



On the Line



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

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Upcoming Events

September 10th

American Legion Appreciation Dinner—Refreshments @ 1700—dinner at 1730 hrs.

September 11th

Annual breakfast in recognition of 9/11-Machine Shed @ 0700

9/11 BBQ @ Deerfield—1100—1300 hrs.

October 6-12

Fire Prevention Week

October 12th—1100—1400 hrs.: FPW Open House at Station 41

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



UFD statistics for August

Calls for service: 227 YTD: 1,762

Average response Time – All incidents: **6 minutes and 24 seconds**

Average response Time – **Emergency** incidents: **6 minutes and 15seconds**

Emergency Medical Service calls: 170

Average Response Time EMS: 6 minutes and 9 seconds

Emergency: 5 minutes and 51 seconds

Non-Emergency: 6 minutes and 18 seconds

Fire related calls: 57

Average Response Time Fire: 6 minutes and 59 seconds

Average turnout per fire incident: 7 people

We **received mutual aid one time**—for a fire call

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

Types of Fire Calls

The 57 fire calls we had in August fall into the following categories:

Fire / Explosion:	9
Hazardous Condition:	5
Service Call:	5
Good Intent Calls:	7
False Calls:	30
Over Press/Heat:	1



Birthdays:

Kyle Bissell Sept 19

Jerry Holt Sept 25





I was in a discussion the other day where the “new” science of firefighting was being discussed. The discussion followed a predictable path and eventually it came out...that’s all good but we are a small department and things are “different” here”. I couldn’t help but chuckle. The same excuse is used by departments all across the country both big and small.

How can large departments and small department use the same excuse? I’ve heard a well-known and respected retired Chief from one of the largest fire departments in the country say that his department was so big, they didn’t need to follow the new science. They could do it the way they had always done it. After all, things are “different here” he said. I have heard numerous members of small departments say the same thing – “we are too small to do it that way, we have it figured out for what is best for us because things are different here.” Yeah, right.

How can departments large and small use the same argument to challenge science? Are the physics of fire behavior really different in their communities? No way! The laws of physics are what they are and a fire burns the same in New York as it does in East Overshoe, Iowa. Physics are physics...just ask Rowdy!!

Now I am not saying that the resources that are available don’t change things. You can certainly adjust your risk benefit assessment based on the amount of resources that are available. Having 50 plus people on a first alarm for a working fire gives options that frankly, many of us don’t have. Those kind of resources are awesome but most of us don’t have, never have had and never will have that kind of resources. But even if we did...the science is the same. Let me give you an example...

The fire is in a second floor apartment. The building is big – more than ten stories so there are lives at stake. The fire is blowing out of the second story window. What tactics does the “large” fire department initiate? Like they have always done it, the stretch lines from the ground floor and attack the fire using a direct attack from inside the building. Firefighters work through the hot, smoky conditions and battle their way upstairs and down the hall to the apartment of origin. Conditions are tough but the firefighters are persistent and battle their way thru high heat and low visibility conditions. The attack goes well and the fire is knocked down, the building is saved and there is no loss of life and no firefighters are injured. They have all of the staffing they need to complete the job. But what if...instead of waiting to attack the fire from the inside, they would have pulled a line, charged it and put a fire stream thru the window where fire was showing? The conditions for the entry firefighters would have been better, the chance of flashover would have been greatly reduced and they could have gotten water on the fire sooner. What’s that they would say? That’s right – we would have pushed fire into the hallway and spread fire throughout the building. This isn’t the place that allows the time to discuss the science and the NIST studies but suffice it to say that no, you wouldn’t have “pushed” fire throughout the building. Why? Because fire is no “different” in that community than it is in any other community.



What is different is that egos sometimes cause science to be ignored. Working “harder” is seen as the right way when working smarter is better and much safer.

