



On the Line



Our Core Values: Pride, Respect, Duty, Unity, Integrity and Compassion.

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Upcoming Events

February 17th

Annual Dinner with social hour from 6:30—7:30 PM—dinner at 7:30.

March 29th

Start of the Citizen Fire Academy—every Thursday for eight weeks

June 4—6th

Kid's Fire Academy

Be sure to check the pub-ed calendars for upcoming events!

UFD statistics for January

Calls for service: 215

Average response Time – All incidents: **6 minutes and 8 seconds**

Average response Time – **Emergency** incidents: **5 minutes and 46 seconds**

Emergency Medical Service calls: 167

Average Response Time EMS: 6 minutes and 5 seconds

Emergency: 5 minutes and 44 seconds

Non-Emergency: 6 minutes and 22 seconds

Fire related calls: 48

Average Response Time Fire: 6 minutes and 19 seconds

Average turnout per fire incident: 7 people

We **received mutual aid six times**— five times for EMS calls and one time for a fire call.

We **provide mutual aid two times**— both times for fire calls.

Types of Fire Calls

The 48 fire calls we had in January fall into the following categories:

<u>Fire / Explosion:</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Hazardous Condition:</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Service Call:</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Good Intent Calls:</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>False Calls:</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>Ovr Pressure/Ovr Heat:</u>	<u>1</u>



Birthdays:

Cory Macumber	Feb 10
Rob Zahnd	Feb 11
Bryce Landers	Feb 19
Julie Stuckle	Feb 22
Rob Harris	Feb 23





Government agencies are hearing it loud and clear; do more with less and reduce the cost of providing services! It's a reasonable expectation...all departments should strive to provide the best possible service as the lowest possible cost. I think Urbandale does an outstanding job with that. Our conservative approach has served us well and we have been fortunate that we haven't faced the cuts that other cities have because of a long history of the utmost conservative fiscal approach. None the less, we are not immune from hearing the cry "do more with less" and "reduce the cost!"

The problem becomes when those calling for cuts do not understand the actual cost, do not understand the resources needed for providing fire/EMS services, and when those calling for change will not consider the reality of the current resources. As with many issues, the fire service can be our own worse enemy; often times we argue against changes using the same rationales.

My goal is to educate the public so they can make informed decisions on how best to spend their hard earned tax dollars. The resources we are provided don't come from the fire chief – they come from the public through the elected officials. It is up to them to decide the level of protection they are willing to pay for and the level of risk they are willing to accept. It is the fire chief's job to provide them information on what is needed based on data and experience but they get to choose what they are willing to support and ultimately, set the direction on how we operate.

Obviously, I cannot "educate the public" in this article so a lesser goal is to make sure that our firefighters/EMTs understand our actual cost so that they can "go forth" and educate the public with factual information. Let's start with the cost of our department.

Let me start by saying this article isn't intended to be "whiny." Our city has increased funding in our department greatly over the last 10 years – while there is much more that we could do with additional resources, we have *so much* to be grateful for and we have come a long way. We are one of many departments in the city competing for a limited amount of funding and we have done well. How well? We've added significant staff and now staff two stations on a 24/7 basis...something that I was told would never happen. Our reliability is better than it has even been – our training is better and supported with a training building and computers that were just a dream 10 years ago. Our apparatus and equipment is in good shape. I believe that we have needs – in strict fire codes and prevention efforts, in staffing, facilities and equipment but at this point, we have the resources our residents are willing to fund and we can work within those parameters they have established.

But here's the rub...do *YOU* know what it all costs for our current budget? How much are the residents of Urbandale spending to give us what we do have? The budget document is on-line at the city web site so any employee or resident is welcome to see everything. There are no secrets. Let me give you some numbers: Our current budget is \$2,685,810 and that includes vehicle replacement cost but does not include items that are in the capital improvement program. It also doesn't

include the department's cost for the 411 retirement system. When that retirement cost is added (\$358,178) our budget comes to a total of \$3,043,988.

That's a lot of money and I would never want to diminish the monetary support we enjoy however; when that cost is shared across our population base, it takes a different appearance. For example, our total budget divided by our population shows that residents in our city are spending \$77.14 per capita for the fire department. One can consider that the "infrastructure" funding as if one uses our EMS service, they are charged for that service. Another way to look at that cost is how much does it cost per day? That's 21 cents per day. Doesn't sound like much but when one considers where our funding once was, one can appreciate the increase in spending; in 2002 our budget was calculated at 9.8 cents per day!

