

# Amherst County

## FIRE & EMS STUDY

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In consultation with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs and the Virginia Department of Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services.



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The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

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**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The Virginia Fire Services Board would like to extend thanks to the following organizations and individuals for their contribution to this study:

Amherst County Board of Supervisors

Pedlar Volunteer Fire Dept.

Jeremy Bryant, County Administrator

Amherst Life Saving Crew

Bradley Beam, Director of Public Safety

Monelison Volunteer Rescue Squad

Amherst Volunteer Fire Dept.

Amherst County Public Safety

Monelison Volunteer Fire Dept.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents the findings and recommendations for the Amherst County Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Study. This study and the information contained herein should not be construed as legal advice or as binding recommendations for Amherst County. This report provides guidance to the Amherst County Board of Supervisors, the Amherst County Administrator, its fire and EMS organizations, and other stakeholders in the community regarding public safety. Amherst County should strive to meet and/or exceed the recommendations contained in this report to enhance the overall quality of fire-rescue delivered to citizens and visitors of Amherst County.

This study was requested by a resolution of the Amherst County Board of Supervisors to analyze five working areas which include:

- Organization
- Budget and Administration
- Training
- Delivery of Services/staffing
- Fleet Design and Management (Equipment/Apparatus)

In addition, community risk reduction was included by members of the study team because it encompasses all the above areas. The Resolution of the Amherst County Board of Supervisors also specified that the Emergency Services Council requested input on sustainability, retention, and recruitment.

The study was conducted by the Virginia Fire Services Board, in partnership with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs and the Virginia Department of Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services. The above referenced working areas served as a guide for the study team to identify issues, evaluate current fire-rescue operations, and make recommendations to improve Amherst County fire and rescue services.

Amherst County created a Department of Public Safety in 1998 to oversee fire and EMS in the county. This department is led by the Director of Public Safety, which has direct oversight over career staff members. Amherst County ordinance requires that fire departments in the county "coordinate their operations and activities with the department of public safety".<sup>1</sup> This report makes recommendations that should be carried out by the Director of Public Safety with the support of the County Administrator and the Amherst County Board of Supervisors.

Amherst County should further develop its Department of Public Safety to better reflect current job duties and possible expansion of the department over the next 5-10 years. As a part of this development, consideration should be given to a dedicated fire marshal position to assist in plans review and the enforcement of the Statewide Fire Prevention Code. The department should be reorganized to split services into three areas: EMS, fire, and support services. A volunteer division chief should lead the fire division, highlighting the important role of volunteers in the combination Department of Public Safety.

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<sup>1</sup>Sec. 11.5-12, *Amherst County Code of Ordinances*

Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines must be reviewed and strictly enforced to ensure the safety of personnel and those who rely on the Amherst County Department of Public Safety. Specifically, it is recommended that an accountability system be in place and utilized on incident scenes. Of note, any SOP or SOG developed is only as good as its enforcement and the training that personnel receive related to it.

Volunteer personnel should be further supported through enhancements to interdepartmental communication, greater financial incentives, and better training opportunities. Training should be coordinated by a dedicated volunteer or career position and be available to all personnel. This training should involve both career and volunteer personnel, ensuring that all members of the department know and understand how to work with one another effectively.

The decline in volunteers at county EMS entities requires that the Department of Public Safety begin providing greater EMS coverage. Requiring a “peak” ambulance to be staffed and the establishment of an advanced life support capable quick response vehicle is recommended to meet growing EMS demands. The department must begin planning for the phase-in of additional full-time transport capable EMS units in conjunction with applicable components of community medicine.

The county should establish countywide minimum equipment and apparatus specifications to create operational uniformity and ensure appropriate access to county funds. A fleet needs assessment should be conducted to assist with this, as well as future planning as it relates to emergency response. The Department of Public Safety should consider the purchase of a reserve engine that can also serve in a training capacity.

Other important recommendations for Amherst County include a community risk assessment, establishment of cancer prevention practices, reviewing public safety communications, and a review of the 2013 County of Amherst Fire and EMS Study Report.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The following is an overview of the study process:

### **PHASE I: INITIATE PROJECT**

#### ***Objectives: Initiation of Study***

To initiate the study, the Amherst County Administrator sent a Resolution, on behalf of the Amherst County Board of Supervisors, to the Virginia Fire Services Board requesting a complete and thorough review of the fire and EMS system in the county (Reference Appendix A).

The county requested the following areas of concentration:

- Organization
- Budget and Administration
- Training
- Delivery of Services/staffing
- Fleet Design and Management (Equipment/Apparatus)

A study team was convened and the study team began by reviewing county-submitted data including the self-assessment questionnaire completed by the county. The team also began collecting and reviewing existing data, memorandums of understanding and relevant policies and procedures.

As part of Phase I, the study team met with leadership from Amherst County to establish working relationships, make logistical arrangements, and determine communication lines. During these meetings, the study team discussed the objectives of the project and identified any issues and concerns central to the study.

### **PHASE II: OBTAIN STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

#### ***Objectives: Conduct Leadership Interviews & Capture Input from the Departments***

The second phase of the study consisted of leadership interviews and department evaluations. The expectations were as follows:

- Identify opinions of department personnel concerning the operations and performance of their department and county coordination;
- Identify issues and concerns of personnel regarding fire and rescue services;
- Identify perceived gaps in existing service levels and new priorities in mission; and,
- Identify strengths and weaknesses as perceived by departmental personnel.

The study team, in coordination with county leadership, developed a schedule of face-to-face interviews with the three fire departments to include: Amherst, Monelison, and Pedlar. The study team also conducted face-to-face interviews with EMS organizations in Monelison and Amherst.

The study team met with leadership from Amherst County to include the Director of Public Safety, Deputy Director of Public Safety, EMS Supervisors, and other public safety staff.

All interviews were conducted during an allotted timeframe and a considerable amount of information was collected. A public hearing was advertised by the county and held on August 9, 2023 to give the public an opportunity to share feedback with the study team regarding the Fire & EMS system in Amherst.

During the interviews and public hearing, the study team received information regarding volunteer staffing levels, service delivery, budget information, apparatus, relationships between career staff and volunteers, and other information about the operation of each volunteer department. The discussion also provided an opportunity for each organization to share comments regarding service delivery of fire & EMS services in the county and possible areas for improvement.

### **PHASE III: PREPARE ANALYSES AND DEVELOP CORE STRATEGIES**

#### ***Objectives: Evaluate Current Trends and Prepare a Report***

The third phase of the study involved further investigation and understanding of the organizational structures, operations, limitations, achievements, and opportunities for improvement within the fire and EMS delivery system. The activities that supported this process consisted of additional requests for information not already obtained in Phase I and II of the work plan. Data requests, made in this phase of the study, attempt to address any issues that emerged from the interviews, and further evaluate implications of the operational issues cited. During this phase, the study team worked with the Department of Public Safety to obtain additional information. Data obtained during the study process also assists the study team in identifying issues influencing the current levels of service.

After receiving and critically evaluating information from the interviews and all supporting materials, the study team began identifying the necessary and critical components to achieve effective and uniform service levels throughout the county.

### **PHASE IV: PREPARE FINAL REPORT**

#### ***Objectives: Prepare and Present Final Report***

The final phase of the study involved documenting the results of all previous tasks into a written report with critical components, such as an executive summary, methodology, background, and findings and recommendations. Once completed, a draft report was shared with the Amherst County Administrator to ensure the technical content in this report is accurate. Upon receiving corrections, the study team revised the draft report, as needed, to assist in the preparation and issuance of the final report.

## COUNTY INFORMATION

Amherst County is a rural community located North of the City of Lynchburg, Virginia with significant recreational areas such as the Appalachian Trail and the George Washington National Forest. Amherst County is bordered by five other counties (Rockbridge, Nelson, Appomattox, Campbell, and Bedford) and the City of Lynchburg. The county was developed in 1761 from portions of Albemarle County, taking its final shape in 1807. The county is named for Lord Amherst, commander of British forces in Canada during the Seven Years War.<sup>2</sup>

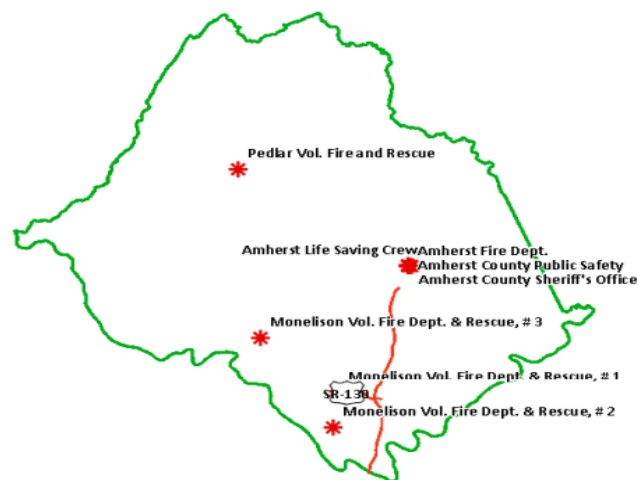
The county has 479 square miles of land, with one incorporated town that serves as the county seat, the Town of Amherst. Major transportation in the area is provided by U.S Highway 29, U.S Highway 60, and State Route 130. The Blue Ridge Parkway also travels through the county.

The estimated population in Amherst County in 2021 was 31,589 people with a household income of \$60,876 and a total of 14,336 housing units. Most of the county's population is present in the South end of the county, near the City of Lynchburg.<sup>3</sup>

The county operates under the guidance of the Board of Supervisors. Board members represent each of the five magisterial districts. The County Administrator serves as the Chief Administrative Officer and executive for the county. The Director of Public Safety serves as the Emergency Services Coordinator, 911 Communications Director, fire marshal, and oversees the Department of Public Safety.

### FIGURE 1: AMHERST COUNTY EXISTING FIRE/EMS FACILITIES

A snapshot of Amherst County GIS mapping software shows the location of each fire station and rescue squad in the county.



<sup>2</sup> "History". *Amherst County Museum*

<sup>3</sup> U.S Census Bureau



## **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations contained in this study are not a requirement for the county to implement. The recommendations are to be used as a guideline of potential solutions that will assist the county as it further develops its capabilities to provide fire and EMS services. The purpose of the study is to review weaknesses and strengths of Amherst County’s current fire and EMS practices, providing recommendations to better serve the citizens and visitors of Amherst County.

Recommendations below refer to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, including NFPA 1720: Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments. According to chapter 1 of NFPA 1720, the standard defines “levels of service, deployment capabilities, and staffing levels for substantially volunteer fire departments. It contains minimum requirements for deploying fire suppression and EMS for service delivery, response capabilities and resources. It also contains requirements for managing resources and systems such as health and safety, incident management, training, communications, and pre-incident planning. It addresses the strategic and system issues involving the organization, operations, and deployment of a volunteer fire department.”<sup>4</sup>

The National Fire Protection Association provides industry-wide best practices for fire and EMS service. Although the NFPA standards are considered best practices, the study team understands that not all NFPA standards are attainable in individual jurisdictions. Amherst County should strive to meet NFPA standards to provide best-in-class service to its citizens and visitors.

It is important to keep in mind who the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) is, which in this case could be the Amherst County Department of Public Safety. In accordance with all NFPA codes the AHJ is “an organization, office, or individual responsible for enforcing the requirements of a code or standard, or for approving equipment, materials, an installation, or a procedure. (1720 -2020, 3.2.2)

### **I. FURTHER DEVELOP THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

Although the Amherst County Department of Public Safety (DPS) is established in Chapter 11.5 of the Amherst County Code of Ordinances, in practice there are a number of operational issues that should be addressed moving forward. In order to provide better services and strengthen the safety of firefighters and EMS providers, the Amherst County Code of Ordinances should be revised to make the Director of Public Safety the ultimate authority responsible for fire and EMS, reporting to the county administrator and the Amherst County Board of Supervisors.

The further development of the Department of Public Safety, including the creation of specialized teams, a county volunteer program, the expansion of support staff, as well as changes to the Code of Ordinances, will ultimately lead to a more effective organization to provide greater services to citizens and visitors in Amherst County.

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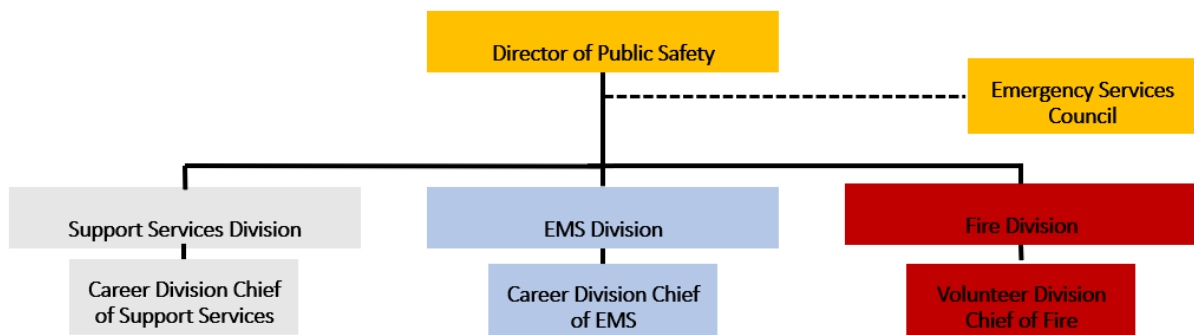
<sup>4</sup> NFPA 1720: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments.

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

**Recommendations:**

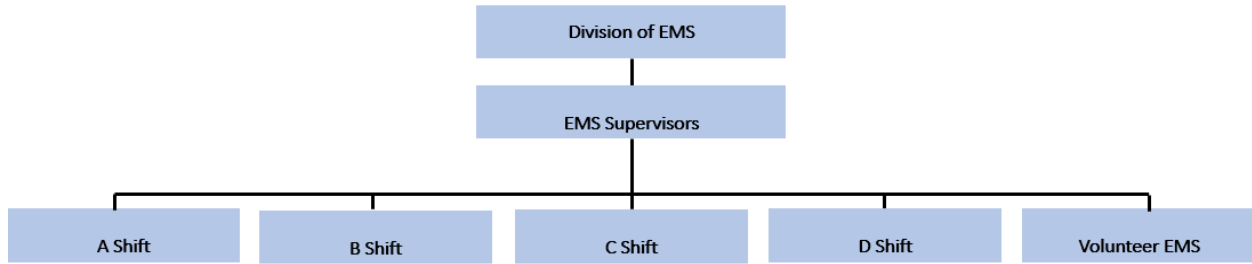
1. The Amherst County Board of Supervisors should change language to more clearly define the Department of Public Safety (DPS) as the authority for fire and EMS in Amherst County. This language should reflect changes below such as the reorganization of DPS. Currently, language in Section 11.5-12 states “organizations and groups mentioned in sections 11.5-11(b) and 11.5-11(c) shall coordinate their operations and activities with the department of public safety and will carry out their assigned tasks to the best of their ability.” The study team recommends that this language be clarified to place the Director of Public Safety as the ultimate authority for fire and EMS, responsible for the command and control of all fire and EMS entities operating in Amherst County.
2. The Amherst County Board of Supervisors should codify the reorganization of the Department of Public Safety. Section 11.5-2 of the Amherst County Code of Ordinances separates the Department of Public Safety into four divisions: fire division, EMS/rescue division, communications division, and emergency management division. Through interviews with DPS staff and volunteer providers in the county, the current organizational makeup of the department is not effective for future growth. The study group recommends that DPS be separated into three divisions, each led by a division chief as shown below. The Director of Public Safety, in consultation with the Amherst County Administrator and Amherst County Board of Supervisors, should review the Public Safety Ordinance to better reflect current operations of the department. This review should be holistic in nature and focus on making necessary updates to reflect changes in structure, operations, and the regular duties of the department.