What about the small department? They have a fire in a single story home. They arrive to find fire coming from a window in the back of the home. They don’t have the luxury of having a lot of people on the first alarm. In fact, sometimes they are lucky to have two people on the first arriving apparatus and that’s the case today. So what do they do? Because they are short staffed, they feel that immediate action is needed and they set the pump, pull a line and the two of them make an aggressive interior attack. Things go well and after battling their way through a zero visibility high-heat environment, they make it to the kitchen in the back of the house and make a direct attack. It felt like it was very close to flashover but the stars are aligned and the attack goes well; the fire is extinguished. No one is hurt and no further damage is done. Again, why did they do it that way? Because that’s the way they have always done it. Because fire is “different” in their community. Again, what if...instead of entering a IDLH atmosphere to attack the fire from the inside without the benefit of two in/two out, they would have pulled a line, charged it and put a fire stream thru the window where fire was showing? They could have done that but that wouldn’t have been seen as “tough.”

I am convinced that ego drives a lot of what these “different” fire departments do. I am not immune. I can tell stories where I’ve done things that in retrospect shouldn’t have been done. We did it because that’s the way we were taught and we were convinced that it was the right way. It put us in harm’s way and we were somehow proud of the fact that we were risking our lives. In most cases, we could have put water on the fire much faster had we taken the less risky route. What’s so bad is that in retrospect, we could have accomplished the same outcome with not even a fraction of the risk we had taken. Why didn’t we? Because we needed to show the public that we were risking it all to save their property. In reality, I don’t think they cared. They want the fire to go out as quickly as possible and if that means less risk for firefighters, so be it. We need to be smarter.

I recently read an article where a Chief officer in a major city was bashing the tactics of the Fire Chief who had just resigned. Reading his comments was an eye-opening experience. How can an educated person make the statements that he was making? I guess things are just different there...

Fortunately, we work in a department that is indeed different. We are a young department without years of extensive firefighting experience...but we are different in a good way. We take the science and apply the lessons learned to our SOGs. We don’t do it the way “we’ve always done it” but rather the safest way. Sometimes that might not be the most exciting way but our goal is not to provide excitement but to provide a safe environment so that all of our members go home at the end of their shift. That’s our goal – not “excitement”, not “ego driven” firefighting. I guess things are just different here.

You can read the article here: <http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/08/20/what-went-wrong-boston-fire-department/KW1JLgc1F55GXuQRheeNVN/story.html>

A Slightly Different Approach – Lt. Cory Macumber

One of the last times you read something from me, I talked about the importance of con ed./education and what it can do. Well, one class I attended had a slightly different approach than what is traditionally accepted on entering an unsecured scene and after researching it a bit, it is actually becoming a hot topic.

The approach that I'm about to discuss comes from a presentation that brought a different train of thought on scene security to light. Traditionally we do not enter a scene until it has been deemed safe by law enforcement right? Why is that? It boils down to the risk vs. benefit assessment. In a fire, I think we all would agree that we would enter a structure that is on fire to save a life, right? That's because, I believe, we are well trained and have the proper PPE for that environment and the pendulum swings a bit more in our favor during the risk vs. benefit assessment and we will take that risk to save a life. During "medical" calls however, we don't have the training nor the PPE for violence against us so the pendulum swings the other way against us and we don't enter the scene and rightfully so.

I am here to tell you, we as the fire and EMS services, need to take a second look at this during specific incidents such as an active killer incident. We can no longer just stand back during these incidents and wait for law enforcement to secure the scene before we enter to begin treating the wounded or extinguishing/controlling the fire. It might take law enforcement hours to officially eliminate the threat and secure the scene and the community expects us to risk our lives to save others, fire or no fire. Besides, this time frame does not swing the pendulum in the victims favor in whole golden hour standard to definitive care and we need to do what we can to improve that.

After the presentation I began exploring this area and have found there are other departments across the nation that have taken a second look at this and have developed S.O.G's for such events, granted they are few and far between, but it is beginning to happen. It is the same approach as we took with animals through the ice. If we don't take action in a controlled manner, citizens will attempt to take action in an uncontrolled manner which will cause additional incidents within the incident itself. For example, there is a case (overseas) where the FD did stay back because the scene was not secured and the citizens literally over took the department on scene (men and trucks) in an attempt to extinguish a fire that started during a terrorist event which did not turn out well on multiple levels.