So how does that compare to other departments in the area? While I do not have current data on all the others, I can refer back to the 2005 Matrix Study that evaluated the possible consolidation of fire/EMS for the communities of West Des Moines, Clive and Urbandale. In 2005, Clive cost per capita was \$123.25, West DM (fire and EMS) was \$99.47 and we were at \$40. As you can see, we remain at a level that is lower than the other two cities' 2005 rates some seven years later. We have maintained conservative approach and a low cost.

It goes without saying that the cost per capita is simply a way to compare our cost to that of other departments. That is not the way taxes are collected so it is not an accurate portrayal of how much each person actually pays. One other point of clarification...the per capita cost of \$77.14 does not consider any of the revenue that is generated by EMS. If we wanted to show the lowest cost, we could show a per capita cost of \$60.80. Using the \$77.14 cost, let's spread that cost out over 12 months and consider that monthly cost (\$6.43) to some other monthly charges that many households feel are absolutely necessary: cell phone (\$40), internet (\$50), cable (\$29.95), movie services (\$8.00), newspaper service (\$17.39), and Starbucks @ once a week (\$12). I think you will agree I am on the low side for all of these numbers as not to skew the numbers but we are less than any of these costs. We really are a bargain!

There is much more to discuss regarding the needs and the justification of resources. I could go on and on about the need for staffing and resources and I know those against "government spending" could go on and on about the low number of occurrences. This is an area ripe for honest open discussion on a balance between the need to be prepared and the high cost of public fire/EMS delivery. The frequency is low, the consequences are high and at the end of the day, the decision on how much to spend and how much risk to assume is a decision that should be driven by stakeholders; the residents of our city. This is a discussion to continue at another time but it is one that should be based in facts and figures and not guided by emotions...either for additional resources or against "government spending." Do your homework and be prepared to have those discussions with our stakeholders with the data and without frustration. If you don't know, don't try to bluff it...tell them you will find the information and get back with them, then do it. Be professional and be tolerant but most of all, be nice.

Situational Awareness - Lt. Stu Wilson

Now that we are a month into the New Year and starting a new training lay out, I would like to talk about something that we should all be trying to incorporate in our daily training. That is situational awareness. Now I know you might be asking what is he talking about and how does this affect me? Well situational awareness is defined as maintaining attentiveness to an event while keeping in mind the effects perception, observation and stress on self and individuals. Ok I know you're saying well that sounds good but what did he just say besides blah, blah, blah? Here is what that all means in very simple terms. You need to be aware of your surroundings at all times and know where you are at in relation to the threats around you. In the fire service, what threats do we face? Oh let me think; how about fire, building collapse, violent patient, drivers on the interstate just to name a few.

Situational awareness is made up of three components: awareness, reality and perception. Below are the eight factors that can lead to the loss of situational awareness. If these are the eight factors that can lead to the loss of situational awareness, how do you prevent them?

Ambiguity: Open to more than one interpretation or unclear.

Prevention: Make sure you are clear on what the company officer or IC wants you to do. If you are not sure ask.

Distraction: Attention is drawn away from the original focus of attention.

Prevention: Pay attention to the current task at hand and don't lose focus.

Fixation: Focusing attention on one item excluding all others.

Prevention: Don't get tunnel vision. Be aware of what is going on around you.

Overload: Too busy to stay on top of everything.

Prevention: If you are assigned a task and already have several things going on, don't be afraid to ask if it can be assigned to someone else.

Complacency: A false sense of comfort that masks deficiencies and danger.

Prevention: Don't get comfortable, even if it is the 3rd time you have been on a false alarm to this location. Act as if it is the real thing.

Improper procedure: Deviating from SOPs without justification.

Prevention: Make sure you have a clear plan and can justify why you did not follow the proper procedure.

Unresolved discrepancy: Failure to resolve conflicts or

conflicting conditions.

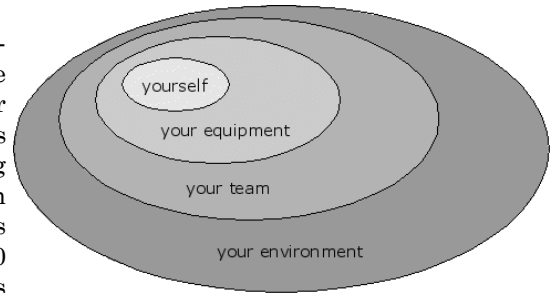
Prevention: If you are given conflicting orders make sure those conflicts get resolved prior to taking any action.

"Nobody flying the plane": Self-explanatory.

Prevention: Be sure you have one well supported incident commander and that you maintain unity of command.

