



On the Line



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

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Upcoming Events

October 7-13

Fire Prevention Week

November 15 & 16

Insurance meetings for FT staff regarding changes to the city's insurance plan.

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



UFD statistics for September

Calls for service:236 YTD: 1,727

Average response Time – All incidents: **5 minutes and 39 seconds**

Average response Time – **Emergency** incidents: **5 minutes and 34 seconds**

Emergency Medical Service calls: 184

Average Response Time EMS: 5 minutes and 44 seconds

Emergency: 5 minutes and 37 seconds

Non-Emergency: 5 minutes and 50 seconds

Fire related calls: 52

Average Response Time Fire: 5 minutes and 26 seconds

Average turnout per fire incident: 7 people

We **received mutual aid four times**— two times for fire calls and two times for EMS calls.

We **provide mutual aid one time**—for an EMS call.

Types of Fire Calls

The 52 fire calls we had in September fall into the following categories:

Fire / Explosion:	9
Hazardous Condition:	3
Service Call:	3
Good Intent Calls:	12
False Calls:	23
Other:	2



Birthdays:

Nick Heuer	Oct 11
Kelly Spooner	Oct 11
Ed Palizzolo	Oct 14
Stu Wilson	Oct 18
Lance Routson	Nov 6





You are called to provide mutual aid in a neighboring city. On arrival, they are using tactics that are different than what you or our department would be using. While their tactics are different, they are not reckless or unsafe – just different. You are given an assignment to side D of the structure. While you are there performing the task that you were assigned, you mention to your co-workers that if you were in charge, you would do this or that. You go on to say that that the tactics being used by the IC are questionable at best and that you could wrap this incident up in 15 minutes if you were in charge.

Your comments are overheard by the Safety Officer who is a representative of the host department. While he doesn't address your comments to you, he does share them with the IC and other members of the host department. Soon, your warm welcome turns cold and you get the feeling your help is not wanted nor appreciated. As soon as the incident is at a point where your crew could be released, they give you a lukewarm "thank you" and you are given the order to return to service and you leave.

A few days later, you are in a class at another department when you overhear people talking about how cocky your department is. You listen as they go on about the lack of respect, overall cockiness and how difficult it is to work with people from your department. They go on to say that they hear people at your department complain when they are not called for mutual aid and then when they do get called, they complain because they have to go to work or because they could "do it better" than the host department.

In general, they say they only call your department because they have no other option – not because they want your department's help but because they need it. If they had an option, they would not be calling your department.

How does that make you feel? If you are like most people, your first reaction might be to become defensive. After all, they are talking about your department, your co-workers and even you. Before you go all "Gunnery Sgt. Hartman" on them, perhaps you should carefully consider what is being said. Honestly, in most cases like this there is some truth in what's being said and there is usually a fair amount of embellishment as well. The truth lies somewhere in between. While you might want to be defensive, ask yourself how you would feel if the shoe was on the other foot.

How you act when responding to a mutual aid call reflects on our department and all of our staff. We should be hum-

ble and helpful, slow to criticize and quick to help. While we might "do it differently" than they are doing it, it is their incident and your opinion is best kept to yourself. Of course, safety is the exception. Let me be clear; there is **NO EXCUSE for not speaking up if there is a safety issue** but short of that, we should have a **helpful and humble attitude**. They didn't call us because they wanted our company; they called us because they NEEDED additional companies. Being cocky adds nothing to process. Some people would say that it isn't "cocky" if you can back it up but if you are on the receiving end of that, it is still cocky and there is no room for that attitude in a mutual aid scenario.



It's not just being "cocky" or thinking you have all the answers that bothers people. How about acting like you don't want to be there? I've heard of crews (not our crews) who had an attitude because they weren't back at their station sleeping. Really? Someone NEEDS your help and you act like you don't want to be there because you rather not be doing anything? Looks like someone needs to figure out why they are **WORKING** in the first place! If you don't want to answer the call for help, you probably shouldn't be a firefighter/EMS provider. There is no room in an emergency response organization for responders who have an "attitude" when they are called to do the job they are being paid to do – at any time during their shift – 3 PM or 3 AM—mutual aid or not. If they don't want to go to work, they shouldn't be at work...that goes for volunteers and POC as well – if they don't want to work, they shouldn't be answering the call to start with.