**FIGURE 2: AMHERST COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**



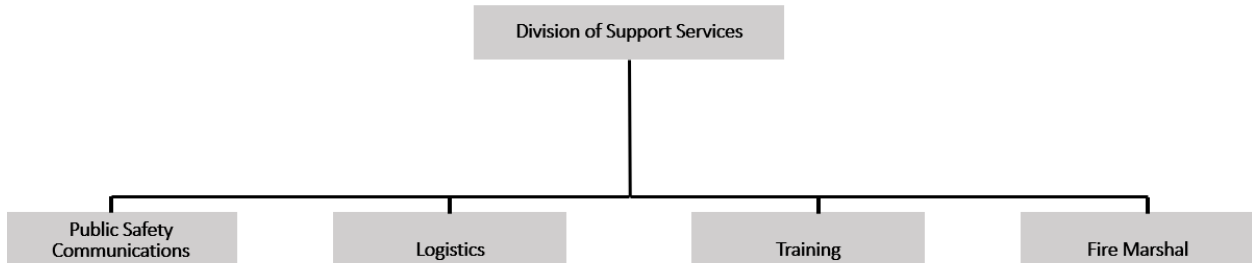
The three divisions of the DPS are further divided as shown below. The study team recommends the following changes to meet the multiple areas identified as duties by the DPS, including communications, fire prevention, fire protection, EMS, and emergency management.

**FIGURE 3: AMHERST COUNTY DPS: DIVISION OF EMS**



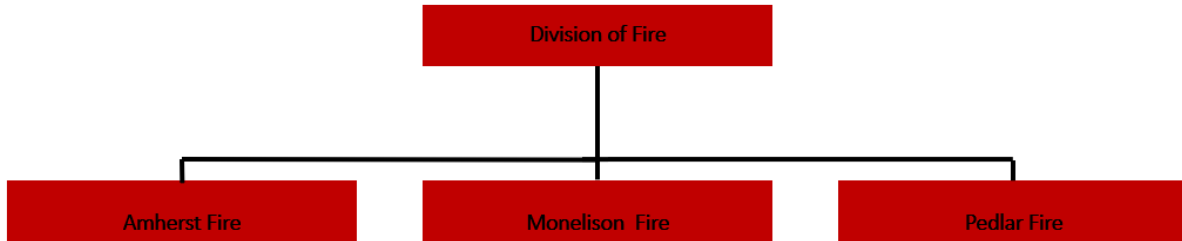
The Division of EMS should be primarily responsible for providing emergency medical services within Amherst County. This division should be led by a career Division Chief of EMS who would primarily oversee EMS operations and other areas identified by the Director of Public Safety as EMS roles. This division should also oversee EMS training and logistics until a Division of Support Services can assume these roles. The career EMS supervisors would report to this position, as well as each career shift and volunteer EMS providers from Amherst Lifesaving Crew, Monelison Rescue Squad, and any future county volunteer program.

**FIGURE 4: AMHERST COUNTY DPS: DIVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES**



The Division of Support Services should be primarily responsible for providing support to career and volunteer providers. This division would be responsible for public safety communications, emergency management, the fire marshal’s office, and future positions such as logistics and training. As explained further in this report, a dedicated fire marshal position is important to ensuring safe community growth in Amherst County. In addition, creating a training or logistics position with the assistance of volunteer personnel or the hiring of additional career staff is recommended.

**FIGURE 5: AMHERST COUNTY DPS: DIVISION OF FIRE**



The Division of Fire should be primarily responsible for providing fire protection in Amherst County. The Division of Fire would be led by a volunteer division chief, overseeing the three volunteer fire departments. The division chief should be responsible for enforcing the policies and guidelines of the department under the supervision of the Director of Public Safety. This division chief should be chosen by the Emergency Services Council and the Director of Public Safety. The volunteer division chief operates under the authority of the Director of Public Safety and reports to this position in the same manner as the career EMS and Support Services Division Chief's.

3. The Director of Public Safety should create specialized teams to handle specialized calls in Amherst County. Throughout meetings with staff and volunteers, mention was made of specialized calls and incidents that required greater resources than available. In order to maximize the use of funds and personnel, it is recommended that county-wide teams be created that bring together personnel from all components of Amherst County Public Safety (DPS). These teams could also involve regional partners. Examples of teams to create could include:
  - a. Heavy-Technical Rescue (HTR): A team composed of fire and EMS personnel from the DPS, and each fire department, that receive additional training and funds to respond to incidents defined as HTR. The Department of Fire Programs defines HTR as Trench Rescue, Confined Space Rescue, Vehicle Rescue, Water Rescue, Rope Rescue, Farm Machinery Rescue, and Structural Collapse Rescue. Not all the previous disciplines must be included in the team, with consideration going to what types of calls Amherst DPS responds to. It is recommended the Director of Public Safety reach out to the Division of Special Operations within the Training and Operations Branch of VDFP for assistance.
  - b. Search and Rescue (SAR): The large recreational areas present in Amherst County, as well as past incidents, suggest the need to create a Search and Rescue (SAR) team. This team could be composed of DPS personnel, as well as regional partners, federal agencies, and possibly civilians who undergo training to assist. The large amount of manpower and resources required to locate and extract patients from these recreational areas require specialized equipment and training. The Director of Public Safety should explore creating a partnership with surrounding jurisdictions, as well as additional training opportunities, to create a SAR team. The study team does not endorse any of the information contained in information produced by outside agencies.

- i. The Virginia Department of Emergency Management Search and Rescue Program<sup>5</sup>
  - ii. Virginia Search and Rescue (Christian Aid Ministries)<sup>6</sup>
  - iii. REACT International<sup>7</sup>
  
4. The study team recommends that the Director of Public Safety create a county volunteer program to allow volunteers to provide services in Amherst County if a volunteer organization can no longer carry out its duties or chooses to end operations. This volunteer program could be marketed for EMS providers to assist DPS career crews, staff additional units, or at stand-by assignments. Consideration should also be given to having driver only volunteers to assist EMS providers when staffing transport units that are BLS only. BLS only transport units could be provided by volunteer or career staff at the direction of the Director of Public Safety. Volunteer EMS providers should be held to the same standard and be provided the same opportunities as career staff. Multiple volunteer EMS providers expressed interest in a county volunteer program. Staff from the Department of Public Safety (DPS) stated this was the intention, but no program had been established. Although it is not recommended at this time, a county volunteer program may be expanded to include firefighters if the volunteer fire departments determine they can no longer adequately handle call volume.
  
5. The creation of a Division of Support Services in the Department of Public Safety (DPS) creates opportunity for future growth and greater involvement by volunteers in the DPS structure. Although public safety communications are already being provided by DPS, the other areas within this division are currently not a defined role within DPS. Logistics and training are important roles that must be considered by the Director of Public Safety. The Director should seek additional positions to fill these roles or ask that volunteer personnel, with the approval of the Emergency Services Council, fill these roles.
  
6. It is recommended that the Director of Public Safety create a dedicated fire marshal's position to enforce the Statewide Fire Prevention Code, oversee plans review, and conduct fire prevention in Amherst County. Currently, the fire marshal role is held as one of many hats within the Department of Public Safety (DPS). Limited time and resources result in difficulty filling this role while also overseeing operations, public safety communications, and other duties. With the significant development occurring in the Southern end of Amherst County, and the constant need to better educate citizens and businesses on fire prevention, a dedicated fire marshal position could improve safety in Amherst County. This position should have the primary responsibility of a fire marshal, with the only other duties being related to active response to calls if the system requires it. It is recommended that the fire official designation remains with the Director of Public Safety.

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<sup>5</sup> "Special Operations". *Virginia Department of Emergency Management*

<sup>6</sup> "Virginia Search and Rescue". *Christian Aid Ministries*

<sup>7</sup> "Introduction to Land Search and Rescue". *REACT International*

## **II. BETTER SUPPORT VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMS PROVIDERS**

Amherst County has a long history of volunteers providing fire and EMS protection. Like much of the country, Amherst County is experiencing strain with less volunteers providing service and increasing calls for service. Priority should be given to supporting active volunteers and incentivizing new volunteers from around the region to join in Amherst. Although each individual component of the Department of Public Safety (DPS) does recruitment, the county must take a more active supporting role or risk losing this vital asset.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Director of Public Safety, through the Division of EMS, should explore offsetting the costs of EMT training for volunteer personnel at local community colleges. Currently, the volunteer organizations provide some funding for personnel to attend training. Amherst County DPS offers \$5,000 a year for training. Volunteer agencies or providers should request this funding for future training costs. The Department of Public Safety should consider providing this training for county volunteers if that program is implemented as an incentive for citizens to volunteer in Amherst County. This should be explored with Central Virginia Community College.
2. The Director of Public Safety, through the Division of Support Services, should explore utilizing email groups or an online message board to provide information weekly. As explained in the “Communications” section below, the Director of Public Safety should provide weekly briefings with operational information, training information, and other important updates. Ensuring the volunteer members feel informed and prepared to assist their career counterparts is essential.
3. The Director of Public Safety should encourage regular communication and training between career members of the Department of Public Safety and volunteers. As a combination system, it is imperative that both career and volunteer personnel regularly interact and can work cohesively as one unit.
  - A. The creation of regular training sessions between each component of DPS, volunteer and career, could be a good step in improving relationships and operational abilities. Volunteer personnel should attend county-wide training, such as the training offered by the DPS.
4. The Director of Public Safety should consider the creation of a Recruitment and Retention Coordinator in the Division of Support Services. This positions, whether a volunteer or career personnel member (full or part-time) should develop a Recruitment and Retention Plan. As part of this plan, the Director or his designee should:
  - a. Utilize the National Volunteer Fire Council outline for volunteer agencies.<sup>8</sup>
  - b. Market volunteer departments through social media and other means to solicit volunteers.

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<sup>8</sup> “Develop a Recruitment and Retention Plan” *National Volunteer Fire Council*

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

- c. Review Fire Department Culture: Each volunteer fire chief, as well as the Director of Public Safety, should encourage a modification of the “how we do things culture”. Each department should assess what the main operational areas are for their organization (fire protection, administration, community events, etc). This would allow for the targeted recruitment of individual members to handle non-emergent functions such as fundraising, entering fire reports, marketing/social media initiatives, fire & life safety education and community programs, human resource management, station & apparatus maintenance, and In-house training. By utilizing these specialized groups to achieve specific tasks, it works to free up the demands on those members that are interested in responding to emergencies and maintaining the necessary training.
- d. Utilize the “Make Me a Firefighter” Recruitment Tool: Each volunteer agency should utilize The NVFC’s “Make Me A Firefighter” recruitment tool if not already being done. This features a department portal filled with resources and tools for implementing a local recruitment campaign as well as a public web site to allow potential volunteers to find local opportunities. There are step-by-step guides and resources on marketing and planning events to engage prospective recruits. It allows the posting of volunteer opportunities by entering them into a database which is searchable to potential volunteers who can connect directly with the department through MakeMeAFirefighter.org. It is possible to customize campaign materials with departmental specific information and customize outreach materials for each individual department for use in the community.

### **III. DEVELOP AND ENFORCE SOPS AND SOGS**

The Department of Public Safety provided the study team with standard operating guidelines (SOG) developed in 2012. Many of these SOG’s fall in line with common fire department SOGs, including command procedures, accountability, personal protective equipment, and others.

Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) are written guidelines that explain what is expected of emergency personnel in performing their duties. SOGs are a “how-to” guideline to follow in order to achieve a desired goal. SOGs are not necessarily rules or regulations, but rather a path to achieve specific goals and objectives. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are formal policies that specify a course of action, thereby ensuring efficiency, predictability, consistency, and safety.<sup>9</sup>

However, multiple interviews with both career and volunteer fire and EMS personnel suggest that these SOGs are not being followed or enforced. The study team was significantly concerned over reports that personnel accountability was not being conducted on incident scenes, although this is covered in SOGs adopted by all fire departments in the county. Currently, Amherst County is extremely vulnerable to a firefighter injury or death.

The Director of Public Safety must have the authority and tools to enforce SOPs and SOGs, regardless if the personnel are career or volunteer.

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<sup>9</sup> “Standard Operating Procedures: The First Step to a Safer Fireground”. *Fire Engineering*

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Director of Public Safety, in consultation with the Emergency Services Council and the division chiefs, should review, develop, publish, and implement standard operating procedures for use by all public safety (fire and EMS) entities in the county. SOGs should reflect the capabilities of the fire and EMS departments in Amherst County and the safety of emergency personnel. NFPA 1720 recommends that fire departments have written administrative regulations, departmental orders, and/or procedures.
2. The Amherst County Board of Supervisors should codify that the Director of Public Safety has the ultimate authority in enforcing the above mentioned SOGs. Personnel, both volunteer and career, who fail to meet SOGs should be accountable to the Director of Public Safety. Operational effectiveness and the safety of both the public and personnel is dependent on the enforcement of SOGs.
3. The SOGs should contain reference to the use of personal vehicles when responding to an emergency call. The study team is not recommending the ending of this practice, but does recommend that an SOG be developed that specifies the type of incidents and the duties of the member once they arrive on the incident scene. Personnel who respond from home should not be permitted to operate without checking in with incident command.
4. Whether an SOP or SOG, minimum training standards should be reviewed, agreed upon, and enforced based on each level of approved membership without exception. If Amherst County determines that Firefighter I, as it is currently, is the minimum training standard for interior firefighters, then this should be enforced by the Director of Public Safety.
5. The Director of Public Safety should review, with legal representation for Amherst County, the legality of allowing volunteer members to also serve as paid, career staff. The study team is concerned that issues arising from having career staff also be volunteers could lead to labor law issues. Additional information should be sought from the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry or the U.S Department of Labor.