In the National Fire Fighter Near-Miss Reporting System which has over 5,000 reports there are

2,163 reports that have situational awareness as being a contributing factor. The other thing that I found is from NIOSH. They found that disorientation is a leading cause of fire fighter deaths on the fireground. Disorientation is a loss of situational awareness. Situational Awareness is something that can be learned and should be trained on as it might save your life.



The culture here at the Urbandale Fire Department is one that gives us the best chance to prevent the loss of situational awareness. This is due to us buying into the use of Crew Resource Management: The use of risk management, the use of NIMS and the overall safety culture. I feel luckily to be working for a department that gets it when it comes to preventing injuries and deaths of its firefighters.

Safety Tip – No Car Fire is Routine:

From www.firefighterclosecalls.com

Do you really know what that car may be carrying?

November 16, 2011: Responded to our neighboring town for a car fire with exposure to a structure. Upon arrival we found a fully involved car next to a house. We went through with our usual routine of putting out a car fire. Cut the hood, (windows were popped so we didn't need to do that) and cut the trunk open. In it was canvas tarp that was on fire. As I pulled the tarp off it revealed two 5 gallon gas cans full and multiple other bottles filled with an unknown liquid.

LESSONS
LEARNED:

Nothing is routine!



Vulnerable Populations: - Lt. Kyle Bissell

Recently in my class on Emergency Management (EM) we discussed a topic that really made me consider all of the challenges associated with vulnerable populations in our community. Every community is faced with the challenges associated with vulnerable populations and I felt that it is important to give all of you an understanding of what vulnerable and special needs populations are.

According to Dictionary.com vulnerable is defined as susceptible to physical or emotional injury. The National Response Framework defines special needs populations as members of the population who have additional needs, before, during, and after an incident in regularly functioning areas that include independence, communications efforts, transportation, medical care, and supervision. The ADA, which is exercised under the auspices of the Department of Justice, broadly defines a disability as: individuals in the community with physical, mental, or medical care needs who may require assistance before, during, and/or after a disaster or emergency after exhausting their usual resources and support network.

With the disaster ultimately affecting everyone, emergency planners will need to look beyond the development of just an emergency operations plan and also incorporate plans to care and shelter the community most vulnerable populations. Vulnerable populations are not just affected by the major disasters they can be affected by other events such as neighborhood power outages to heat waves or other severe weather events.

Emergency Managers must also remember that vulnerable populations also includes the non-English speaking individuals, which Urbandale has a significant number of, the homeless adults and children, foreign vacationers and other special needs groups such as the elderly and home bound persons. Emergency Managers need to conduct a population protection analysis and study the demographics of their community in an effort to prepare a plan for protection.

There are several ways to gather data and the location of vulnerable populations. The current federal census, local business-licensing agencies, and local economic development organizations are good sources of information. Emergency Managers should also contact local non-governmental support agencies such as civic groups and faith-based organizations which are good sources to assist with locating vulnerable people. One should also contact local utility companies such as the power, water, and natural gas or propane. The power company may have a list of homeowners that are on vital medical equipment such as oxygen and ventilators. They may also be able to provide maps or a GIS database for use with Urbandale's mapping department.

Lastly, emergency managers need to understand that they may not be able to locate or identify everyone within their jurisdiction. Some groups or individuals may not want to be identified. Planning must also include a process for handling more people than what was planned on.

After the vulnerable populations have been identified and located. Emergency Managers must work with other organiza-

tions to ensure that plans and materials are in place to care for these individuals. A quick check with local nursing homes and other care facilities, emergency managers may find that these facility plans may consist of calling 911 for assistance. They may also be under the belief that public safety personnel will transport all of the people to an area of safety such as a hospital or other site.

Emergency Managers must work with these sites to assist them in planning for a disaster and not have public safety support for several days. Emergency managers may also be able to have these same organizations provide resources and staff to local shelters to care for other special needs populations. They may be able to provide limited medical support by providing nurse and other medical assistant to the shelter.

This is a lot to consider and with the number of variables associated with an emergency or disaster the EM must take a great deal into consideration when vulnerable populations are involved. Most of the previous information is germane to an EM however on a small scale we can all be considered EMs when it comes to our customers during their emergency situation. How do you deal with the non-English speaking patient? How do you deal with the couple just passing through Urbandale when they get into a car wreck? How do you deal with the little old lady that experienced a home fire? The vulnerable population is all around us and they need our best.

Special Notice: Follow Safety Policies!!