What I have found and it seems rational at this point, is we need to work with law enforcement to establish a well run command system, pre-plan to the best of our ability (which is currently in the works), train with law enforcement (so we understand what they are doing and they understand what we are doing along with specific tactical moves) and look at active killer incidents like we do with haz-mat scenes. The cold, warm and hot zone set up specifically. The rationale for the zones is that as the risk increases (hot zone) the zone would only be entered when certain protections are in place and as the risk decreases the protections decrease clear out to the cold zone. These are also easily adjusted as the incident progresses. For example, a hot zone could only be entered by trained staff with PPE and under the direct cover of law enforcement while the warm zone could be entered without direct law enforcement cover, but with PPE and cover readily available as mobile or stationary cover, ie; fire truck, ambulance, squad car, AC Light's truck, solid concrete walls, dirt berms etc.. The hot and warm zones do not "treat" victims with the exceptions of applying tourniquets, they simply extricate the victim to the warm and/or taken directly to the cold zone where treatment and transport would begin. Yes, this again changes the traditional thought process of spinal immobilization in unknown trauma, but we are trying to increase the survivability of these victims and limit our exposure thus decreasing our risk, but this also has a huge benefit of increasing the survivability by treating and transporting to definitive care in less time. Risk a lot to save a lot!

The zones could also be established if a fire was set during an incident, we could enter a hot zone under direct cover of law enforcement and proper PPE, set up master streams to control the fire or keep it from spreading further and then retreat to the cold zone or enter a hot zone to hook up to a FDC to support the sprinkler system, back out and let it do its job of controlling it till we can get in. Again risk a lot to save a lot, but this time its property not lives.

The last point that I have found in researching this, is that no matter what these operations are, they need to be highly calculated and coordinated between law enforcement and us.

As you can see there is a slightly different train of thought going on throughout the fire and EMS communities when it comes to these incidents and entering unsecured scenes. At least I hope I generated some thoughts and healthy discussions on it as it is becoming a hotter topic and will be addressed in the future if we like it or not.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE DEPARTMENT...

- Work on replacing 419 is continuing. We hope to start the bid process in September or October.
- Interviews for the Emergency Preparedness Specialist will be taking place in early September. We hope to have this position filled by the end of the month.
- The job description for Driver/Engineer has been completed and submitted to HR for review. The testing process is being finalized with the hopes of going to HR by Sept. 12th. HR will review the test and testing process and once that is complete, the entire process will go before the Civil Service Commission for approval. We hope that the testing process will be announced sometime in late September or early October at the latest.
- We haven't had any volunteers to assist with the SOG projects. That project will be completed and will be moving forward as workload allows.
- The Station 42 renovation project will be kicked off on September 6th. The Committee will be meeting with the architect firm and starting the process of identifying the needs, options and future space needs of the station.
- Testing for the FT list has been completed. The list has been sent to HR and will go before the Civil Service Commission at the next meeting for certification.
- There continues to be many road construction projects throughout the City. When we are made aware of closures, we will pass that information along to you but please be alert. Sometimes we are not finding out about closures prior to the closing. One new project will be the off ramps at the I 35/80 – 141 Interchange. The DOT will be working to improve traffic flow in this area and changes will be forthcoming on how the lanes are configured.
- Work on the direct capture exhaust system continues. We hope to get the project out to bid in late September or early October.
- There were no new projects submitted for consideration for the CIP. One change that was made is that the Station 43 construction is being moved up to 2018. That doesn't mean it will be approved but rather that it will be discussed by the CIP Committee during CIP hearings. The CIP committee can approve or remove the project. The CIP meetings will be held in November.
- We did pursue a grant to allow the purchase of safety messages to be placed on apparatus. The vision is to have public safety messages on all of our apparatus. The messages would be changed or added every six months and will include messages like "Check your batteries," "Have an escape plan," or "No Texting – it can wait" type messages.
- The city's "Citizen Survey" will be going out in early October. This is the city's effort to measure the impact of local

government in the eyes of our citizens. The survey will be sent to random residents to get their feedback on city operations.