**IV. EMS COVERAGE**

Throughout the study teams' visit to Amherst County, both volunteer and career staff expressed concern over the increasing call load related to EMS, especially in the Southern end of the county immediately surrounding the City of Lynchburg. Currently, Amherst County Public Safety provides three full time career transport units stationed in Amherst, Pedlar, and Monelison, as well as a career EMS supervisor. In addition, the county is currently conducting a pilot program that provides a "peak" transport unit staffed by overtime or part-time providers. This "peak" unit is not required to be staffed if no part-time or overtime staff are available. Amherst Lifesaving Crew and Monelison Rescue Squad also provide limited support by assisting career staff with staffing ambulances during periods of high call volume or at standby events



such as festivals. Volunteer EMS staffing is currently insufficient to meet the total EMS need in Amherst County.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Director of Public Safety should require the “peak” unit mentioned above be staffed. This unit should be staffed by either career staff, volunteers, or a combination of both regardless of the availability of overtime or part-time staff. The director should explore making this pilot program permanent by securing funding from the Amherst County Board of Supervisors, or other means such as a grant through SAFER or other organizations. Of note, Amherst County DPS has already applied for a SAFER grant.
2. The Director of Public Safety should create a “Quick Response Vehicle (QRV)” unit with Advanced Life Support (ALS) capability for use in Amherst County 24/7. This unit, similar to the EMS supervisor, should respond to critical calls with transport units, freeing the EMS supervisor to more effectively manage the system. In the event that all transport units are already on a call, or the nearest transport unit is a significant distance away, this QRV could provide immediate care until the arrival of a transport unit or partner with other career staff or volunteers to man a 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> transport unit. The director should explore funding from the Amherst County Board of Supervisors, or other means such as a grant through SAFER or other organizations.
3. The study team recommends that Amherst County continuously reassess staffing and make appropriate modifications to ensure adequate EMS coverage. As the number of volunteer providers in Amherst County changes, and the calls for service increase, the Department of Public Safety will need to consider future staffing of a 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> full time transport unit.
4. The Department of Public Safety should utilize the Virginia OEMS Standards of Excellence Program. The purpose of the Virginia Standards of Excellence program is to identify and recognize EMS agencies that strive to operate above the standards and requirements of the Virginia EMS Regulations (12VAC5-31). The evaluation addresses several areas that collectively make up the operations of an EMS agency from several perspectives.<sup>10</sup>

**V. CREATE AND IMPLEMENT COUNTY LEVEL EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS**

Increasing costs and lead times for apparatus and equipment are leading to difficulties across the Commonwealth regarding the purchase and use of equipment. Amherst County does not currently have specifications for apparatus and equipment, although this was a recommendation contained in the 2013 County of Amherst Fire and EMS Study. Some interviewees recollected a county level apparatus specification being drafted but could not ascertain whether it was ever adopted or enforced. Additionally, multiple personnel expressed concern over the various levels

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<sup>10</sup> “Standards of Excellence”. *Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services*

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

of spending for different types of apparatus across the county, with some apparatus being much greater in cost than apparatus purchased for neighboring departments.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Emergency Services Council should develop minimum apparatus specifications for each apparatus type, allowing volunteer organizations to make customizations at their own cost in some areas. Amherst County should only fund apparatus that meet or exceed the county level specifications and not pay for additional “bells and whistles”. This will ensure uniformity across the system at the most basic level, making training and operations more effective.
2. The Emergency Services Council should develop common equipment specifications. Amherst County should only fund equipment that meets or exceeds the county level specifications and not pay for additional items. This will ensure uniformity across the system at the most basic level, making training and operations more effective. This is especially important concerning self-contained breathing apparatus, personal protective equipment, tools used on fire apparatus, and EMS equipment.
3. Apparatus specifications should reference NFPA 1901: Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus.<sup>11</sup>
4. It is recommended that the Director of Public Safety create an equipment maintenance program to increase the life of apparatus and reduce repair costs. This equipment maintenance program should consider variables such as age and mechanical condition, as well as the use level of each apparatus.<sup>12</sup>
  - a. Tennessee Fleet Maintenance Template:  
<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tdot/multimodaltransportation/5310callforprojects/Attachment%205%20-%20Sample%20Vehicle%20Fleet%20Maintenance%20Plan.pdf>
  - b. City of Rogers, Arkansas:  
<https://www.rogersar.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2752/RFD-Fire-Apparatus-Replacement-Plan-2014-PDF>

**VI. IDENTIFY APPARATUS FOR TRAINING/RESERVE STATUS**

The future training needs and growth in Amherst County suggests that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) should begin planning for the increased use of apparatus and the need for apparatus dedicated to training. Currently, each individual department has apparatus assigned to their station. In some cases, apparatus is loaned from other departments in the county to backfill when apparatus is being repaired or serviced. This informal means of providing apparatus will not be sufficient as Amherst develops. Additionally, the development of a training center in Amherst suggests an investment by Amherst County in better training and future training for firefighters. As a component of this, a dedicated piece of apparatus for training would prevent frontline units from being taken out of service for training.

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<sup>11</sup> NFPA 1901, Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus

<sup>12</sup> “Q&A: The art of fire department fleet management”. *FireRescue1*

**Recommendations:**

1. The Director of Public Safety should explore the purchase of a training/reserve engine that meets NFPA requirements and is similar to apparatus currently used in Amherst County. This engine should be owned by Amherst County and be utilized primarily for training purposes. This engine should be outfitted and prepared to serve in a reserve status, available to any fire department in Amherst County when other apparatus is out of service. As Amherst County purchases additional apparatus to replace aging units, these units could be placed in this training/reserve status. It is recommended that a SOG be developed to address the use of training/reserve apparatus.
2. The Director of Public Safety should explore the purchase of a reserve tanker that meets NFPA requirements and is similar to tankers currently used in Amherst County. This tanker would be utilized if other tankers are out of service and should be owned by Amherst County. The tanker should be outfitted and prepared to serve in front line service and could be used in the event that additional resources are required. As Amherst County purchases additional tankers to replace aging units, these units could be placed in this reserve status. It is recommended that a SOG be developed to address the use of training/reserve apparatus.

**VII. PLAN FOR INCREASED GROWTH IN SOUTH END OF COUNTY**

Amherst County is experiencing significant growth in the Southern end of the county immediately surrounding the City of Lynchburg. This area, including the specific area of Madison Heights, is being developed under the guidance of the Madison Heights Concept Plan. The majority of the land in this area is zoned for low density residential development, with a significant amount of land also zoned for general commercial.<sup>13</sup> As Amherst County further develops, the Department of Public Safety will need to address growing housing density and calls in this area. Many of the recommendations below are further developed from other areas of the report.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Director of Public Safety should appoint a full-time fire marshal to work with Amherst County Planning and Zoning staff to review plans and future development in Amherst County. Staff from the Department of Public Safety should be significantly involved in future development. The fire marshal should review construction plans, site development plans, and new development for general compliance with adopted fire code and life safety standards.
2. If future development occurs or is desired, Amherst County must consider expanding the Department of Public Safety. This could include the addition of a ladder truck in the Monelison Fire Department's area of operations and additional EMS transport units.
3. It is recommended that the Director of Public Safety reevaluate the location of fire/EMS stations in this area of the county. Utilizing call volume data for both EMS and fire,

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<sup>13</sup> "Planning and Zoning", *Amherst County, Virginia*

future fire suppression and EMS resources should be located where they will best serve the public, regardless of the current location of facilities.

## **VIII. COMMUNITY RISK ASSESSEMENT**

Community Risk Reduction (CRR) is defined by Vision 20/20 as “a process to identify and prioritize local risks, followed by the integrated and strategic investment of resources (emergency response and prevention) to reduce their occurrence and impact.”<sup>14</sup> A component of CRR is a community risk assessment.

A Community risk assessment requires the identification of potential risks within a community and the process of prioritizing those risks. This process is based on the collection and review of community profile information including event history and the response capabilities of the community. Response capabilities specifically looks at the type of incidents to which public safety organizations in the community respond, and the capabilities of these organizations. Event history looks at past experiences and trends in response, losses and causes. A risk assessment helps focus the fire prevention/loss prevention activities of the community and department.

CRR provides a more focused approach to reducing local, identified, and specific risks. Although there is no specific blueprint for developing CRR plans, there are some common and essential steps. Much of the current literature and training materials suggest that community risk reduction programs use a six-step approach towards development.

- |                       |                                     |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1) Identify Risks     | 4) Prepare Plan                     |
| 2) Prioritize Risks   | 5) Implement Plan                   |
| 3) Develop Strategies | 6) Monitor, Evaluate, & Modify Plan |

Each locality should have a CRR plan that is unique to them, taking into account the target hazards, response capabilities, and other areas of their public safety community. Components of a community risk assessment could include specific areas as outlined below such as financial audits and a review of the emergency vehicle fleet.

### **Recommendations:**

1. To maintain financial stability and promote transparency for the citizens of Amherst County, each volunteer component should undergo annual audits by an outside entity. Each volunteer component may elect to have their own audit done, as long as it is independent of the organization. This information should be submitted to the Department of Public Safety and the Amherst County Administrator for review. When citizen’s tax dollars or donations are being utilized, a high level of accountability must be maintained.
2. The Director of Public Safety, through the Division of Support Services, should conduct a fleet risk assessment that includes:

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<sup>14</sup> “Vision 20/20”. *Institution of Fire Engineers*

- a. A focus on apparatus that meet community specific needs such as population density, zoning, development, previous call data, etc.
  - b. The assessment should examine what the adequate number of each category of response vehicle is for each fire district or EMS district. For example, if larger buildings are being constructed in the Southern end of Amherst County, consideration should be given to a ladder truck or similar unit being placed in this area.
  - c. All new apparatus purchased with county funds should continue to be co-titled with the volunteer agency that provides funds. If the county is the sole provider of funds, the vehicle should be titled under the Department of Public Safety.
  - d. A fleet replacement schedule, that considers the fleet risk assessment, funds, and the county equipment specifications, should be developed that purchases apparatus based on need.
3. The Director of Public Safety should conduct a community risk assessment to identify potential and likely risks within Amherst County, prioritize those risks, and analyze the capabilities of fire and EMS agencies. The Director of Public Safety can request the VDFP CRR Coordinator return and assist the county in its Community Risk Assessment (CRA)
    - a. NFPA 1720 indicates that the emergency services engage in the development of a community risk management plan for fire, emergency medical service, and hazardous materials use, storage, and transportation within the county. (NFPA 1720, 4.2;4.2.1;4.2.2; 4.2.3.1)
  4. The Director of Public Safety should ensure that all county fire departments are reporting via VFIRS. Not only does this process provide insight into the county’s emergency responses and trends, but it can also provide a means of comparing local trends to regional and national trends. Additionally, the Director of Public Safety should prepare for the transition from NFIRS to NERIS being administered through the U.S Fire Administration. As stated above, this information is critical for the identification and mitigation of any community risks. This is also applicable to EMS call data.

## **IX. FURTHER DEVELOP TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

Citizens expect fire and EMS providers, volunteer and career, to be well training and equipped to respond to a growing number of issues. Training occurs at various levels, including certified training provided through the Department of Fire Programs or Office of EMS, local training occurring at the department level, or through classes and conferences offered throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia and nationally.

A review of training in Amherst County found that the Amherst Fire Department provided Firefighter I training in an academy format for volunteers in the county. Additionally, the Department of Public Safety holds training for EMS personnel during weekdays, while volunteer departments offer training on various nights of the month. The study team did not recognize a consistent training schedule or regimen for all fire departments or EMS organizations in the county. Amherst County does have minimum training requirements, Firefighter I, for interior

firefighters. This training requirement was reported by some as not being enforced. VDFP suggests that firefighters receive certification level training such as Firefighter I to be considered interior firefighters.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Director of Public Safety should create a Training Coordinator position under the Division of Support Services. This position would be responsible for the coordination of training within Amherst County related to both fire and EMS. The position, which could be a volunteer or career member, would work with the Department of Public Safety and each component to schedule regular training, keep accurate training records, and work with agencies such as the Department of Fire Programs and the Department of Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services. This position should also be responsible for overseeing minimum training such as Firefighter I. If a volunteer is chosen, it should be in an impartial manner as determined by the Director of Public Safety and the Emergency Services Council.
2. The study team was informed that Department of Public Safety (DPS) personnel conduct EMS training during the day to meet continuing education requirements and to better prepare to serve the citizens of Amherst County. The Director of Public Safety should designate the Training Coordinator or the Division Chief of EMS to schedule duplicate training during evening hours or on weekends when volunteer providers are more available to participate. This will further develop relationships between career and volunteer providers and provide greater training for all involved.
3. The Director of Public Safety should designate the Training Coordinator, or the Division Chief of EMS and Volunteer Division Chief of Fire, to publish a monthly training calendar available to all career and volunteer personnel. This calendar should include information such as the location, training type, date, and time of both internal training and training being offered in the region. As a component of this, all training being conducted by each of the components of the DPS should be open to all career and volunteer members.
4. The Director of Public Safety should implement the EMS Officer Program. The Office of EMS and the State EMS Advisory Board Workforce Development Committee has created an EMS Officer Program that can be implemented in EMS agencies to help boost leadership and help develop and maintain quality leaders in the EMS Community. The program covers topics like human resource management, community and government relations, administration and more, all useful information for the Department of Public Safety and the volunteer organizations contained within it.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "EMS Officer I". *Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services*

## **X. COMMUNICATIONS**

Public safety communications are a component of the Department of Public Safety (DPS). In general, the study team did not hear significant complaints concerning dispatch protocols or communication in Amherst County. Some personnel expressed concern over areas without radio coverage in Amherst County, specifically near recreational areas.

Internal communications within DPS were cited consistently by those interviewed as an issue. Personnel reported that training opportunities, changes in operations, and other information was not being received at all levels of the department.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Director of Public Safety, through the Division of Support Services, should survey career and volunteer members about potential “dead zones” for radio coverage in Amherst County. This should include local law enforcement where applicable.
  - a. If “dead zones” are identified, the Director of Public Safety should work to address these areas by working with local tower providers and other partners deemed necessary.
2. The Director of Public Safety should provide weekly briefings with operational information, training information, and other important updates to all members of the DPS, both career and volunteer. This weekly briefing could be included on an online platform or in an email to all career and volunteer personnel. Email groups could also be created for specific areas, such as fire, EMS, training, etc. These weekly briefings would ensure that all department members receive the same information in the same format.
3. The Office of EMS recommends that Amherst County contact them regarding assistance and accreditation for emergency medical dispatch (EMD) and public safety answering points (PSAP).

## **XI. CANCER PREVENTION**

The following information is included in Virginia Fire Service Board reports to reflect the significant importance of cancer prevention in the fire service. As stated in the Lavender Ribbon Report developed by the NVFC and IAFC, cancer is the leading health risk facing firefighters, largely due to the chemicals and carcinogens they are exposed to while engaged in response activities.<sup>16</sup> Chemically based plastics are in use in nearly every product in our homes, business and vehicles and when they burn, their chemical composition changes.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Director of Public Safety should develop operational SOP’s that establish safe cancer prevention practices such as:
  - a. Gross decontamination after fire incidents
  - b. Washing of firefighter PPE following fire or hazardous materials incidents
  - c. A fire hood exchange program

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<sup>16</sup> “Lavender Ribbon Report-Best Practices for Preventing Firefighter Cancer” (2021) *NVFC & IAFC*

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

- d. Shower facilities at fire stations
2. The Director of Public Safety should encourage /facilitate National Firefighter Registry (NFR) sign up.
- a. The Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2018 mandated the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) create a voluntary registry of firefighters to collect health and occupational information to determine cancer incidence in the U.S. fire service. In response to this mandate, CDC’s National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) established the National Firefighter Registry (NFR).<sup>17</sup>
  - b. There have been no comprehensive, national data sources in the United States for studying the relationship between firefighting and cancer among all firefighters. The NFR will help researchers better understand and reduce cancer in firefighters by matching the information provided by participating NFR firefighters with cancer diagnosis information from state cancer registries. This matching process will allow NIOSH to study the relationship between firefighting and cancer outcomes over time.

Step 1: Firefighters sign up for the NFR.

Step 2: NIOSH researchers match firefighter profiles with potential information in state cancer registries over time. This makes it possible to study the relationship between firefighting and cancer over time, even if cancer diagnoses occur in the future.

Step 3: NIOSH captures work history details. This information can be used to better understand firefighters’ exposures and how they may be related to cancer.

Step 4: Stronger evidence can help inform new health and safety measures to protect firefighters from cancer. Combining information from firefighters across the U.S. will help researchers better understand cancer and its risk factors in the fire service, which could ultimately help reduce cancer among firefighters for generations to come.

## **XII. REVIEW OF THE 2013 VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD REPORT**

The Virginia Fire Services Board, with assistance from the Department of Fire Programs, the Department of Forestry, and the Office of Emergency Medical Services, conducted a fire and EMS study of Amherst County in 2013. A review by the current study team found that many of the 2013 recommendations were not present during the 2023 study. The study team encourages the Director of Public Safety and the County Administrator to review the 2013 report. The information below is not an exhaustive list but reflects certain recommendations from the 2013 report that should be noted. Please review the 2013 report for more extensive information

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<sup>17</sup> H.R. 931 “Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2018”. (2018) *115<sup>th</sup> U.S Congress*

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.



contained below. Failure to adopt recommendations contained in reports such as this often lead to reoccurring issues.

1. The adoption of a strategic plan
2. Amherst County should “formally practice and strictly enforce” accountability practices.
3. Coordinated and structured training
4. The adoption of a countywide recruitment and retention plan
5. Standardization and centralization of purchasing.