As you will see in the "Last Safety Incident" announcement on page 6, we had two incidents in January involving compartment doors that were not secured. In both of these incidents, equipment fell out of the unsecured compartment. The risk is huge...damaged equipment is a part of that but the risk to the public is enormous. Imagine what would happen if someone swerved to miss the equipment and had a collision and was injured...or worse yet, what if a vehicle was next to you when the equipment fell out and the equipment actually goes through a window injuring, or God forbid, killing someone! This is serious risk...be sure you follow the policy. The policy came about as a result of someone having done the same thing...failing to follow the policy causes us to repeat the same mistakes.

In another incident, the cab of an apparatus was raised without assuring that all equipment was out of the way. A similar incident occurred in December. ***All of these incidents are highly predictable and 100% preventable.***

While the consequences for not following the policy have been consistent, it appears that it is not adequately serving as a deterrent. As a result, future failures of following the policy regarding the movement of apparatus, may well be met with more serious consequences including suspension of more than 24 hours.

Please follow all of our safety policies...they are in place to protect you, our equipment and our customers...participation is ***MANDATORY!***

Tango's Tips - A Controversial Article - Cody Thorne

As another new year has rolled around many people, firefighters and civilians alike have decided to take on the old "Get back in shape" resolution. This resolution is noble and one to be applauded but as firefighters there should be no "Getting back in shape".

Firefighting is a profession. Since all firefighting, be it career, part-time, or volunteer is a profession we must approach fitness with a professional attitude. We approach our skills, tactics, and equipment with a professional attitude. We have weekly training sessions, daily equipment maintenance, and even perform fireground training to keep our skills, tactics, and all equipment in peak condition. Of those three things; Skills, tactics, and equipment, which is considered most important? None of the above. The correct answer: The Firefighter.

The firefighter accounts for the largest chunk of the department's budget, thus becoming the departments largest asset. So what is being done on a weekly basis to keep the departments largest piece of equipment in peak condition? All skills, training, and equipment maintenance is no good if there is no firefighter present to perform the tasks. The people who work within the department is what makes the department function.

Stress is a major part and concern of the job. Indianapolis Fire Department, one of the front runners on safety and fitness conducted a study in 2008 focused on firefighter health. The study was conducted in conjunction with Indiana University and cost around 1 million dollars. The study used 56 members who considered themselves healthy. Each participant wore a vest, worn under their uniforms which monitored heart rates continually through the day. These vests recorded average resting heart rates of 50-70 bpm and above average working heart rates of up to 200 beats per minute and sustained for up to 30 minutes! Not only were those heart rates recorded during actual structural firefighting activities but they were recorded during response. The study also proved those heart rates took hours to subside naturally. Stress is unavoidable. Even during EMS activities heart rates can be elevated.

The only way to counter the ill effects of stress is to exercise on a regular basis. Through exercise firefighters will be able to perform their duties more efficiently. A fitness program must include cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility. Each component will assist the other having a synergistic effect for the body.

With requirements of the job in mind, take into consideration what you do to prepare yourself to perform your duties. With the job requirements of a professional football player in mind, take into consideration what they do to prepare themselves to perform their game. A football player's mind is set to keep himself in peak condition to perform on game day at 100%. Even the big guys have

their own degree of fitness to perform their job. They are paid to do so. Are we not the same? We are paid to protect Urbandale but it is no game. Why not keep ourselves in peak physical condition?

The goal is not to accuse anyone of being lazy or guilt anyone into exercising against their will but to inspire people to be healthy. Don't we all wish to lead long lives and enjoy a retirement someday? It has been shown through statistics that firefighters have an average life expectancy of 10 years after retirement. The IAFF and IAFC have taken measures to ensure firefighters go home after every shift and lead long, healthy lives, through the Wellness Fitness Initiative. Departments across the country have adopted this program and have developed the professional attitude toward fitness and health and UFD looks to head in the same direction.

My mission and plea for Urbandale FD is that we develop a professional attitude toward fitness. It is our duty as service members to this city, our duty to those we work with, and our duty to those we go home to.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE DEPARTMENT...

- Work with the FY 12/13 budget continues. The City Council is conducting budget works shops the last week of Jan/first week of February. Public Safety will be considered at the January 30th work shop. As of this writing, it appears that we will be purchasing 8 new AEDs in the upcoming budget to place AEDs on all apparatus. Next year we will be updating our 12 lead Cardiac monitors.
- We are scheduled to replace 409 and 417 in the current budget. This is the scheduled replacement of these units and I hope we are able to have two Tahoes approved via the state bid. I hope that item will be considered at the February 7th City Council meeting.
- We plan on making an adjustment to our response process beginning in February. Essentially, we will be getting to the point where we are staffing a fire apparatus and an ambulance at both stations. So—a response will be a fire apparatus and an ambulance. Second and third out EMS calls will be handled according to the resources available at that time but essentially, if the fire apparatus is "out" of the station, the ambulance from the other station will respond along with the fire apparatus from the first station if it is available.
- We are working with our mutual aid partners to adjust responses to assignments. Much like the Clive approach, we are looking at reinforcing our initial alarm response for "assignments." The move is hoped to get the resources that we would normally get on a second alarm on scene faster and without the need for an "extra" step in the process. As a result of this, we will also be adjusting our TEAMS cards to account for this change.