- HR has completed a revision to the city's HR Policies and Procedures Manual. There will be training in the near future as this is rolled out.

• WestCom update

The radio system upgrade is well underway. One of the last hold ups was the construction of a new tower at station 19. This will provide for the microwave system that will serve as a "circle" within the WestCom system. This tower was delayed when neighbors in the area complained about the height of the tower. WestCom needed a 75' tower and the area was zoned for that, however; cell phone carriers were interested in partnering on a tower and WestCom saw this as a potential revenue stream. The issue was that to accommodate the cell phone providers, the tower would have to be constructed to 180'. In the end, the tower will be constructed to the 75' that is needed by WestCom and there will be no cell phone providers on the tower. We are still on track to have the system with new radios up and running by the end of the year.

At the WestCom Ops/Tech meeting, it was discussed that some users were forgetting to inform WestCom when they return a Knox Box key to the unit. As a reminder, we are to inform WestCom when a key is accessed and when it is returned. That allows us to provide accountability of when and where keys are used. This information is kept within the CAD.

Also at the Ops/Tech meeting, one item that we have been working on is resolving the dispatching of units with information as a "still alarm." I am happy to say that the end of the "still alarm" is near and in the future, there will be no dispatches as "still alarms" but rather the type of call. I.e., instead of being dispatched to a "still alarm" we will be dispatched to a "dumpster fire", a "vehicle fire" or a "grass fire." This will be a great change.

WestCom has a policy to check on mic "clicks." These are occurrences where the user usually accidentally presses the mic and WestCom is often quick to check on the status of the user. Be informed that WestCom will not be routinely checking on "mic clicks." Users should be using the emergency button if there is an issue where help is needed and not merely clicking their mic.

Some WestCom units have fallen into old habits and have been routinely requesting specific units for mutual aid. That should be avoided when possible and we have a process in place for requesting additional resources when needed.

If you need additional resources for an incident, please remember to use the term "add" to your communication with WestCom – if you need an engine, simply request that

Continued on next page....

WestCom Update continued from page 4...

WestCom “add” an engine to the assignment. The CAD will identify and send the closest appropriate unit that you have requested.

We can always request a specific unit for an incident *if there is a need for a specific unit*. This should be the exception and shouldn't be a frequent occurrence. One might want/need a specific unit when there is a certain tool, level of knowledge or perhaps communication capability on a given unit. As an example – you are at an incident that is closer to Johnston and you need one more engine. The incident is going to be on-going and you only need an additional engine. Using the normal process, you would simply request the WestCom “add” an engine and CAD would find the nearest unit – in this case, it would be Johnston. In this case, you might want to “special” in an engine from Clive so that we don't have the communication issue that we have when working with Johnston. If you decided to do that, you can request a specific unit from Clive.

A couple of notes on requesting a “special” assignment for a specific unit...please request the specific unit you want. If you want 321, say that as opposed to “an engine from Clive”. If you say “an engine from Clive” there is nothing built in the CAD that is set up for that. Simple solution – be specific to the unit that you need/want. The down side is that you won't know if 321 is available and that process might take a few minutes before the request can be filled or that you are notified that Clive cannot fill the request of 321. That's less efficient than just saying “add an engine” to the incident but again, you would only “special” in a unit when there is a *specific reason* for that unit as opposed to just adding a unit to the incident.

As the IC, you may “special” in any unit that you need on any incident. For the most part, that should be an infrequent request but it is a tool available to you. Please use that resource when you need it but the normal day to day process should be to simply request WestCom to “add” the type of unit that you need.

Safety Tip – Safety During Station Tours from firefighternearmiss.com

School children exposed to potential needle-sticks during ambulance tour.