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## APPENDIX A

Resolution requesting the Virginia Fire Services Board conduct a comprehensive analysis of the Fire and EMS system of Amherst County, Virginia



### **Agenda Item VII.A.**

**Meeting Date:** August 2, 2022

**Department:** Public Safety

**Topic:** Virginia Fire Services Board Study.

**Board Action:** The Board is being asked to approve the request of the Emergency Services Council to conduct a study of Fire & EMS services in the County of Amherst, VA.

**Attachment:**

1. VFSB Findings and Recommendation Report 2013

**Summary:** A Virginia Fire Services Board study is recommended by the Emergency Services Council (ESC) on Fire and EMS service delivery in Amherst County. Senior leadership of the organizations realize there are only a few members to answer calls and there is a struggle to cover the calls and all the other administrative duties. The ESC and local fire companies are looking for input on sustainability, retention, and recruitment. Providing the required services in the current environment is not sustainable in the long term.

The Fire Services Board is a 15-member policy board within the commonwealth's executive branch. It's members are appointed by the governor for 4-year terms. One of the services it performs is to provide localities reviews of the effectiveness of their emergency services systems.

This study is conducted by the Fire Services Board at no cost to the locality. The last study was done in 2013 and is known as a Report of Findings and Recommendations. A copy of the last study is attached.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Board direct staff to obtain a study of Amherst County Fire & EMS services through the Virginia Fire Services Board.

**Comprehensive Plan Impact:** This topic is not addressed in the Comprehensive Plan.

## APPENDIX B

### Scope of Agreement between the County of Amherst and the Virginia Fire Services Board



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**

**Kelth H. Johnson  
VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES  
BOARD CHAIR**

**Virginia Department of Fire Programs**

**Scope of Fire and EMS Study Agreement**

**between the**

*Locality Amherst County*

**and the**

**Virginia Fire Services Board**

#### **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of this agreement is to establish mutually accepted duties, responsibilities, and expectations between the Virginia Fire Services Board, its designated Fire and EMS Study Committee and the locality which has requested the Fire and EMS Study/Technical Assistance from the Virginia Fire Service Board. The agreement is provided to help define activities and expectations between both parties.

#### **AGREEMENT**

- Study results/recommendations shall be comprehensive in nature and shall be consistent with and organized according to a final revised scope of work as negotiated between the Study Committee and the locality prior to the formal commencement of the Study. **\*\*Refer to Self-Assessment Questionnaire for Scope of Study.**
- While questions of staffing ratios, response time, capital equipment purchases, etc. are relevant to the Study process, the locality should not expect detailed recommendations in these areas beyond system-wide recommendations.
- Study Results will be openly presented to the elected/appointed governing body, the requesting agency as well as any additional requesting organization(s);
- The time frame noted for technical assistance will be accepted;

- All relevant organizational data will be made available to the study committee; and,
- Locality will provide to the Virginia Department of Fire Programs a central point of contact. Please ensure the contact is available Monday – Friday from 9 am to 5 pm, and nighttime and weekends as needed.
- Within 6 to 9 months of the Study completion, the Department of Fire Programs will email the locality a feedback follow-up survey. It is requested that the locality complete the survey so the Agency and Board can gain valuable in-sight into the success and areas of improvements for future studies. Your participation in the feedback survey is important to the Agency and Board.

**REVIEW AND TERM**

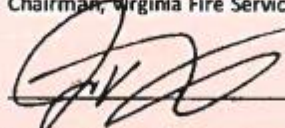
This agreement shall be in effect until the end of the Fire and EMS Study.

**SIGNED**

We do hereby acknowledge and agree to abide by the provisions of this Memorandum of Understanding.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Keith H. Johnson  
 Chairman, Virginia Fire Services Board

8/2/2023  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Authorized Locality Representative

1/26/23  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

**APPENDIX C**

Letter Requesting a Fire and EMS Study from the Amherst County Administrator



COUNTY OF AMHERST



**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

TELEPHONE (434) 946-9400

AMHERST COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
153 WASHINGTON STREET  
P. O. Box 390  
AMHERST, VIRGINIA 24521

FAX (434) 946-9370

January 11, 2023

Attn: Virginia Fire Services Board  
105 Technology Park Dr.  
Glen Allen, VA 23059

RE: Comprehensive Analysis Study of Fire/EMS System Request – Amherst County

This is to request the services of the Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB) in conducting a complete and thorough review of the fire and EMS system in Amherst County.

This study has the support of the Amherst County Board of Supervisors and County Administrator as shown by the attached Board of Supervisor’s minutes from the August 2, 2022 meeting Section VII New Business.

The requested areas of concentration of the study include:

- Organization
- Budget and Central Purchasing
- Personnel
- Training
- Fleet Design and Management (Equipment/Apparatus)
- Emergency Services Council
- Amherst Count Fire & Rescue Departments

It is the Board’s and County Administration’s proposal to have a complete and thorough review of the aforementioned areas of concentration and a comprehensive list of recommendations to enhance the delivery of services to the citizens of Amherst County.

Your consideration of this request at the next available opportunity would be greatly appreciated. Bradley Beam is the Director of Public Safety and is available to respond to any questions you may have regarding this request. He may be reached by phone at 434-661-7820 or by email at bsbeam@countyofamherst.com

Sincerely,

Jeremy Bryant  
Interim County Administrator

## **APPENDIX D**

Other resources available to the Director of Public Safety and Amherst County

### **1. Community Paramedicine**

- a. <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/emergency-medical-services/community-paramedicine-mobile-integrated-healthcare/>
- b. NFPA 450: Guide for Emergency Medical Services and Systems, 2021 Edition –
  - i. Chapter 14 Operations
  - ii. Annex B Time Intervals and Components.
    1. <https://catalog.nfpa.org/NFPA-450-Guide-for-Emergency-Medical-Services-and-Systems-P1307.aspx#:~:text=The%20comprehensive%202021%20edition%20of%20NFPA%20450%2C%20Guide,well%20as%20during%20the%20evaluation%20of%20measurable%20outcomes.>

### **2. Manuals**

- a. NVFC: Understanding & Implementing Standards: NFPA 1500,1720, and 1851
  - i. [https://www.nvfc.org/resource\\_item/understanding-implementing-nfpa-standards-1500-1720-1851-english/](https://www.nvfc.org/resource_item/understanding-implementing-nfpa-standards-1500-1720-1851-english/)
- b. NVFC: Understanding & Implementing Standards: NFPA 1407 and 1021
  - i. <https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Standards-Guide-Vol2-1407-1021.pdf>
- c. NVFC: Psychologically Healthy Fire Departments Implementation Toolkit
  - i. <https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/PHFD-Implementation-Toolkit.pdf>
- d. NVFC: What to expect: A Guide for Family Members of Volunteer Firefighters Volunteer Fire Services Culture: Essential Strategies for Success
  - i. <https://www.nvfc.org/guide-for-family-members-of-volunteer-responders-now-available/>

### **3. Informational Sheets**

- a. Training Volunteer Firefighters to be Combat Ready
  - i. Section 9: Developing and Implementing Training Best Practices
  - ii. Appendix B: Sample Knowledge and Skills Based Annual Training Topics Plan
  - iii. Appendix E: How to Use NFPA Standards To your Department's Advantage
    1. <https://www.iafc.org/docs/default-source/1vcos/operational-training-guide.pdf>
- b. The 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives
  - i. <https://www.everyonegoeshome.com/16-initiatives/>
- c. VFIS: NFPA 1500 Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health and Wellness Program Worksheet (2018 Edition)
  - i. <https://education.vfis.com/Portals/0/Documents/wellness/NFPA-1500-Worksheet-2018-Edition.pdf>
- d. NVFC: Conducting a Recruitment and Retention Needs Assessment



- i. <https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/RR-Needs-Assessment.pdf>

**APPENDIX E**

County of Amherst Fire and EMS Study Report (2013)

# VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD



## A Report of Findings and Recommendations:



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The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

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Amherst Department of Public Safety

Pedlar Fire and Rescue

Amherst Fire Department

Amherst Life Saving Crew

Monelison Rescue Squad

Monelison Fire Department

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report documents the findings and recommendations for the Amherst County Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Study. The information contained is not to be construed as legal advice or as binding recommendations. This report is intended to provide guidance for Amherst County Board of Supervisors and its fire and rescue stakeholders to build on what is working well, while observing opportunities for improvement. Strategic focus in these areas will enhance the overall quality and coordination of fire-rescue service delivery to residents of Amherst County.

The study was requested by the Amherst County Board of Supervisors in order to analyze several areas of responsibility within the County's fire and rescue services. The Study Committee was comprised of representatives from the Virginia Fire Services Board, the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, the Virginia Department of Forestry and the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services.

The findings and recommendations are organized into five working themes to include:

- Organizational Development
- Communication
- Training
- Budget and Administration
- Delivery of Services

These working themes provide a central focus for prioritizing the study's recommendations. They serve as a guide for the Study Committee to identify and evaluate measures that ultimately will improve the quality and coordination of fire and rescue services within Amherst County.

Below is a high-level summary of the findings and recommendations, which will be discussed further in the report.

### ***Theme 1: Organizational Development (Page 11)***

- **Centralized Authority for Fire and Rescue Services:** The Amherst County Board of Supervisors should restructure the Emergency Services Council.
- **Lack of Strategic Plan and Unified Mission:** Amherst County should develop a strategic plan for fire and rescue services to increase performance levels and service delivery. In addition, the County should develop unified vision and mission statements for the entire County Emergency Services.
- **Continuity of Leadership and Succession Planning:** Amherst County should develop a program that illustrates leadership and interpersonal relationship skills within the fire and rescue services and focuses on growing future leadership.

- Accountability Practices: The Emergency Services Council should formally practice and strictly enforce the current countywide standard operating guidelines.

**Theme 2: Communications (Page 18)**

- Levels of Interdepartmental Communications: The County should host a strategic communication session to resolve existing challenges and barriers between the Amherst County Board of Supervisors, the County Administration, the Emergency Services Council and members of the volunteer fire and rescue departments.
- Improved Dispatch System: Amherst County should continuously monitor and seek to improve its existing dispatch protocol to ensure a high level of efficiency and effectiveness.

**Theme 3: Training (Page 21)**

- Coordinated Training Program: The County should work with the Emergency Services Council to develop a structured and coordinated training program to address the comprehensive training needs of the entire County. The Council should further schedule classes accordingly and provide appropriate notification emergency services personnel. It is imperative to tailor training requirements to the needs of Amherst County.

**Theme 4: Budget and Administration (Page 23)**

- County Funding and Capital Improvements: Amherst County should develop a countywide capital improvement plan for upgrading its fire and rescue stations and equipment. The Board of Supervisors should require documentation of expenditures and annually audit funds.
- Standardization and Central Purchasing: Working with the Emergency Services Council, the County Administration should develop and implement a centralized purchasing option to establish equipment and apparatus standardization and reduce operational expenses.

**Theme 5: Delivery of Services (Page 27)**

- Operations and Staffing: The County should enforce the Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines (SOPs/SOGs). The County should keep accurate records of incident response times in order to continuously assess response capabilities.
- Recruitment and Retention: Amherst County should adopt a countywide recruitment and retention plan in addition to examining the feasibility of reinstating the Recruitment and Retention Officer Position.

## **METHODOLOGY**

For each task of the work plan, the Study Committee identified objectives, performed specific activities, and delivered project products. The following is an overview of the study process:

### **PHASE I: INITIATE PROJECT**

#### ***Objectives: Initiation of Study***

To initiate the study, the Study Committee began by gaining a comprehensive understanding of the project's background, goals, and expectations. This was carried out by identifying in detail the specific objectives for the review, and assessing how well the work plan would accomplish the objectives. In addition, the Study Committee set out to establish a mutually agreed project work plan, timeline, deliverables, and monitoring procedures that would support the accomplishment of all project objectives. The final study initiation step consisted of collecting and reviewing existing operational data, information on agreements along with relevant policies and procedures. Many of these review materials are included in the appendix of this study.

As part of Phase I, the Study Committee met with Amherst County leadership to establish working relationships, make logistical arrangements, and determine communication lines. During these meetings, the Study Committee discussed the objectives of the project and identified policy issues and concerns central to the study.

The meetings also allowed the Study Committee to obtain pertinent reports and background materials relevant to the review, such as current and historical staffing data, as well as a description of the current service delivery system and organization.

Based on this course of action, the Study Committee concluded this section of the study with a revised project work plan/timeline deliverable.

### **PHASE II: OBTAIN STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

#### ***Objectives: Conduct Leadership Interviews & Capture Input from the Departments***

The second phase of the study consisted of leadership interviews and department evaluations. The expectations were as follows:

- Identify expected service levels;
- Identify opinions of department officials concerning the operations and performance of the department;
- Identify issues and concerns of officials regarding fire and rescue services;
- Identify perceived gaps in existing service levels and new priorities in mission; and,
- Identify strengths and weaknesses as perceived by departmental personnel.



Each goal was realized with the support of Amherst County's study project manager and Director of Public Safety, Gary Roakes. Mr. Roakes assisted in finalizing the interview list and establishing a schedule that was reasonable, but more importantly convenient for the interviewees. All interviews were conducted during an allotted timeframe and a considerable amount of information was collected. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with majority of Amherst County's Fire and Rescue organizations as well as County leadership including County Administrator Clarence C. Monday.

The Study Committee received descriptions of staffing and deployment responses in meeting service demands at targeted service levels. The discussions also provided a snapshot of personnel management contentions as well as concerns regarding service delivery. It is also important to note that the Study Committee visited all fire and rescue stations throughout Amherst County in an effort to supplement their research of the County's organizational functioning.

The deliverable for this section of the study work plan consisted of a thorough evaluation of the site visit data and the development of working themes to capture the team's assessment.

### **PHASE III: PREPARE ANALYSES AND DEVELOP CORE STRATEGIES**

#### ***Objectives: Evaluate Current Trends and Prepare a Report***

The third phase of the study work plan involved further investigation and understanding of the organizational structures, operations, limitations, achievements, and opportunities for improvement within the volunteer and career system. The activities that supported this process consisted of additional requests for information not already obtained in Phase I and II of the work plan. Data requests, made in this phase of the study, attempt to address any issues that emerged from the interviews, and further evaluate implications of the operational issues cited. Data obtained during the study process also assists the Study Committee in identifying issues influencing the current levels of service.

After receiving and critically evaluating information from the interviews and all supporting materials, the Study Committee began identifying the necessary critical action steps to achieve exceptional organizational functioning and uniform service levels throughout Amherst County.

Each action step was selected to identify the changes in policies, facilities, apparatus, and equipment to ensure that the County would be capable of providing fire-rescue services at the desired level going forward.

The deliverables achieved in Phase III involved drafting a report that evaluated current trends in the services, recommended action steps for improvement, and the assignment of responsibility.

#### **PHASE IV: PREPARE FINAL REPORT**

##### ***Objectives: Prepare and Present Final Report***

The final phase of the study involved documenting the results of all previous tasks into a written report with critical components, such as an executive summary, methodology, background, and findings and recommendations. Once completed, a draft report was shared with the designated locality project manager, Gary Roakes to ensure the content is accurate. Upon receiving corrections, the Study Committee revised the draft report, as needed, to assist in the preparation and issuance of the final report.

The deliverables for the final phase of the work plan consisted of 1) a draft report, and 2) the final report.

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## **COUNTY DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

Amherst County is located near the geographic center of Virginia north of the city of Lynchburg and on the south and east of the historic James River. The county has a total of 479 square miles with about 68.3 persons per square mile.<sup>1</sup> Its neighboring localities include City of Lynchburg on the southern boundary, Roanoke about fifty miles to the southwest and Charlottesville within fifty miles north. Amherst County is part of the Lynchburg Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).<sup>2</sup> The Lynchburg MSA includes Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, and Campbell counties and the city of Lynchburg.