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When we respond, it is my vision that we provide competent help that is humble and eager to assist the host department in any way that we can. We do that by providing the same level of service to the host department that we must do for any other customer; we do not make them feel as if they have disturbed or "put us out" to answer their call for help. We should never be "dismissive" in our attitude and we should be eager to help to the best of our ability. We will **be nice** and even if we have a different opinion of how things should have been/should be done, we will keep that to ourselves or share it only when and to whom it would be appropriate. (**Again, safety is the exception—Crew Resource Management is an expectation!**) We won't offend another department with our presence – we will provide them with the assistance they asked for in a professional and kind and caring way. It is our hope that we are never viewed as "cocky" but rather that we will be viewed as a department that people enjoy having come help them out!

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I'm In Need of Your Help! – Lt. Lance Routson

Hello gang! I hope this article finds you well! It's a busy time for all of us at the UFD....Paige is keeping Kyla and I busy, but we are enjoying the new addition to our family!

In the next few months, I will be looking for assistance on a project I have been working on. Let me explain.

There are many people in the world that go to their part-time or full-time job every day and dread it. Those of us who are a part of America's Fire Service are truly blessed. I don't know about you, but I am excited to come to work every day. If we can all go the rest of our lives and not dread going to work, we are pretty lucky people. With that said, ask yourself: what part of the fire service is your favorite? In what area are you the "subject matter expert"? What area drives your curiosity? I hope that each one of you can find that area in your career, because when you do, it brings an entirely new appreciation to the job. You will be motivated like never before. I can tell you what my "passion" is. While it is not the "happiest" side to our job, I enjoy reviewing case studies and learning what actually happened on the fire ground when firefighters are hurt or killed in the line of duty. Most of you probably could have guessed this as I have spent a lot of time working on programs sponsored by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

Iowa's Annual Fire School is coming up in February, 2013. I have decided to apply to teach a class at next year's event. As I'm sure you could guess, I have decided to present on a case study review. Since my start in the fire service, there have been several LODD's that have occurred either close to home or have carried a "larger-than-usual" amount of influence on our profession. All LODD's are tragic events, but some have had an especially powerful influence on my personal life and career. Specifically, these events would include Winterset, Albert City, and Keokuk. Do you know what happened in those communities? If not, find out or ask me. In my opinion, we need to know what happened so we can learn and pass these lessons on to those who are new to our job.

However, there is one event that I have extensively researched that has affected me more than any other. This event is the Sofa Super Store Fire that occurred in Charleston, South Carolina, on June 18, 2007. This fire resulted in the loss of nine firefighters and changed the fire service forever. Do you know what happened that night? Do you know why those firefighters died? Do you know what factors played into the outcome so they are not repeated? This fire was an extremely sad, yet predictable event. As such, it is my opinion that *we owe*

it to the nine firefighters that died to study this event to make our profession better.

So here is where I need your assistance. I am planning my class and when it is complete, I would like to present it to any members of the UFD that would be willing to participate. This will be strictly voluntary. At this rate, I would expect that the class would be ready for presentation sometime in mid-January, 2013. It would be approximately a 6-hour class (this is the time frame allotted at Winter Fire School), so it would be a large commitment. However, I would be humbled if anybody would be willing to attend a "test run" of the course. I will provide lunch and snacks, you just have to decide if you are interested or not.



What can you expect at the class? You can expect an in-depth case study review, a viewing of actual photographs from the scene, a chance to listen to the actual audio of the call, and more. Most importantly, you will gain valuable insight as to what went wrong that day so you can improve both yourself and our organization. With that said, I will be interested in your *critical, constructive criticism*. I will be looking for ways to improve the class. If it's too long, too short, too confusing, too anything, please tell me! That will be the first time I present the class and I'm sure there will be many areas to improve upon.

Welp, that's all folks. Please think about it. I hope that anyone who is interested can join me. I will be looking at the calendar in the next few months to pick a date. I hope that once all of you see and hear about what happened in Charleston, you will find a way to reflect and improve your life. This story is just too powerful to overlook. We owe it to the Charleston 9.

I'll keep you all posted!
Thanks for reading!!!!!!