During a tour of an ALS ambulance children were given the opportunity to walk through the patient area of the ambulance. The children in groups of five would climb into the unit. They would then be seated on the bench. The students would ask questions concerning the equipment. The group age varied from 9- 12 years old. One of the children lifted a door on a sharps box and stuck his finger into the opening. I stopped the child just in time. What a mess that would have been if the child suffered a needle stick. Little things can be a big problem. Think ahead.

Lessons Learned: Watch children during tours at all times! Remove or tape up all sharp box's prior to tours of ambulances.



Congratulations!

- **Dave and Chris Burns** welcomed Brady Samuel Burns on August 16. Brady was born at 19:48, weights 5 lbs. 10 oz., and was 19 inches long. All are home and we hope everyone continues to do well.



ON THE LINE

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

Training Report: **592 hours** of training were completed in August.

Fire Training: 387 hours

EMS Training: 205 hours



Prevention & Inspection Activities:

- Completed 32 Inspections
- Completed 35 re-inspections
- Completed 1 Preliminary Walk-thru/meeting
- Completed 5 preplans
- Conducted 21 plan reviews
- Conducted 3 Car Seat checks
- Conducted CPR classes for 30 people
- Conducted public education for 665 people



“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 September 1st we have sent 121 letters to our personnel. The following people received “You’ve Been Caught” letters since our last newsletter:

We received a thank you card for a tour of the station. There is no return address or date of the tour so we are not able to identify those directly involved but the writer wanted to thank us for the helmets that were given to the two boys. She says they continue to wear them around the house pretending to fight fires. She wanted to thank us for taking time to give them a tour of the station.

Lt. Mike Gentosi: The Chief received a “thank you” email from Randy Peterson from UPD. He had dropped by to bring his son by to see the trucks. His email read “We showed up unannounced and Lt. Gentosi greeted us and made Ethan feel so special. He loved sitting in the fire truck and loved all the lights. He thought it was cool to sit in the back of the ambulance. It’s these sorts of little things in our daily routine that are a BIG deal to the children and their parents within the community we serve. So again THANK YOU to Lt. Gentosi and you Chief for encouraging your personnel to give these unannounced tours.”

Fire Marshal Jon Rech, and B-Shift Sta. 41 on-duty crew: Lt. Birkett, David Burns, Brennan Burke, Brad Crookshank, and Bryce Landers: Chief McCarty and Officer Randy Peterson sent a thank you letter thanking us for our support of the National Night Out effort.

Fire Marshal Jon Rech, A/C Mike Cardwell, Michael Kaduce and C-Shift Sta. 41 on-duty crew: Lt. Bissell, John McCannon, Cody Thorne and Rob Zahnd: UCan sent a thank you letter thanking us for our participation with the Movies in the Park program.

Entire Department: We received a thank you note from Bonnie Bissell. It was addressed to the UFD and Lt. Macumber thanking us for the generous donation to the Ronal McDonald House made in Jerry Bissell’s memory. She went on to say that Kyle’s dad would have been proud and pleased that we came to the visitation and brought the trucks.

We received a \$100 Fareway gift card from Bill Lawson and the Urbandale Downtown Neighborhood Association (DUNA). The card was to “thank you for your great service to the people of Urbandale” and invited us to use the card for “some goodies.”

Andrew Andrasko, a student who volunteered this summer sent a thank you note thanking you for allowing him to volunteer. He stated that he really enjoyed being here and learning about what we do.

Lt. Routson: We have received several “thank yous” from fire department that have received a sympathy card from us. Lt. Routson makes sure that every firefighter line of duty death is acknowledge by a sympathy card from our department.

Lt. Bissell, Cody Thorne and Rob Zahnd: We received a thank you letter and a framed picture of birthday party visit from back in April. The writer wanted to thank us for the excellent community service. (we had previously received a \$100 donation for this same event)

Thanks to all of you for providing outstanding service!!