The County<sup>3</sup> is bisected north to south by US Route 29 running from Washington, DC to Greensboro, NC and east to west by US Route 60 running from Richmond to Lexington.<sup>4</sup> U.S. Route 29 has become the focal point for most commercial, industrial and residential development<sup>5</sup>. Amherst is serviced by both Norfolk Southern and CSX.<sup>6</sup> In addition to several trucking companies that service Amherst, the county serves as a headquarter location for Harris Trucking, one of the leading family-owned trucking companies in the east coast. Harris Trucking operates over 200 tractors and 400 trailers.<sup>7</sup>

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the population of Amherst County is 32,353 with a median age of 40 years old<sup>8</sup>. The median household income is \$44,383 which is \$18,919 below the average for Virginia<sup>9</sup>. In 2012, the top employing industries in Amherst County were government, manufacturing, health care and social assistance and retail trade<sup>10</sup>. As of 2012, the unemployment rate for Amherst County was 6.1%.<sup>11</sup>

The fire and rescue services of Amherst County are provided by a dedicated group of volunteers, with supplemental paid fire and rescue staff. Collectively, these six organizations provide firefighting and emergency medical services from stations located throughout the county. A listing of the fire and rescue services providers can be found below.

Amherst Department of Public Safety  
Pedlar Fire and Rescue  
Amherst Fire Department  
Amherst Life Saving Crew  
Monelison Rescue Squad  
Monelison Fire Department

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts

<sup>2</sup> Virginia Economic Development Partnership

<sup>3</sup> The "County" refers to Amherst County

<sup>4</sup> Virginia Economic Development Partnership

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Virginia Economic Development Partnership

<sup>11</sup> Virginia Employment Commission

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

The goal of the fire and rescue service is to protect life and property by delivering the highest possible level of service consistent with need at the lowest possible cost consistent with safety. First responders responsible for fire suppression provide an array of additional emergency services to the residents of Amherst County. They include light and heavy rescue, vehicle extrication, water rescue, hazardous materials, and other non-emergency activities. The rescue squads within the County provide basic life support (BLS) and advanced life support (ALS) rescue ambulance services to all areas of the County. During 2012, Amherst County responded to approximately 2,858 fire and emergency medical services (EMS).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS) Appendix 2 and Virginia Pre-Hospital Information Bridge Report Appendix 3

## **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section provides a summary of the five working themes for this study report. The summary is based on areas of concern that were repeatedly cited in the face-to-face interviews and observed during the site visit. Following this section is an in-depth examination of each theme, to include findings and recommendations.

### **Theme 1: Organizational Development (Page 11)**

- Centralized Authority for Fire and Rescue Services
- Lack of Strategic Plan and Unified Mission
- Continuity of Leadership and Succession Planning
- Accountability Practices

### **Theme 2: Communications (Page 18)**

- Levels of Interdepartmental Communications
- Improved Dispatch System

### **Theme 3: Training (Page 21)**

- Coordinated Training Program

### **Theme 4: Budget and Administration (Page 23)**

- County Funding and Capital Improvements
- Standardization and Central Purchasing

### **Theme 5: Delivery of Services (Page 27)**

- Operations and Staffing
- Recruitment and Retention

Amherst County's fire and rescue service providers and administration should utilize the national consensus standards. The standards were developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) with the input and support of fire and emergency services personnel, businesses, industry and other stakeholders, as guidance documents and resources to address several of the findings identified in this report.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> For a complete listing of the national consensus standards developed by the National Fire Prevention Association, visit: [http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/list\\_of\\_codes\\_and\\_standards.asp](http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/list_of_codes_and_standards.asp)

## **THEME 1: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

One of the major concerns identified was the limitation of Amherst County's communication and coordination among its fire and rescue organizations and County leadership. Part of this issue occurs due to the lack of clarity in the organizational structure. Amherst County Department of Public Safety created under the county's ordinance oversees four divisions: fire division, EMS/rescue division, communications division, and emergency management division.<sup>14</sup> The director serves as the manager tasked with providing control over the four public safety divisions.

Moreover, the county ordinance establishes the Amherst County Emergency Services Council which has the following representatives; at a minimum, of two (2) representatives and one (1) alternate to be appointed from each of the following entities; Amherst Fire Department, Monelison Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad, Pedlar Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad, Inc., Amherst Life Saving & First Aid Crew, Inc. and Amherst County Search and Rescue. The council membership extends membership to one (1) representative and one (1) alternate from each of the following entities: Piney River Volunteer Fire Department, Inc., Gladstone Volunteer Fire Department, Inc., Big Island Volunteer Fire Department, Roseland Rescue Squad, Big Island Rescue Squad, Inc., and Gladstone Volunteer Rescue Squad, Inc.<sup>15</sup> The aforementioned fire and rescue companies are non-jurisdictional entities that are authorized to provide mutual aid for Amherst County. Lastly, there are two (2) citizens nominated by the fire and rescue community and appointed by the board of supervisors, one (1) member of the board of supervisors and Amherst County Sheriff. The Public Safety Director also serves on the council as a non-voting member. The Council<sup>16</sup> was established in an effort to include stakeholders in the decision-making process on issues of public concern related to fire, rescue and emergency services in Amherst County.

As a result of the large membership, the Emergency Services Council has not been able to produce results. Additionally, as established in the county ordinance but often neglected, the council serves as a public forum so that entities can collectively decide on matters that will be brought to the attention of the Board of Supervisors. However, such defined role is not enforced or adhered to. Based on observations, the Emergency Services Council are perceived as unproductive and generally disregarded in terms of decision-making. The lack of a clearly defined governance system could have a negative impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of Amherst's fire and rescue organizations.

Disorganization negatively affects the service delivery to residents of Amherst County and its visitors. Additionally, the confusion over the current organizational structure creates liability issues for the county. In order to improve Amherst County's level of service, it is recommended that internal organizational development strategies be considered. This recommendation

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<sup>14</sup> Public Safety Chapter of the Amherst County Code

<sup>15</sup> Public Safety Chapter of the Amherst County Code

<sup>16</sup> The Council will be used to refer to the Emergency Services Council

encourages organizational cohesion, innovation, and effectiveness while guiding the inevitable change that will occur as Amherst County strengthens its fire suppression and rescue capabilities.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Amherst County Board of Supervisors should restructure the Emergency Services Council.
  - a. The county should reexamine the composition of the Emergency Services Council and reduce the membership to a manageable level which consists of Amherst County fire chiefs, rescue captains, director of public safety and one representative from the communications division and the sheriff's office, respectively.
  - b. The restructured Emergency Services Council can abide by the existing bylaws per the Public Safety Chapter of the Amherst County Code.
  - c. The Emergency Services Council should enforce and adhere to the Amherst County Code on Public Safety section 11.5-6 regarding the bylaws. The effort will ensure the council effectively achieves their specific responsibilities and expectations to improve the organizational cohesiveness and efficiency of public safety in Amherst County.
  - d. This council should collectively as one unit provide advice and feedback directly to the County Administration and Board of Supervisors.
2. If organized and the council bylaws are enforced, the Emergency Services Council will be able to ensure that all fire and rescue service providers within the County are working together.
  - a. It is imperative that the county moves forward together and not in multiple directions.
  - b. Collaboration will help to develop ownership in a unified system and create transparency.<sup>17</sup>
3. The Emergency Services Council in collaboration with the Department of Public Safety should enforce existing countywide Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines (SOPs/SOGs) with an accountability system.
  - a. If needed, informational and training sessions must be held with all Amherst County fire and rescue members to ensure all personnel are knowledgeable and adhere to the county's SOG.

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<sup>17</sup> Leading the Transition in Volunteer and Combination Fire Departments, November 2005

- b. New members should receive training on the standard operating guidelines during their orientation to ensure they abide by the county's SOG.
  - c. It is imperative that all members thoroughly understand their responsibilities and expectations.
4. This study should be used as a starting point for continuously reexamining and developing the most efficient and effective Fire Rescue System to meet the community's needs.

### ***Centralized Authority for Fire and Rescue Services***

In the current organizational structure, the Amherst Department of Public Safety serves as the centralized authority. It contains four divisions which are fire division, EMS/rescue division, communications division, and emergency management division. According to Amherst County code, the public safety department's task is to provide an effective management of the existing emergency services operations within the county.<sup>18</sup> Director of Public Safety is appointed and acts as the emergency services coordinator.

Although it may have been the intent of the Board of Supervisors to provide the Director of Public Safety the administrative and operational authority, in practice this individual serves more as the liaison between the County Administration and the fire and rescue organizations. Due to the limited personnel in Amherst, it has strained the county to increase the workload of its limited members with multiple responsibilities. Consequently, the Director and Deputy Director of Public Safety spend substantial amount of time providing rescue and fire services on a daily basis. This in effect prevents the Director of Public Safety from effectively exercising full supervisory authority over the four aforementioned divisions.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Amherst County Government<sup>19</sup> should work with the Emergency Services Council to identify needs for additional fire and rescue personnel to meet service demands and citizen expectations.
  - a. The County Government should reexamine its current system and must find methods to effectively use the human capital that are in the fire and rescue system presently.
  - b. The County Government should find methods to create additional personnel to assist the Director and Deputy Director of Public Safety. The present organizational structure has too many jobs for two people to accomplish.
  - c. Amherst County will be better able to determine fire and rescue personnel and equipment needs, and deployment.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Public safety chapter of the Amherst County Code

<sup>19</sup> County Government refers to both the County Administration and Board of Supervisors

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## ***Lack of Strategic Plan and Unified Mission***

During the site visit, Amherst County's fire and rescue organizations acknowledged the need for improved fire and rescue coordination. The current organizational structure does not provide a clear division of labor. This is especially true for the administrative and operational responsibility aspect of the organizations involved, both for career and volunteer members. The County's Emergency Services Council has about twenty representatives which Amherst County's fire rescue personnel felt was oversized, unproductive and generally disregarded in terms of its decision-making. These factors have negatively affected the overall morale of Amherst's fire and rescue organizations.

The first steps to resolving clarity within the fire and rescue services organizational structure is to pursue the establishment of a Strategic Plan. Strategic planning must become institutionalized as an integral part of fire and rescue departments and community resource allocations.<sup>21</sup> A strategic plan will provide a basis for long-term operational planning and will serve as a framework for services.<sup>22</sup> The strategic plan will further allow the vested parties the opportunity to create effective policies while attuned to its publics' interests, demands, and expectations. It is imperative to keep in mind that decisions only have legitimacy if parties involved work together and are in agreement.<sup>23</sup> The strategic planning process will create public value for Amherst County if the fire and EMS and other stakeholders are fairly represented and there is effective use of relevant expertise along with transparency of the deliberations.<sup>24</sup>

### **Recommendations:**

1. Working with the Emergency Services Council, the Amherst County Board of Supervisors and County Administration should adopt and implement a strategic plan for its fire and rescue services to increase performance levels and achieve lower cost of service delivery.
  - a. Stakeholders such as fire and rescue personnel and county leadership must each play an integral part in the development of this strategic plan in order to meet stakeholder's expectations and foster commitment.
  - b. Parties involved in the strategic planning process should analyze the gap between where the county is and where it wants to be in the future and identify strategies to close such gap.

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<sup>20</sup> International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) - "Make Better Decisions: Put Your Data to Work," <http://www.iafc.org/MemberCenter/OnSceneArticle.cfm?ItemNumber=5840>. This article provides an example of how multiple sources of data can be incorporated into fire and rescue department planning.

<sup>21</sup> Preserving and Improving the Future of the Volunteer Fire Service, March 2004

<sup>22</sup> Leading the Transition in Volunteer and Combination Fire Departments, November 2005

<sup>23</sup> Mark Moore, *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*, 1995

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

- c. The County should seek to reduce residents insurance cost by incorporating methods for improving their Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating into the strategic plan.
    - d. It is suggested that a neutral party facilitate this process.
  2. In developing its strategic plan, the Emergency Services Council should create a unified vision and mission statement for the Amherst County Fire-Rescue System.
    - a. A unified vision statement will provide the fire and rescue organizations and Amherst County an expansive, aspiring image of the future of fire and rescue services. The vision statement should emphasize purposes, performance criteria, decision rules and standards that serve the public.<sup>25</sup>
    - b. A unified mission statement will ensure the fire and rescue organizations are collectively moving forward in one direction to improve service delivery. It will further foster a habit of focusing discussions and meetings on important issues.<sup>26</sup>
  3. The Emergency Services Council should establish a system of measurable goals and objectives. The performance measurement's factors will strengthen the newly developed strategic plan.
    - a. Strategic plans should identify immediate, intermediate and long-term goals with reasonable target deadlines.
    - b. Goals and objectives should be quantifiable, consistent, realistic and achievable.<sup>27</sup>
    - c. The Board of Supervisors should routinely assess the achievement of these performance measurements and alleviate any barriers to their completion.
  4. In developing its strategic plan, Amherst County's fire and rescue organizations should continue their commitment to using incident analysis and reporting, to include the Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS) and the Virginia Pre-Hospital Information Bridge (VPHIB).
    - a. Amherst County's commitment to reporting will ensure that they have reliable data to appropriately develop a plan to address operational and capital funding needs, or equipment, apparatus and facility needs.
    - b. By analyzing fire and rescue incident data and potential community hazards, a plan can be developed to address deployment of resources, placement of sub stations, and the number of personnel needed for response and prevention efforts.

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<sup>25</sup> John Bryson, *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, 2004

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Leading the Transition in Volunteer and Combination Fire Departments, November 2005

- c. Access to the data collected should be provided to rescue squads and fire departments so they are able to get a comprehensive understanding of their performance.
- d. The use of data such as VFIRS and VPHIB can be contributing factors to performance measurement and can further enable stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of the strategic plan.

In Amherst County, performance measurements will enable the Board of Supervisors to evaluate the performance of fire and rescue entities tasked with accomplishing the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.<sup>28</sup> The performance measurement will exhibit clear association between performing, planning, spending and results.<sup>29</sup> Amherst County will have the opportunity to evaluate its mission, vision and performance objectives through three perspectives: financial accountability, constituent priorities and internal processes<sup>30</sup>.

### ***Continuity of Leadership and Succession Planning***

The Emergency Services Council should consider developing a continuity of leadership or succession planning program to focus on training and mentoring future leaders within the system. The succession planning program will ensure retention of institutional knowledge, including subsidizing advanced officer training. A succession plan will address the needs of the Amherst County fire and rescue services by providing formal program to develop and enhance the future potential of personnel.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Amherst County should develop a program that demonstrates to all fire and rescue personnel the value of leadership and interpersonal relationship skills. The following elements should be considered for inclusion in the program:
  - a. A Leadership and Career development program for the volunteer fire and rescue personnel that focuses on the following subject areas; Management, Prevention, Operations and Safety.<sup>31</sup>
  - b. Incentives for advanced training and higher education.
  - c. Leadership training should be offered as an ongoing long-term project.
  - d. With the assistance of a trained facilitator, the fire and rescue organizations should hold a focus group consisting of stakeholders to determine how to accomplish and successfully implement the program.

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<sup>28</sup> Gerald Gordon, *Strategic Planning for Local Government*, 2005

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> William Shouldis, *Officer Development Programs on a Budget*, 2008

## ***Accountability Practices***

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), a standard operating procedure is “an organizational directive that establishes a standard course of action.”<sup>32</sup> Thus, standard operating procedures (SOPs) are written guidelines that explain what is expected and required of fire service personnel in performing their jobs.<sup>33</sup> It is critical for Amherst fire and rescue personnel adhere to the established system of SOPs to better coordinate service delivery throughout the county. It is imperative that all members thoroughly understand their responsibilities and expectations. Organizations that lack SOPs are increasingly vulnerable to accidents, lawsuits, preventable costs, personnel problems, and damage to their professional image.