Over the past few years, there have been a lot of discussions about [firefighter safety](#) in the international fire-fighting community. Everyone seems to be very concerned about [how to make firefighting safer](#) and how to reduce injuries and [fatalities](#). This is, of course, very important, and it's interesting to see how things develop. I believe every measure possible should be taken to protect those who protect. But there is one thing I don't understand: as soon as someone suggests something radical or something that is a little bit out of the ordinary, a lot of people seem to get very upset. How come so many in this business talk about [firefighter safety](#) but so few seem to understand what firefighter safety is about?

Looking at reports on injuries and casualties in the [fire service](#) is very interesting. It's easy to find conclusions such as "rapid change in fire conditions," "stress," "exhaustion," "fell from tower ladder," or "vehicle crash." But, and this is actually the crux of the matter, I still haven't found any reports saying that the reason for injuries and casualties was a lack of knowledge. Isn't that what they all are, really? It might not be that the individual firefighter has a lack of knowledge but that the fire service community has a lack of knowledge. And this is much worse, since it's a lot harder to change a system than to change an individual. Many actions are being taken, many disciplines are studied, and much equipment is being introduced to increase firefighter safety. Such actions and equipment include the following:

- [rapid intervention](#) teams
- search procedures
- hose stream management
- ladder operations
- roof operations
- door-entry procedures
- positive-pressure [ventilation](#) and attack
- air management
- high-pressure nozzles
- piercing nozzles
- thermal imaging cameras
- pump operations
- venting procedures
- suppression procedures

However, to me such actions and equipment are not actually firefighter safety. Firefighter safety is something else, something that we have to dig a lot deeper to find. It's not something we find in our hands: safety is something that comes with the combination of hand, heart, and mind. Firefighter safety is about knowledge and understanding what happens when we take all these actions and use all our equipment. It's how those things affect our ability to work on the fire scene. We must understand the consequences of our actions and how the equipment works during operations, otherwise we will end up with problems. Firefighter safety can't be treated as something "extra" or something we "put on top" of everything else: firefighter

safety has to be integrated in everything we do in such a way that we don't have to talk or think about it. *Safety is the baseline, not the add-on!* We will never get safety by adding a few more liters per minute, having a rapid [intervention team](#), or cutting a hole in a roof if we don't understand the consequences of these things. If we don't have understanding, operations might even become more dangerous.

The only way to achieve actual safety is to have knowledge and understanding about the environment we work in, regardless if it's at a fire, a car accident, or a [hazardous materials](#) call!

I am fully aware that there are so many great people in the fire service trying so hard to make things easier, better, and, above all, safer. But unfortunately, there's also resistance. There is resistance stemming from politics, prestige, the economy, and a number of other sources. These reasons are often hard for me as a scientist to understand. If we all understand that we need to change a few things to make things safer, why is it so hard to make those changes?

We need to educate every firefighter about the "why," not only the "how." And to do that, we have to bring a combination of our minds, hearts, and hands into it. If we want to have professional firefighters (at least in the sense of acting in a professional manner), and I assume we do, we need to educate and teach the fire service community and to help it understand some fundamentals on why things happen, not only how they happen. Firefighter safety is about knowledge and understanding. Once we have this knowledge and understanding, we can start to take actions and use our equipment more effectively and more safely! Safety is about knowledge, knowledge that we can get only by working, developing, and sharing ideas together.

Any injury is one too many!!!

Last Safety Incident:

As of October 1st

34 days without a safety incident

34 days without a lost time injury



Last safety incidents:



- **Lost time:** Back injury
- **8/27: Back injury**—fell/struck back while preparing to suction unresponsive patient during transport. Incident occurred when driver applied brakes while the provider was standing to get the suction equipment.
- **8/25: Struck ambulance rub rail/light**—struck wall at the entrance at Methodist Hospital while maneuvering the ambulance.

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

Training Report: **555 hours** of training were completed in September.

Fire Training: 311 hours

EMS Training: 244 hours

Prevention & Inspection Activities:

- Completed 25 Inspections
- Completed 35 re-inspections
- Completed 6 preplans
- Conducted 14 plan reviews
- Conducted 8 Car Seat checks
- Conducted public education for 5,033 people – 4,374 children and 659 adults. (3,953 children in the Urbandale schools)



The UFD patch:

- **The color Red** - symbolizes the life and continued growth of our FD.
- **Gold trim** - symbolizes that Firefighters, like gold, will withstand trial by fire and still remain.
- **Black background** - represent the foundation built by our past members and we will never forget all they have given in the line of duty.
- The Scramble symbolizes a collection of items that represent readiness.
- The six branches of the Star of Life are symbols of the six main tasks executed by rescuers through the emergency chain: **Early Detection, Early Reporting, Early Response, On Scene Care, Care in Transit, and Transfer to Definitive Care.**
- The Centerpiece: Continuing the Tradition—The “**U**” was carried on to this patch design to keep the tradition of having the “**U**”. We also wanted to incorporate the “**U**” because it is a symbol used throughout the City of Urbandale.
- “**Mission Driven, Customer Focused**” These words speak a lot about our Fire Department. Our ultimate goal is to provide quality customer service by adhering to our core values and mission statement. We want our members to ask themselves two simple questions whenever they are faced with a challenge: Are your actions consistent with our core values and mission statement? Are they in the best interest of our customer?



ON THE LINE

“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 October 1st, we have sent 86 letters to our personnel. The following people received “You’ve Been Caught” letters since our last newsletter:

Lt. Macumber, John McCannon, Paula Merfeld, Cody Thorne and Rob Zahnd:

We received a thank you card for attending a birthday party on 7/7/12 at 4623 90th Street. The card has pictures of our participation at the birthday party and says “Thank you so much for joining me at my birthday party! I had so much fun and will always remember it – It was so fun watching you raise the ladder above my House! Thanks again!”

Lt. Birkett, Brad Crookshank, Paula Merfeld, Kelly Spooner and Cory Young:

We received a thank you note from a patient who had a bicycle accident – she had broken ribs, a ruptured spleen, multiple bumps and bruises. She wrote: “I am so grateful to live in a community of caring professional who give far more of themselves than required. I believe the EMT Paula attended me, and I have memories of her face and kind voice while working calmly to keep me comfortable and preparing me for the trauma team. I learned afterward that members of the fire crew loaded and delivered our bikes to our home. Not only do your actions save lives, they make me proud to live in Urbandale.”

Thanks to all of you for providing outstanding service!!

WHAT’S HAPPENING AROUND THE DEPARTMENT...

- The SCBA bid was received in September. The recommendation of the SCBA Committee was to go with the Drager SCBA. Drager was the low bidder and we continue to check references to assure that the change to Drager SCBA is the prudent move for our department. The initial references were very positive regarding their experience with the Drager SCBA. We hope to complete the background checks the first week in October and submit a request for approval of the bid to the City Council by October 16th. **Many thanks to the SCBA Committee:**
 - Lt. Wilson Rob Zahnd John Ouverson
 - Eric Ennen Rob Harris Cory Young
 - Craig Jensen Demir Miljkovic Jamie Erie
 - Lt. Routson Cody Thorne Ed Palizzolo
 - Jeff Gilchrist
- The bid for AEDs was sent out in September and the bid opening will be later this month. This project will assure that we have an AED on all of our non-transport apparatus to improve staff safety as well as allow us to provide the highest level of service to our customers. The units will be Zoll AED Plus and if funds are sufficient, we may be able to provide two AED Pros for our first out fire apparatus. The AED Pros will provide us with options if we ever decide to upgrade our response capabilities on those apparatus. Part two of the project will be undertaken next year when we update our 12-lead monitors/defibrillators in the transport units. Those on the committee that reviewed the AED choices/options are:
 - A/C Light Rob Harris Eric Ennen Jamie Erie
- The new Fire Attack SOG was rolled out in September. Training was conducted by Chief Holt. Copies of the SOG are available in the Training Room and electronic copies are on the “G” drive and available via email. See your supervisor if you haven’t received a copy of this document. The biggest change is the formal adoption of “transitional fire attack” as the preferred fire attack when it is appropriate.
- The 121st Street road construction project has gotten up close and personal for Station 42. The south driveway was shut down in September as well as Ridgemont to the north. To enter the parking lot, one must go north of the station to Prairie and then come south entering the station parking lot from the north east.
- Road construction continues throughout Urbandale. It appears that all projects are on schedule and should be completed in early November. Meredith is now open in one lane in both directions from NW Urbandale to 86th Street.
- The week of October 7—13th is Fire Prevention Week. Expect station tours, school visits and numerous Public Education/Public Relation events this week. Of special note is the presentation on October 10th @ 1330 hrs. at City Hall. **Please see the email sent on Friday, September 28th regarding this special presentation.**

