES HOME®

I agree to sign the ***International First Responder Seatbelt Pledge***. As a participant in this pledge, I will make this first step toward safety by wearing my seatbelt, following all seatbelt laws, and department policies. I make this pledge willingly; to honor my family, my department, my fellow responders, my community, and myself. **Wearing my seatbelt is the right thing to do - It is my life on the line!** ***I Pledge to Wear My Seatbelt.***

Printed Name	Signature	Printed Name	Signature

Department: _____ **Address:** _____

Authorized Signature: _____ **Printed Name:** _____

Rank: _____ **Contact E-mail Address:** _____

Please use as many sheets as necessary to collect signatures. Once completed, please fax to 410-721-6213 or scan and send to seatbelts@EveryoneGoesHome.com. Visit Us at: www.EveryoneGoesHome.com/seatbelts

Homeland Security

Everyone Goes Home® and International First Responder Seatbelt Pledge program are made possible through the efforts of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation with funding provided by the Department of Homeland Security, Assistance to Firefighters Grant and the generosity of Fireman's Fund Insurance Company.

Fireman's Fund® Insurance Company
A company of Allianz

Appendix A

Model Policies

XYZ FIRE DEPARTMENT		
POLICY & PROCEDURES		
Standard Operating Procedures	**P.P. #**	
Emergency Vehicle Response		**Revised Date:**

Privately Owned Vehicle Response

Privately Owned Vehicle Response Policy

Purpose:
To establish guidelines governing the response to department events/incidents in privately owned vehicles (POVs).

Scope:
All personnel.

Policy:
Personnel must follow all laws and regulations for the State of XYZ that apply to non-emergency vehicles, unless the state statute allows POVs to operate as an emergency vehicle.

Please reference the following state regulation: insert your specific state requirements.

XYZ FIRE DEPARTMENT		
POLICY & PROCEDURES		
Standard Operating Procedures	**P.P. #**	
Emergency Vehicle Response		**Revised Date:**

Authorization to Operate a POV as an Emergency Vehicle

Purpose:
To establish guidelines governing the official authorization allowing personnel to respond to department events/incidents in privately owned vehicles (POVs).

Scope:
All personnel.

Policy:
- Driver must own and operate a vehicle that complies with all state and local regulations, including, but not limited to; valid insurance & inspection.
- Driver must read and demonstrate an understanding of the Department's policies regarding use of lights & sirens.
- The POV must be in proper mechanical condition and the warning devices in compliance with the applicable laws.
- Driver must wear a seatbelt at all times while operating the vehicle.
- Driver must complete an Emergency Vehicle Driving course or DDC
- Driver must submit to a medical examination, skills evaluation/observation, and driving record check.
- Insert your specific state requirements.

XYZ FIRE DEPARTMENT		
POLICY & PROCEDURES		
Standard Operating Procedures	**P.P. #**	
Emergency Vehicle Response		**Revised Date:**

Courtesy/Warning Light Policy

Purpose:
To establish guidelines governing the use of a courtesy/warning light in privately owned vehicles (POVs) responding to an incident.

Scope:
All personnel who are authorized to respond to an incident in a POV.

Policy:
To ensure the safety of its members, the authorization for use of a courtesy/warning light must be approved by the department.

Installation and use of warning lights on privately owned vehicles must be in accordance with state laws and regulations.

An authorized driver may use colored warning lights on privately owned vehicles to request the right of way when responding to emergency incidents. The use of a courtesy/warning light does not provide any special privileges or exemptions to traffic laws. Other drivers are not required to yield the right of way to a vehicle that has a courtesy light in operation. The only purpose of the warning light is to request that other drivers yield the right of way. The POV driver is required to comply with all traffic laws.

[INSERT APPLICABLE STATE REGULATIONS HERE]

The department will revoke the authorization to use a courtesy/warning light if a member fails to comply with all of the requirements and legal limitations.

VCOS Training & Conferences

The IAFC's Volunteer and Combination Officers Section (VCOS) offers many specialized opportunities for leadership training throughout the year.

Beyond Hoses and Helmets

Presented in partnership with Pierce Fire Apparatus

This course provides strategy and tactics for leading a volunteer or combination organization by delivering real world expertise in the following areas:

- Problem-solving
- Recruitment & Retention
- Conflict Resolution & Negotiation
- Marketing & Communications
- Leadership & Team building

FROG: Fire Rescue Organizational Guidance for Volunteer Leaders

This is a graduate-level leadership workshop that picks up where the Beyond Hoses & Helmets course leaves off. Topics include analyzing and understanding the fire department's people, processes and culture. Participants leave with practical guidelines customized to their organization, which can be implemented immediately.

Leading the Transition in Volunteer & Combination Departments (LTC)

This program is available to assist departments that are changing status; from all volunteer to combination and increasing the combination factor. There are also discussions about moving from a career department to a combination department.

On-Fire Leadership Webinars

Each month the On-Fire Leadership webinars feature valuable information on engaging topics. These online offerings offer a great opportunity for free and convenient professional development.

You and ISO

VCOS and ISO have developed this seminar to teach what every fire chief should know and understand about ISO in your community. Topics include: ISO's Public Protection Classification (PPC) program, the ISO rating (PPC) and the value it brings to you, meeting the challenges of your PPC rating, information on the newly revised Fire Suppression Rating Schedule, and a review of best practices.

Symposium in the Sun & Symposium in the West

The VCOS puts on two Symposia focusing on the issues impacting volunteer and combination departments. Symposium in the Sun is held every November in Florida and Symposium in the West will be held for the first time in May 2016 in Nevada. Departments from around the country attend for interactive discussions and valuable networking.

SCHOLARSHIPS

VCOS offers several scholarship opportunities for those who would like to attend the IAFC's Fire-Rescue International (FRI) or the Symposium in the Sun. Get full details and submission deadlines online at www.vcos.org/education.

For more details go to:

www.vcos.org/education