1. Utilizing the guidelines outlined in NFPA 1561: Standard on Fire Department Incident Management Systems, Amherst County should formally articulate, practice and strictly enforce a countywide Incident Management System policy and accountability system.
  - a. Increased structure and coordination to the management of emergency incidents will ensure the safety and health of fire-rescue personnel.
  - b. The county should emphasize the importance of incident management system in managing all emergency incidents and training exercises. Amherst County should further emphasize the importance of written plans to anticipate incidents that require standardized procedures.
  - c. National and state standards should be used as a guide for the development process, such as the Incident Command System.<sup>34</sup>
  - d. It is recommended that these management principles be practiced through full-scale exercises. This will help identify response challenges and allow them to be resolved before an incident.
2. The county should consider appointing a Safety Officer with the authority to identify health and safety hazards and ensure that they are corrected.
  - a. Every emergency scene must be properly assessed to identify any potential hazards. This information will provide guidance in strategic and tactical decisions and must be communicated to all emergency responders.
  - b. The county must strive to protect its first responders at all times and should implement a standard personnel accountability system to account for all firefighters on scene.

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<sup>32</sup> Developing Effective Standard Operating Procedures for Fire and EMS Departments, December 1999

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> Incident Command System, Overview; <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/IncidentCommandSystem.shtm>

- c. The county should utilize *NFPA 1521: Standard on Fire Department Safety Officer*<sup>35</sup> as a guide for the development process.

## **THEME 2: COMMUNICATIONS**

In order to develop a cohesive Fire-Rescue System<sup>36</sup> in Amherst County, the Board of Supervisors and the County Administration must foster positive internal and external communication among the county's fire and rescue organizations along with members of the general public. Without effective and trusting relationships, the county will have limited success with the recommendations contained in this report and any other attempts at coordinating and improving the fire and rescue services in Amherst County. Before other identified recommendations can be implemented, effective and reliable communication capabilities must be established between the volunteer departments and the county.

Public safety personnel must have access to reliable and instantaneous communications at all times to effectively coordinate response and recovery operations. Emergency communications is not solely a product of technology, but rather a condition of a locality's governance, standard operating procedures and training. To achieve an effective and efficient emergency response framework, all areas of emergency communications must collectively work effectively.<sup>37</sup> Without reliable communications, the safety and security of Amherst County's fire and rescue service providers are jeopardized.

### ***Levels of Interdepartmental Communications***

During the site visit, the study committee observed and documented a breakdown of communication among the fire departments, rescue squads, Emergency Services Council and the County Government. The first issue that came to light was the high level of bypass that occurs among the Emergency Services Council members in regards to communicating with the Board of Supervisors. Members often would seek to get an issue brought into their respective Board of Supervisor's attention without bringing the matter to council meetings. As a result of such method, the council is not able to effectively make policy recommendations to the Board of Supervisors collectively.

There are continuous mistrust and frustration between career fire and rescue personnel in the county. The lack of personal and professional communications between the volunteers and career staff is negatively affecting the application of fire and rescue activities in Amherst County. The study team detected a high level of anticipation on the part of volunteers as it relates to transitioning the county fire and rescue into career based system. Consequently, such rumors have negatively affected the relationship between the volunteers and career personnel. Without committed efforts to improve the existing communication challenges,

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<sup>35</sup> NFPA 1521, <http://www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/document-information-pages?mode=code&code=1521>

<sup>36</sup> The Amherst County Fire-Rescue System (Fire-Rescue System or System) means all those fire and rescue organizations that are recognized by the County as providers of fire, rescue services, and primarily respond to incidents within the County.

<sup>37</sup> Ten Years After 9/11: Improving Emergency Communications: Hearing before the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (July 2011).

there will be no improvement of Amherst County's overall fire and rescue operations. Such obstacle will create resistance towards service delivery enhancement and will continue to alienate each fire department and rescue squad throughout the county.

The burden lies with the County Administration and the Board of Supervisors to resolve this perception and ensure an open and honest dialogue is established. The county must identify and resolve the breakdowns in communications and work tirelessly to educate all members.<sup>38</sup> The current unresolved conflicts have the potential to divert fire and rescue personnel from their core mission of assisting the residents of Amherst County. All relevant parties must work together to provide the highest quality level of service.

**Recommendations:**

1. The county should host a strategic communication session with a professional mediator to resolve existing challenges and barriers amongst the following entities; fire and rescue departments, Emergency Services Council along with Amherst County Administration and its Board of Supervisors.
  - a. The objective of this work session should be to develop strategies to overcome identified barriers. It should further create and implement an effective communication system involving fire and rescue departments, County Government and with the general public.
  - b. The county must develop an efficient and effective communication model to ensure all stakeholders within the public safety community have input into long-term plans and decisions.
  - c. This communication model must ensure reliable documentation related to public safety strategic planning and development. It must be disseminated and received by all public safety stakeholders.
  - d. The communication session should further serve as an opportunity to clarify and establish countywide division of labor.
2. The county should strengthen its fire and life-safety communication activities with the residents of Amherst County.
  - a. Increased efforts to promote the positives attributes of the fire and rescue services in Amherst County can raise morale and attract more volunteers. Some options include producing an annual report, developing a quarterly newsletter and utilizing social networking avenues.

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<sup>38</sup> Leading the Transition in Volunteer and Combination Fire Departments, November 2005

3. The county should take advantage of pre-existing fire and life-safety information available through state and federal organizations. Public fire and life-safety education resources are available at the following locations:

- i. Virginia Department of Fire Programs:  
[http://vafire.com/fire\\_safety\\_education](http://vafire.com/fire_safety_education)
- ii. Virginia Fire and Life Safety Coalition: <http://www.vflsc.org>
- iii. The Home Safety Council: <http://www.homesafetycouncil.org>
- iv. National Fire Protection Association: <http://www.nfpa.org>
- v. Virginia Department of Forestry: <http://www.fireAmherstvirginia.org>
- vi. Virginia Department of Emergency Management:  
<http://www.vaemergency.gov/social-media/alert-localities>

### ***Improved Dispatch System***

The current dispatch system utilizes four stations with up-to-date technology. It is able to answer all calls-for-service for law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services throughout the county. Amherst County presently has a written dispatch procedure in place. However, it is recommended for the county to continuously monitor and seek to improve its existing dispatch protocol to ensure it is efficient and effective. Lastly, some of the radios held by previous fire and rescue volunteers have not been returned. Thus, it has caused a shortage on portable radios.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Amherst County should monitor and improve its existing dispatch protocol.
  - a. Identify specific criteria regarding what qualifies a BLS or ALS call through the County's Operational Medical Director.
  - b. Leadership at rescue and fire departments must ensure the radios given to volunteers are returned immediately following their departure from the agency.
2. Accounting for call volume and complexity, the Amherst County Board of Supervisors should examine the feasibility of increasing dispatch personnel.
  - a. Additional staff will likely improve the overall quality of dispatch operations by affording each dispatcher sufficient time to document all pertinent information and efficiently relay it to first responders.
  - b. The county should consider improving the use of emergency medical dispatch program.
  - c. The following resources are provided as a means of analyzing staffing to ensure adequate dispatch coverage:

- i. The Association of Public Safety Communication Officials (APCO) – Project RETAINS Toolkit 2.0;
  - ii. The National Fire Protection Association’s (NFPA) Standard 1221 – Standard for the Installation, Maintenance and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems; and,
  - iii. The National Emergency Numbers Association’s (NENA) Standard 56-002: 9-1-1 Call Answering Standard/Model Recommendation.
- 3. The Amherst County Board of Supervisors should appoint a Communications Advisory Committee from the Emergency Services Council or outside to thoroughly analyze the county’s overall dispatch system.
  - a. The Committee should meet at least quarterly, more often if needed.
  - b. Membership shall include representatives from fire, rescue and law enforcement.
  - c. The Committee should review dispatch protocols, procedures, staffing and equipment upgrades and provide recommendations to the Director of Public Safety.
  - d. The county representative should be the Director of Public Safety who will serve as an ex-officio member of the Advisory Committee. The Director will be responsible for communicating recommendations to the County Administration.
- 4. Based on the guidance from the Communications Advisory Committee, the Emergency Services Council should enhance the current dispatch protocols and procedures.
  - a. The level of response should be consistent across each department and throughout the day.
  - b. Standardization of dispatch protocols will improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of Amherst County’s fire and rescue response.
  - c. Response times should be continuously evaluated for effectiveness.

### **THEME 3: TRAINING**

One of the secrets of a successful countywide Fire-Rescue System is the full integration of volunteer personnel, regardless of their affiliation at the tactical level. Tactical equality recognizes all positions, from firefighter through senior fire officer and requires minimum training standards to ensure performance level.<sup>39</sup> Tactical equality is achievable in Amherst County if the Department of Public Safety provides performance-based, certifiable training and the opportunity for all volunteer personnel to train together. The approach will facilitate the development of personal and professional relationships. Training and continuity of leadership

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<sup>39</sup> Leading the Transition in Volunteer and Combination Fire Departments, November 2005

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are closely joined because solid basic training will foster strong and consistent cooperation among the county's emergency response agencies.

### ***Coordinated Training Program***

Development of important skills is the basis for safety and improving services received by the citizens. The fire and rescue organizations in Amherst County work hard to ensure the sufficient offerings of mandated and relevant training. During the site visit, the study committee heard the hours for minimum training standards required by fire personnel was in fact more than needed for a small county and therefore required a comprehensive review.

1. Aligning with the strategic planning efforts, it is recommended that a structured and coordinated training program be developed to address the comprehensive training needs of the entire County and schedule classes accordingly.
  - a. The county should develop a comprehensive training program to be assessed annually. Such assessment will enable the adoption of warranted changes.
2. The Emergency Services Council in collaboration with the Board of Supervisors and County Administration should explore the feasibility of creating a Training Committee from the Emergency Services Council to develop and coordinate the application of a countywide training program.
  - a. The committee should work to increase the number of training courses and enhance efforts of collaborative multi-company training opportunities.
  - b. It is important for the Training Committee to ensure that the necessary training is being offered and with appropriate notice to ensure maximum turnout and return on investment.
  - c. Better coordination and increased local training opportunities will also assist with recruitment and retention efforts for Amherst County's fire and rescue organizations.
  - d. The county should explore utilizing both traditional classroom platforms as well as distance learning models. Online training allows greater flexibility in the application of courses to accommodate the schedule of volunteers.
  - e. The Board of Supervisors should appropriate all the necessary resources to fulfill the county's identified training challenges and fully train existing firefighters and rescue personnel.
  - f. The county should enforce the training requirements and ensure all fire and rescue service providers are competent and capable to perform assigned duties.

3. The Emergency Services Council should encourage all new firefighters be cross-trained as Emergency Medical First Responders, at minimum, to enhance rescue capacity within Amherst County.
  - a. The Emergency Medical Responder/First Responder (EMR/FR) program offered by the Virginia Department of Health (Office of Emergency Medical Services) provides training in emergency care for those who are likely to be the first personnel responding to the scene of an accident, fire, or medical emergency.<sup>40</sup>
  - b. The course prepares the responder to address the immediate life threats and injuries until more highly-trained personnel are available.
  - c. Having all firefighters obtain a first responder certification will ensure a rapid response in the event of a major medical emergency or trauma.
  - d. The Emergency Medical First Responder classes should be offered in conjunction with each Firefighter I program.

#### **THEME 4: BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION**

The fire and rescue departments in Amherst County receive funding from state, local and federal avenues to cover expenses. In FY2013, Amherst County received a total of \$93,910 from the Commonwealth of Virginia's Fire Programs Fund. Amherst County also receives approximately \$25,000 from the Office of Emergency Medical Services in Four-for-Life funds, which are utilized to fund training, personnel and equipment expenses.<sup>41</sup> To supplement operational cost, some fire departments and rescue squads have a fundraising. With respect to utility bills, the county pays for most expenses including fuel.

#### ***County Funding and Capital Improvements***

Amherst County provides funding to the fire and rescue organizations without a consistent funding formula and utilizes incremental adjustments. Additionally, there is a blanket funding to outside county agencies for providing services. Amherst County should restructure the funding model to better achieve equitable and performance based budgeting. Budget transparency should not be perceived negatively or as a method for the county to micromanage its fire and rescue departments. The Board of Supervisors has been trusted by the citizens of Amherst County to exercise fiscal responsibility and must therefore ensure taxpayers' dollars are spent efficiently. The burden rests with the Amherst County Board of Supervisors to ensure its limited monies are utilized responsibly and fairly.

Strong accounting practices and accountability measures provide fire and rescue leadership the opportunity to demonstrate its financial needs may be greater than the allocated monies. The

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<sup>40</sup> Virginia Department of Health (Office of Emergency Medical Services)

<sup>41</sup> Office of Emergency Medical Services

Board of Supervisors should require each fire department and rescue squad to annually provide yearly financial compilations. Greater transparency over the budget will provide another venue to eliminate the apparent distrust between the Board of Supervisors and the Fire-Rescue System's leadership.

**Recommendations:**

1. Amherst County should stop using blanket funding. It is imperative for the County Government to restructure the current funding model so it is able to achieve an equitable and performance based model.
  - a. Amherst County currently uses inconsistent funding method that shows allocation of monies to fire and rescue organization regardless of their performance or call volume.
2. Amherst County should complete a yearly countywide needs assessment for the delivery of fire and rescue services and develop a base funding allocation system upon the priorities set through the needs assessment and quantitative data.
  - a. Monies should be allocated based on the most critical needs and the highest call volume data.
  - b. It is recommended that the county continuously evaluate whether it is getting the appropriate return on its investments.
  - c. The strategic plan adopted by the Emergency Services Council should serve as a guide for the funding decisions to account for services rendered and equipment deficiencies.
3. An accountability plan should be developed for county funds and revenue recovery funds. The plan should be communicated to citizens and members of the fire and rescue organizations.
  - a. This accountability plan should be developed with fire and rescue organizations' participation.
  - b. By creating an accountability plan and communicating funding usage, confusion should be reduced among fire and rescue organizations on the usage of limited county funds.
  - c. The county should require documentation of expenditures and annually audit funds.
4. With input from the fire and rescue community, the Board of Supervisors should develop a capital improvement plan for upgrading its fire and rescue stations and equipment.
  - a. Some facilities do not provide adequate space to house equipment or facilitate overnight personnel.

- b. Board of Supervisors should establish a countywide equipment replacement policy with an emphasis on rotational equipment replacement based on prioritized needs.
5. The Amherst County Board of Supervisors should consider the feasibility of hiring a Grants Coordinator to assist the fire and rescue organizations with the acquisition and management of grants. This individual should research and consider the availability of all federal, state and private grant programs, including:
- a. The Department of Forestry's Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grants:  
<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/fire/index-vfa.htm>
  - b. The Department of Forestry's Firewise Virginia Community Hazard Mitigation grants:  
<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/fire/index-mitigation.shtml>
  - c. The Department of Forestry's Dry Hydrant grants:  
<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/fire/dryhydrant/dry-hydrant.htm>
  - d. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG):  
<http://www.firegrantsupport.com/content/html/afg/>
  - e. The Virginia Department of Health-Office of Emergency Medical Services' Rescue Squad Assistance Fund (RSAF) Grants:  
<http://www.vdh.state.va.us/OEMS/Grants/index.htm>
  - f. The grant programs offered by the Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB) through the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP).<sup>42</sup>
  - g. Various private grant programs.<sup>43</sup>

### ***Standardization and Central Purchasing***

Amherst County has a widely diverse fleet of apparatus among the fire and rescue organizations. Amherst County's fire and rescue organizations appear to have sufficient pieces of equipment in each station to support their call volume throughout the county. However, an area of cost-savings would be experienced through the standardization of future equipment and apparatus within the county. Presently, Amherst County should be applauded for their effort to make collective purchasing of medicine and tools used on Ambulances. Standardization and Central Purchasing will not be without difficulty, but is necessary for delivering cost-effective and efficient fire and rescue services.

