

Structural Firefighter Line-of-Duty Deaths

The facts, the lessons
& the future

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Today's Presenters



Chief Reggie Freeman
Hartford (CT) Fire Department



Chief Randy McGregor
Bryan (TX) Fire Department



Deputy Chief Billy Goldfeder
Loveland-Symmes
(OH) Fire Department



Chief Dan Krushinski
East Franklin (NJ)
Fire Department

3 incidents
4 LODDs
3 leaders
...ONE goal



FF Kevin Bell



FF Kevin Apuzzio



Lt. Eric Wallace



Lt. Gregory Pickard



Oct. 7, 2014
FF Kevin Bell
Hartford (CT) Fire
Department

- 2-story residential
- Interior firefighting operations
- Low-air alarm activates;
Lt. tells FF Bell to exit
- Lt. loses track of FF Bell
- Lt. calls Mayday but Command
doesn't acknowledge
- Search and rescue attempt finds
FF Bell with foot caught in furniture
- 2 other firefighters injured, one seriously

NIOSH Factors & Recommendations

- Conduct risk assessments; ensure strategy and tactics match the assessment
- Maintain crew integrity by voice or radio contact in IDLH atmosphere
- Train on Mayday procedures
- Use a Mayday tactical checklist
- Train on air management, including out-of-air emergencies
- Use a personnel accountability system
- Incorporate the principles of command safety into the incident management system

Leadership Challenges

- Multiple conduct issues
- Poor morale
- High turnover
- Lack of accountability
- Inadequate training
- Lack of structure, order, discipline

Leadership Priorities

- Build on the foundation of structure, organization and discipline
- Set and hold expectations
- Use data to enhance accountability
- Open lines of communications
- Establish formal professional development program
- Enhance training



April 11, 2006
FF Kevin Apuzzio
East Franklin (NJ)
Fire Department

- Single-family dwelling
- Elderly woman trapped
- FF Apuzzio and 4 other firefighters make entry
- Floor collapses while removing victim; crew falls into basement
- 3 firefighters rescued from basement
- PASS alarm heard in basement
- FF Apuzzio found in basement 50 minutes after dispatch

NJ Division of Fire Safety Incident Factors

- Personnel accountability system not capable of effectively tracking all personnel
- Nearly unintelligible Mayday call
- Dispatch did not inform units fire was in basement
- Inability to conduct 360-degree size-up due to fences on the sides of the home
- Initial shortage of officers on scene
- Flooring overlay made the floor appear solid (during sounding) when it was not

NJ Division of Fire Safety

“Firefighters used all the tools that were available to them in order to perform the operations safely...

They simply had no way of knowing that the floor joists below them had burned to the extent that they did, thus weakening the floor...

During every emergency incident, there are things that could have been done differently... However, it is not readily apparent that these items... would have changed the outcome of this incident.”

Leadership Priorities



- Mutual aid / good working relationships with neighboring departments
- Strict requirements for training
- Leadership positions earned
- Maintain discipline and fairness

Lesson Learned: Don't Go It Alone

- Huge emotional impact often goes unrealized
- Offers to help but most people don't actually understand
- You're helping everyone, who's helping you?



Feb. 15, 2013

Lt. Gregory Pickard

Lt. Eric Wallace

Bryan (TX) Fire Department

- Fire at Knights of Columbus Hall—
7,400-sq-ft single-story windowless structure
- Interior operations
- Lt. Wallace becomes separated,
eventually radios for help
- Second alarm requested but mistaken
by dispatch
- Lt. Pickard and RIT attempt rescue
- Flashover occurs as they are pulling
Lt. Wallace out
- Lt. Wallace and Lt. Pickard killed
- FF Mantey and FF Moran suffer
near-fatal injuries

NIOSH Factors & Recommendations

- Use risk management principles at all structure fires
- Understand impact of certain tactics (e.g., ventilation, PPV) on fire behavior
- Establish effective incident management system
- Conduct a complete situational size-up
- Maintain crew integrity by voice or radio contact in IDLH atmosphere

Leadership Priorities

- **Air Management**
When your bell goes off, radio for help
- **Fire Behavior**
Recognize signs of trouble
- **Communication**
Interior personnel must report fire conditions and changes
- **Protect the RIT**
Establish Rescue Division,
hoseline in place

Common Factor #1 **Mayday calls**

- After separation from company officer, make 3 radio attempts, then transmit Mayday
- OR, call whenever separated and concerned
- Activate emergency alert button
- Turn on PASS
- Tactical worksheet for incident commanders

Common Factor #2 **Size-up**

- Initial 360-degree size-up
- Situation reports
- Changing fireground conditions
- Communication to/from command and to/from dispatch

Common Factor #3 **Accountability**

- Ongoing awareness of the location and function of all company members
- Face-to-face or radio contact
- Company officer must always own accountability in addition to individual FF responsibility
- Personnel Accountability Reports

Leadership Post-Tragedy



- Identify needed changes
- Instill fair, unbiased discipline
- Help members cope
- Create positive change from tragedy

Questions?

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For More Information

<http://info.lexipol.com/firefighter-lodds>

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