ON THE LINE

Other programs/training/projects completed by UFD in January:

Training Report: **847.5 hours** of training were completed in January.

Fire Training: 408 hours

EMS Training: 439.5 hours

Prevention & Inspection Activities:

- Completed 18 Inspections
- Completed 6 re-inspections
- Completed 4 Preliminary Walk-thru/meetings
- Completed 4 preplans
- Conducted 9 plan reviews
- Conducted 2 Car Seat installations



“YOU’VE BEEN CAUGHT DOING AN OUTSTANDING JOB” LETTERS...

We continue to recognize your efforts. Whenever we receive a thank you letter, card or a phone call, we pass that along to the people involved in the form of a “You’ve Been Caught Doing An Outstanding Job” letter. As of February 1st, we have sent 11 letters to our personnel. The following people received “You’ve Been Caught” letters since our last newsletter:

Josh Boyle & Jeff Gilchrist, Lt. Routson, Ed Palizzolo and Nick Heuer

We received a thank you card from one of our EMS customers who had fallen at home thanking us for “prompt response.” She wanted us to know that she appreciated our courtesy.

Eric Ennen & Bryce Landers, Lt. Wilson, John Ouverson and Nick Heuer

We received a phone call thanking us for the great care one of our customers received. She said that the crews did a great job – she said they recognized her distress and did all of the right things. She said her care was right on the money despite O2 sats in the 98% range...within 20 minutes of delivery to the ER she was intubated but she had improved dramatically with the care we provided on scene. She was calling from the hospital after being extubated. She wanted the crew that took care of her to know how much she appreciated their great care.

Rob Zahnd

A “blue sheet” will be presented to Rob Zahnd on Friday or doing an outstanding job on a mutual aid fire in WDM providing excellent fire extinguishment using the aerial nozzle. Presented by Lt. Bissell.

Thanks to all of you for providing outstanding service!!

Last Safety Incident: As of February 1st

16 days without a safety incident 222 days without a lost time injury

Last incidents:

- Compartment door was not secured properly resulting in equipment falling out. *(Happened twice in January!!)*
- The cab of a fire apparatus was raised and the deck gun was in a position so that it contacted the cab

Member Profile...

Member Profile: Brandon Simpson

Length of time with UFD: Since October 2011

Why I became interested in the UFD: Heard good things about the dept- Personnel, Training, etc.

Level: FF/EMT-B - now testing for Paramedic

Previous EMS experience: I'm full-time at Ankeny Fire Dept. and on a volunteer dept in Missouri.

Previous Fire Experience: I have been a firefighter since I was 15 years old. I started on a volunteer dept in Missouri.

Family Life: Married (pretty sure 4 years) to Sara. We have no children, but pets include a dog named Roxy. I kicked my wife's cat out of the house.

Current Profession: Ankeny Fire Dept since 2008

Activities or hobbies I enjoy: Golf, Softball, and watching Bob Ross paint happy trees!

Most memorable moment: I played football in Germany for the USA All-Stars.

Favorite TV programs: Bob Ross and Ellen

Favorite movies: La Bamba, 8 Seconds

Last book that I read: This stupid Paramedic book

Personal goals: Finally becoming a paramedic

What I enjoy about UFD: The staff (besides Roe)

Favorite Quote: You can't build a reputation on what you're going to do.



Training Pics:

During a recent training, staff had various changes made to help them see what it could be like for the elderly. Safety glasses with Vaseline smeared on them shows the decreased eyesight or possible cataracts, playing cards with rubber gloves shows the decreased function they have due to arthritis, typing on a computer with the safety glasses and rubber gloves, how being secured to a backboard with a curved back can be uncomfortable and how we need to adjust for this, and sitting on glass beads can simulate hemorrhoids or the bony structure they may have and what it feels like for them just sitting on a chair. Breathing through a straw shows what it feels like to have a reduce lung capacity/function. All of these helped the staff to experience what an elderly person may have in everyday life, and help to show compassion to them.