### **Recommendation:**

1. The County Administration should develop and implement a centralized purchasing option to leverage County purchasing power and reduce operational expenses.

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<sup>42</sup> A listing of available VFSB is available online, [http://www.vafire.com/grants\\_local\\_aid/index.htm](http://www.vafire.com/grants_local_aid/index.htm)

<sup>43</sup> A wide variety of Fire and EMS grants can be found on <http://www.grants.gov/> <http://www.firegrantshelp.com/nvfc/> and <http://www.emsgrantshelp.com/>

2. The County Administration should consult with the Emergency Services Council to develop specifications for central purchase activity areas. Below are suggested areas/activities for central purchasing:
  - a. Personal Protective Equipment<sup>44</sup> and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus<sup>45</sup>  
Ensure all departments are purchasing compatible equipment that meets National Fire Protection Association standards and are reaping the same cost savings. Amherst County is doing well with the contracts already in place for Pump, SCBA along with Fit and ladder testing. However, the county should continue to look for other areas of improvement to achieve efficient central purchasing.
  - b. Equipment/Apparatus – The Emergency Services Council should survey each department to determine if equipment commonalities exist. As previously mentioned, common apparatus specifications should be created and contracted, allowing volunteer organizations to make customizations without overly altering the specs, and reap the benefits of group purchasing for routine maintenance and replacement of aging ambulance and fire apparatus.
3. The Emergency Services Council should survey each department to determine if equipment commonalities exist. The equipment commonalities list should be used, along with strategic planning for Amherst County’s routine maintenance and replacement of equipment, aging ambulance and fire apparatus.
  - a. An Apparatus Repair and Replacement Subcommittee should be established within the Emergency Services Council in order to identify and prioritize needs of apparatus replacement and/or repair.
  - b. This critical priority list of apparatus should utilize the NFPA 1911 – Standard for Inspection, Maintenance, Testing and Retirement of In-Service Automotive Fire Apparatus.<sup>46</sup>
  - c. An inventory and capabilities of all vehicles should be provided to the Dispatch Center to improve dispatch development.
  - d. Fire and rescue departments must be strongly encouraged against making significant equipment purchases outside those approved by the Board of Supervisors. It is not fiscally responsible to make equipment purchases that place the County and individual departments in a financially unstable standing.
4. The Emergency Services Council should develop specifications for future apparatus purchases (considering the cost-effectiveness of regional contracts), refurbishment and replacement using the following national consensus standards:

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<sup>44</sup> NFPA 1971, <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=1971>

<sup>45</sup> NFPA 1981, <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=1981>

<sup>46</sup> NFPA 1911, <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=1911>

- a. NFPA 1901 - Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus<sup>47</sup>
- b. NFPA 1911 – Standard for Inspection, Maintenance, Testing and Retirement of In-Service Automotive Fire Apparatus<sup>48</sup>
- c. NFPA 1912 – Standard for Fire Apparatus Refurbishing<sup>49</sup>

### **THEME 5: DELIVERY OF SERVICES**

Several outside factors are affecting the fire and rescue personnel in Amherst County. Similar to many other jurisdictions, the county lacks adequate personnel to address call volume and growing administrative requirements. According to the 2012 Virginia Fire Service Needs Assessment, Amherst County reported that the present call volume warranted 26 additional personnel to sufficiently staff their stations.<sup>50</sup>

The limited and aging populations along with the lack of incentives make it difficult to recruit volunteers. This shortfall has decreased morale and has forced the county to increase the workload on its limited members with multiple responsibilities. Moreover, the lack of volunteers has made it a necessity to hire career staff to supplement volunteers while also having the Director and Deputy Director of Public Safety respond to service calls. This in effect prevents the Director conducting day-to-day management of operations. The availability of personnel plays a large role in the quality of service provided to the citizens of Amherst County. Currently, there is no assistance from the county to help the fire and rescue organizations recruit quality personnel. Included in this study are additional resources for recruitment and retention activities.

#### ***Recruitment and Retention***

Recruiting and retaining quality personnel is an essential component to the overall success of a volunteer fire and rescue departments. Like many areas throughout the nation and the Commonwealth of Virginia, Amherst County has felt the impact of declining numbers of men and women volunteering for fire and rescue departments. Currently, there is no assistance from the county to help the fire and rescue organizations recruit personnel. In order to relieve this burden, the county must provide increased leadership and participation towards the recruitment of volunteers. County leadership relies heavily on its volunteers and must become more actively involved in assisting each volunteer department with their recruitment and retention efforts. The Emergency Services Council should encourage leaders to contribute to other aspects of the community thus enabling them to become ambassadors of the department.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> NFPA 1901, <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=1901>

<sup>48</sup> NFPA 1911, <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=1911>

<sup>49</sup> NFPA 1912, <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=1912>

<sup>50</sup> See Appendix 5: 2012 Virginia Fire Service Needs Assessment.

<sup>51</sup> *Fire Service Image Task Force Report: Taking Responsibility for a Positive Public Perception* 15  
International Association of Fire Chiefs

## Recommendations:

1. As previously mentioned, the Amherst County Board of Supervisors should restructure the Emergency Services Council to better provide leadership for all fire and rescue issues throughout the county, including recruitment and retention activities.
2. Working alongside the Emergency Services Council, the County Government should identify the needs for additional fire and rescue personnel to meet the service demands and citizen expectations.
  - a. Through improvement of fire and rescue incident data analysis and strategic planning, Amherst County will be able to determine fire and rescue personnel needs, equipment needs and deployment.<sup>52</sup>
3. The Amherst County Board of Supervisors should examine the feasibility of reinstating the Recruitment and Retention Officer position which can support with recruiting prospective new members.
  - a. Volunteers provide a tremendous service to the County and save taxpayers significant amounts of money.
  - b. Participation in recruitment and retention activities not only provides welcomed assistance to each department, but it also demonstrates to fire and rescue personnel that the County is a dependable partner in overcoming this obstacle.
  - c. The Recruitment and Retention Officer should develop a single countywide volunteer orientation process leveraging the best practices of existing orientations in order to provide a consistent foundation for all new volunteers.
4. The Emergency Services Council should adopt a countywide recruitment and retention program.
  - a. This recruitment and retention program should take into consideration the needs of current volunteers and identify motivational factors to keep this population engaged and committed to the fire and rescue service.
  - b. The council should set annual recruitment and retention goals and concentrate its efforts and resources to achieving these benchmarks. The plan should be included in the strategic plan.
  - c. The Board of Supervisors should consider the current incentive package presented to them as a starting point.
5. The County Government and Emergency Services Council should collaboratively find low-cost methods to enhance public-education efforts such as open houses and creating PSAs.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) - "Make Better Decisions: Put Your Data to Work," <http://www.iafc.org/MemberCenter/OnSceneArticle.cfm?ItemNumber=5840>. This article provides an example of how multiple sources of data can be incorporated into fire and rescue department planning.

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

- a. Improve the visibility of the Amherst County fire and rescue services in the community.
  - b. Word-of-mouth recruiting is effective; therefore, each volunteer should be encouraged to inform their respective community network about Amherst fire and rescue services' training and educational opportunities.
6. The Emergency Services Council should encourage career staff to collaboratively work alongside volunteers to enhance current relationship.
7. In addition, Amherst County's fire and rescue organizations should take advantage of pre-existing recruitment and retention information. Resources may be downloaded at the following locations:
- a. Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
    - i. <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/OEMS/Agency/Recruitment/index.htm>
    - ii. [http://www.vdh.state.va.us/OEMS/Files\\_page/Locality\\_Resources/EMSWorkbook\\_0405.pdf](http://www.vdh.state.va.us/OEMS/Files_page/Locality_Resources/EMSWorkbook_0405.pdf)
    - iii. [http://www.vdh.state.va.us/OEMS/Files\\_page/Locality\\_Resources/EMSWorkbook3.pdf](http://www.vdh.state.va.us/OEMS/Files_page/Locality_Resources/EMSWorkbook3.pdf)
  - b. BecomeEMS.org - <http://www.becomeems.org/>
  - c. Fire/Volunteer (Guide) - <http://www.nvfc.org/resources/rr/retention-recruitment-guide/>
  - d. Fire/Volunteer (Video) - <http://www.nvfc.org/files/documents/Retention-and-Recruitment-Volunteer-Fire-Emergency-Services.wmv>.
  - e. 2004 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission Report. "Review of EMS in Virginia" Part III of the report; *Recruitment, Retention and Training of EMS Providers* (Page 55) – <http://leg2.state.va.us/dls/h&sdocs.nsf/4d54200d7e28716385256ec1004f3130/87c75ac37063994d85256ec500553c41?OpenDocument>

### ***Operations and Staffing***

Though efforts have been made towards achieving 24/7 coverage at all fire and rescue stations, staffing challenges still exist. It was noted during the site visits that routinely departments struggle to secure enough volunteers to adequately respond to their present call volume, especially during the day.

Additionally, special attention should be made to ensure fire and rescue capabilities are adequate for the potential hazards presented by the economic developments in Amherst County and its interstate highway system. Lastly, Amherst County should be commended for their efforts to establish 18 dry hydrants throughout the county.

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<sup>53</sup> *Fire Service Image Task Force Report: Taking Responsibility for a Positive Public Perception* 15

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## Recommendations:

1. The County should seek to reduce residents insurance cost by improving Insurance Service Office (ISO) ratings.
  - a. This can be accomplished through improved training records and installing additional Dry Hydrants.
  - b. The county should continue working with the Department of Forestry (DOF) to obtain additional Dry Hydrants.
    - i. Grants can be obtained through DOF's Dry Hydrant Grant Program: <http://www.dof.virginia.gov/fire/dry-hydrants.shtml>.
2. Amherst County fire and rescue services should keep accurate records of incident response times in order to continuously assess response capabilities.
3. The county should continue to enhance its effort to provide 24-hour paid fire and rescue crew to address staffing challenges and ensure adequate resources are deployed for calls during the day.
  - a) It is recommended that the county utilize the NFPA guidance documents as resource documents.
  - b) The 2010 edition of *NFPA 1720: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments* addresses the organization and deployment of fire suppression operations, emergency medical operations, and special operations to the public by all volunteer fire departments.
2. Amherst County should work with the fire and rescue organizations to identify needs for additional fire and rescue personnel to meet service demands and citizen expectations.
  - a. Rescue squads expressed the need to add a paid EMS crew for daytime response, as there is limited volunteer availability during the daytime.
  - b. It is recommended for the county to consider hiring paid EMS crew from the community to act as the daytime service providers throughout Amherst.
  - c. The County Government in collaboration with the Emergency Services Council should pursue creating a tank task force for certain areas without dry hydrants.

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## **APPENDIXES**

**Appendix 1:** Amherst County Letter of Request – March 2013

**Appendix 2:** Amherst County - Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System Report Summary

**APPENDIX 3:** Amherst County – Virginia Pre-Hospital Information Bridge Report Summary

**Appendix 4:** Amherst County Training Summary for FY2009 to FY2013

**Appendix 5:** Amherst County 2012 Needs Assessment Summary Statistics

**Appendix 6:** Amherst County FY2013 Aid-to-Localities Allocation Report

APPROVED

## APPENDIX 1: AMHERST COUNTY LETTER OF REQUEST



Office of the  
County Administrator

March 12, 2013

Chief Richard E. Burch, Jr., Chairman  
Virginia Fire Services Board  
Virginia Department of Fire Programs  
1005 Technology Park Drive  
Glenn Allen, Virginia 23059

Dear Chief Burch:

At the meeting of the Amherst County Board of Supervisors held on March 11, 2013, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to request a study of the Amherst County Fire and Rescue System by the Virginia Fire Services Board. Amherst County is prepared to conduct this study and is ready to complete any documentation that will expedite the process. We appreciate your consideration at the next fire services board meeting.

Amherst County wishes to have a comprehensive study that will help enhance and guide the overall quality as well as coordination of our fire and emergency medical services delivery for our citizens. In addition to examining levels of service, staffing, governance, accountability, training, safety, operation, etc., the County would like to examine the quantity of vehicles in the Amherst County system and determine if they are adequate for our current and future needs.

Amherst County has a population of 34,000 served by three volunteer fire departments and three rescue squads covering a population spread over 475 square miles. Amherst County is also served by eighteen career EMS/Fire personnel assigned to the three rescue squads on a 24/7 basis with each station staffed with an ALS and BLS provider.

In addition, we are in the process of hiring one driver / pump operator for Amherst Fire Department.

Mr. Gary Roakes, Director of Public Safety, will serve as the principle contact between Amherst County and the study team and will coordinate input that will be provided by all relevant stakeholders. He can be contacted at (434) 946-9307.

**APPENDIX 1: AMHERST COUNTY LETTER OF REQUEST CONT:**

Thank you for your assistance in this matter and should you have any questions or require additional information please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Clarence Monday  
County Administrator

cc: Board of Supervisors  
Gary Roakes  
Chief Tom Shrader, Amherst Fire Department  
Chief Ernie Cash, Monelison Volunteer Fire Department  
Chief Danny Tucker, Pedlar Volunteer Fire Department  
Captain Charlie Goodin, Amherst Life Saving Crew  
Captain Vickie Padgett, Monelison Volunteer Rescue Squad  
Captain Lisa Tomlin, Pedlar Rescue Squad

**APPENDIX 2: AMHERST COUNTY – VIRGINIA FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM REPORT**

The Virginia Department of Fire Programs manages the Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS). VFIRS is the statewide system for tracking all emergency responses with fire departments in Virginia. By reporting their incidents to VFIRS, fire departments document the details of their incidents for legal purposes and documenting the overall activities of their fire department.

**Incident Type Summary, Amherst County, Virginia 2008-2012\***

<b>Incident Type</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>Total</b>
Fires	152	115	133	131	110	641
EMS/Rescue	101	93	117	147	146	604
Hazardous Condition	141	94	118	94	63	510
Service Calls	26	24	20	13	9	92
Good Intent	141	167	152	174	184	818
False Alarm	39	36	39	39	27	180
Other	2	0	3	5	3	13
<b>Total Incidents</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>2,858</b>
Aid Given	138	129	139	139	121	666
Exposures	7	4	1	2	0	14
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>3,538</b>

**Fire Dollar Loss Summary, Amherst County, Virginia 2008-2012\***

<b>Year</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>Total</b>
Dollar Loss	\$713,477	\$837,920	\$871,320	\$1,973,270	\$963,850	\$5,359,837

**Casualty Loss Summary, Amherst County, Virginia 2008-2012\***

<b>Incident Type</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>Total</b>
Civilian Fire Injuries	3	1	1	4	1	10
Civilian Fire Deaths	0	1	2	1	0	4
Fire Service Injuries	1	0	7	1	2	11
Fire Service Deaths	0	0	0	0	0	0

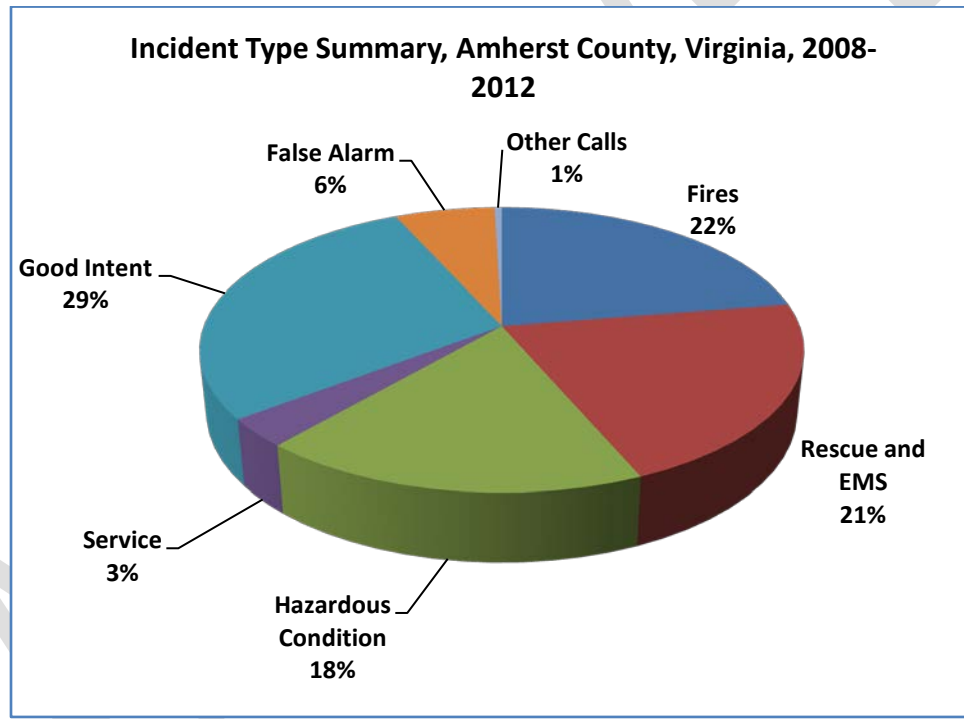
The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.



**APPENDIX 2: AMHERST COUNTY – VIRGINIA FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM REPORT**

**VFIRS Participation By Fire Department, Amherst County, Virginia 2008-2012\***

Fire Department	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Amherst Fire Dept.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Monelison Vol. Fire Dept. & Rescue Squad	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pedlar Volunteer Fire Dept.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Total Fire Departments Participating</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Percent Reporting</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>



The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

**APPENDIX 3: AMHERST COUNTY – VIRGINIA PRE-HOSPITAL INFORMATION BRIDGE REPORT SUMMARY**

The Virginia Department of Health’s Office of Emergency Medical Service manages the Virginia Pre-Hospital Information Bridge (VPHIB). VPHIB is the statewide system for tracking all emergency medical services (EMS) responses with EMS organizations in Virginia. In accordance with the *Code of Virginia*, “Maintaining a comprehensive emergency medical services patient care data collection and performance improvement system (32.1-111.3).”

Amherst Co.	Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Grand Total
Dept. of	2013	240	214	249	213	243	236	260						1655	
Public Safety	2012	NR	18	118	126	266	225	318	266	245	217	227	304	2330	
	2011	189	184	222	203	212	197	222	263	3	NR	NR	21	1716	
	2010	232	188	206	228	201	224	258	231	168	203	172	179	2490	
	2009	115	76	148	145	172	163	149	221	230	281	141	218	2059	
	2008	5	6	1	3	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	4	19	
	<b>Total</b>	781	686	944	918	1094	1045	1207	981	646	701	540	726	<b>10,269</b>	<b>10,269</b>

Amherst	Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Grand Total
Life Saving &	2013	47	42	44	48	44	25	22						272	
First Aid Crew	2012	NR	NR	NR	6	30	14	23	18	29	20	20	41	201	
	2011	45	42	46	42	44	49	40	13	21	16	13	2	373	
	2010	56	56	57	67	58	73	64	73	60	37	38	53	692	
	2009	70	45	56	62	57	54	36	60	57	41	62	57	657	
	2008	100	89	108	89	107	55	85	104	101	77	92	95	1102	
	<b>Total</b>	318	274	311	314	340	270	270	268	268	191	225	248	<b>3,297</b>	<b>3,297</b>

Monelison Volunteer	Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Grand Total
Rescue Squad	2013	31	20	24	24	15	17	10						141	
	2012	21	10	8	19	36	30	29	9	19	23	21	29	254	
	2011	41	42	31	30	28	28	12	25	29	11	17	13	307	
	2010	33	46	33	34	40	44	50	22	14	36	17	24	393	
	2009	43	45	46	55	57	55	38	64	48	21	33	37	542	
	2008	161	170	166	147	157	179	177	122	157	101	186	199	1922	
	<b>Total</b>	330	333	308	309	333	353	316	242	267	192	274	302	<b>3,559</b>	<b>3,559</b>

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

**APPENDIX 3: AMHERST COUNTY – VIRGINIA PRE-HOSPITAL INFORMATION BRIDGE REPORT SUMMARY,**

**CONT:**

<b>Pedlar Volunteer</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
<b>Fire &amp; Rescue</b>	<b>2013</b>														
	<b>2012</b>														
<b>NO LONGER OPERATING</b>	<b>2011</b>														
	<b>2010</b>	2	1	NR	1	NR	NR	1	NR	2	NR	NR	1	8	
	<b>2009</b>	3	4	1	2	2	NR	1	2	1	5	NR	NR	21	
	<b>2008</b>	24	19	24	35	29	37	25	21	27	11	20	18	290	
	<b>Total</b>	29	24	25	38	31	37	27	23	30	16	20	19	<b>319</b>	<b>319</b>

APPROVED

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

#### **APPENDIX 4: AMHERST COUNTY TRAINING SUMMARY FOR FY2009 - FY2013**

This information is a compilation of training data, for Fiscal Years 2009 through 2013, from the Fire Service Training Record System (FSTRS) maintained by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. For more information on FSTRS visit, [http://www.vafire.com/fire\\_service\\_training\\_record\\_system/index.htm](http://www.vafire.com/fire_service_training_record_system/index.htm)

<b>Course</b>	<b>Students</b>
ADJUNCT INSTRUCTOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING	3
ARFF - GENERAL AVIATION 16 HOUR (STRUCTURAL)	2
BASIC PUMP OPERATIONS - 16-HOUR TRAINING PROGRAM	16
COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF FUNCTIONS - PRACTICAL EVOLUTIONS	0
COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN	1
CONFINED SPACE RESCUE	3
CONFINED SPACE RESCUE (16-HOURS)	3
DRIVER/OPERATOR PUMPER CERTIFICATION COURSE NFPA 1002-08	0
DRIVER/OPERATOR-AERIAL CERTIFICATION COURSE NFPA 1002-98	7
EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATION - CLASS 1	33
EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATION - CLASS 2	33
EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATION - CLASS 3	34
ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES AWARENESS	0
EVOC TRAIN-THE-TRAINER	2
EVOC - TRAIN-THE-TRAINER UPDATE	0
FARM MACHINERY EXTRICATION	24
FIRE ATTACK - ESSENTIALS	1
FIRE ATTACK II - BASIC NFPA 1403-92	1
FIRE INSPECTOR I & II - (NFPA 1031-03)	2
FIRE INSPECTOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING	2
FIRE INSPECTOR LEGAL IN-SERVICE	2
FIRE INSTRUCTOR I - NFPA 1041-07	2
FIRE INSTRUCTOR I - UPGRADE NFPA 1041-02	6
FIRE INSTRUCTOR II CERTIFICATION COURSE NFPA 1041-07	2
FIRE INSTRUCTOR III NFPA 1041-87	2
FIRE INVESTIGATOR - (NFPA 1033-03)	3
FIRE INVESTIGATOR "IN-SERVICE" TRAINING	3
FIRE OFFICER I CERTIFICATION COURSE (NFPA 1021-97)	0
FIRE OFFICER II - (NFPA 1021-03)	1
FIRE OFFICER III - (NFPA-1021-09)	0
FIRE SERVICE TRAINING - AIRCRAFT LIVE FIRE TRNG	20
FIRE SERVICE TRAINING - GENERAL	2

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

**APPENDIX 4: AMHERST COUNTY TRAINING SUMMARY FOR FY2009 - FY2013, CONT.**

<b>Course</b>	<b>Students</b>
FIRE SERVICE TRAINING -INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM	0
FIREFIGHTER I - NFPA 1001 -08	0
FIREFIGHTER I AND II - T-T-T	0
FIREFIGHTER I COMPLETE COURSE	33
FIREFIGHTER II - NFPA 1001-02	0
FIREFIGHTER II COMPLETE COURSE	13
H-465 - INTERMEDIATE ICS FOR EXPANDING INCIDENTS - T-T-T	0
H-465/ICS 300 - INTERMEDIATE ICS FOR EXPANDING INCIDENTS	0
H-467 - ADV ICS FOR CGS & MACS FOR OPS 1ST RESPONDERS - T-T-T	0
H-467/ICS 400 - ADVANCED ICS FOR CGS & MACS OPS 1ST RESPONDERS	1
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AWARENESS NFPA 472-02	24
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AWARENESS NFPA 472-97	0
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AWARENESS & OPERATIONS NFPA 472-08	3
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS OPERATIONS - NFPA 472-98	0
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS OPERATIONS - T-T-T UPDATE	1
I-200 - ICS FOR SINGLE RESOURCES & INITIAL ACTION INCIDENTS	1
ICS-300: INTRM ICS FOR EXPANDING INCIDENTS - ST AGENCIES	0
ICS-400: ADVANCED ICS FOR CGS, COMPLEX INCIDENTS AND MACS	0
INTRO TO NAT'L FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING (V.5)	1
INTRO. TO NAT'L FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING (V.5) TRAIN-THE-TRAINER	0
INTRODUCTION TO COMMAND	24
IS-100 -- ON-LINE INTRODUCTION TO INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEMS (ICS)	1
IS-700 - NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM INTRODUCTION	20
IS-800 - NATIONAL RESPONSE PLAN TRAINING COURSE	1
L. P GAS EMERGENCIES (16-HOURS)	13
MAYDAY AWARENESS ONLINE TRAIN-THE-TRAINER	4
MAYDAY, FIREFIGHTER DOWN - AWARENESS (C/R & P/R)	0
MAYDAY, FIREFIGHTER DOWN 16-HOUR PROGRAM	23
MERT AWARENESS - NFPA 610-10	0
N.F.A. - PREPARATION FOR INITIAL COMPANY OPERATION (PICO)	0
N.F.A. ARSON DETECTION FOR THE FIRST RESPONDER (ADFR)	15
N.F.A. EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO TERRORISM: BASIC CONCEPTS	4
N.F.A. FIREFIGHTER SAFETY & SURVIVAL: CO. OFFICER	0
N.F.A. INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM	3
N.F.A. INCIDENT SAFETY OFFICER (ISO)	17
N.F.A. LEADERSHIP I: STRATEGIES FOR COMPANY SUCCESS	0

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

**APPENDIX 4: AMHERST COUNTY TRAINING SUMMARY FOR FY2009 - FY2013, CONT.**

<b>Course</b>	<b>Students</b>
NFA - COURTROOM PREPARATION FOR FIRST RESPONDERS	0
NFA - JUVENILE FIRESETTER I	0
NFPA 1403 AWARENESS	7
NIMS - ICS PLANNING AND FORMS	0
OFFICER DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR	1
PROTECTIVE BREATHING APPARATUS - SPECIAL OFFERING	6
PUBLIC FIRE & LIFE SAFETY EDUCATOR I (NFPA 1035)	1
ROPE RESCUE AWARENESS AND OPERATIONS - PHASE 1	3
ROPE RESCUE OPERATIONS - PHASE 2	3
RURAL WATER SUPPLY - 16 HOUR TRAINING PROGRAM	0
TRAFFIC IMS FOR THE FIRST RESPONDER T-T-T	0
TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT FOR EMERGENCY RESPONDERS	0
TRENCH RESCUE OPERATIONS	6
VEHICLE RESCUE AWARENESS AND OPERATIONS	30
VEHICLE RESCUE TECHNICIAN - NFPA 1006-03	0
VFIRS/NFIRS DATA ANALYSIS & PROBLEM SOLVING TECHNIQUES	0
VIRGINIA FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM - VER. 5 BASIC TRAINING	0
VIRGINIA FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM - VER. 5 OVERVIEW	0
WRITTEN TEST & SKILLS TEST EVALUATOR	4

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

## APPENDIX 5: AMHERST – 2012 NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY STATISTICS

The Fire Service Needs Assessment is an annual survey conducted by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. Fire departments complete a survey questionnaire designed to identify their critical needs. Results are compiled and published in a comprehensive report available each January. The Department of Fire Programs received responses from all seven fire departments located in Amherst County.

<b>Fire Department Personnel</b>	<b>Current*</b>	<b>Need Reported**</b>
<b>Career Firefighters</b>	20	1
<b>Volunteer Firefighters</b>	52	25
<b>Paid-Per-Call</b>	0	0
<b>Total Firefighters</b>	72	26
<b>Civilian-Paid</b>	1	0
<b>Civilian-Volunteer</b>	0	10
<b>Total Civilian Personnel</b>	1	10

\*Taken from Supplemental Table 1 of the 2012 Virginia Fire Service Needs Assessment.

\*\*Number from Supplemental Table 7, means needed on top of the total column.

<b>Apparatus Owned</b>	<b>Current*</b>	<b>Need Reported **</b>
<b>Aerial Apparatus</b>	1	1
<b>Ambulance/Other Patient Transport</b>	9	1
<b>Command Support Unit</b>	1	0
<b>Command Vehicle (SUV)</b>	5	0
<b>Engine/Pumper</b>	9	0
<b>Fire/Rescue Boat</b>	0	0
<b>Hazardous Materials Vehicle</b>	0	0
<b>Heavy Technical Rescue Vehicle</b>	0	0
<b>Logistical Support Apparatus</b>	0	0
<b>Quint Combination Vehicle</b>	0	0
<b>Tanker</b>	2	0
<b>Wildland Brush Truck</b>	3	0
<b>Other Apparatus</b>	0	0

\*Taken from Supplemental Table 2

\*\*Taken from Supplemental Table 5

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

**APPENDIX 5: AMHERST COUNTY – 2012 NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY STATISTICS CONT.**

<b>Equipment Owned</b>	<b>Current*</b>	<b>Need Reported **</b>
<b>4-Gas Monitors</b>	6	4
<b>Map Coordinate System – GPS</b>	0	0
<b>Mobile Data Terminals</b>	0	0
<b>Personal Alert Safety Systems</b>	0	0
<b>Personal Protective Equipment</b>	0	15
<b>Radios with Emergency Alert Button</b>	60	0
<b>Radios without Emergency Alert Button</b>	0	0
<b>Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (without integrated PASS)</b>	15	0
<b>Self-Contained Breathing (with integrated PASS)</b>	60	0
<b>Thermal Imaging Cameras</b>	7	0
<b>Other Equipment</b>	0	0

\*Taken from Supplemental Table 3

\*\*Taken from Supplemental Table 6

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**APPENDIX 6: AMHERST COUNTY FY2013 AID-TO-LOCALITIES ALLOCATION REPORT**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Population (2010 Census)</b>	<b>FY2013 Allocation</b>
Town of Amherst	2,231	\$8,000
Amherst County	30,122	\$85,910
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,353</b>	<b>\$93,910</b>

APPROVED

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

# Sussex County

## FIRE & EMS STUDY

In consultation with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs and the Virginia Department of Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services.



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The group above is herein after referred to as “Study Team.”

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The Virginia Fire Services Board would like to extend thanks to the following organizations and individuals for their contribution to this study:

Sussex County Board of Supervisors

Stony Creek Volunteer Fire Dept.

Richard Douglas, County Administrator

Sussex Courthouse Volunteer Fire Dept.

Reid Foster, Public Safety Coordinator

Wakefield Volunteer Fire Dept.

Nick Sheffield, Chief of Emergency Services

Waverly Volunteer Fire Dept.

Thomas Hicks, Interim Public Safety  
Coordinator

Stony Creek Rescue Squad

Jarratt Volunteer Fire Dept.

Waverly Rescue Squad

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents the findings and recommendations for the Sussex County Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Study. This study and the information contained herein should not be construed as legal advice or as binding recommendations for Sussex County. This report provides guidance to the Sussex County Board of Supervisors, its fire and EMS organizations, and other stakeholders in the community regarding public safety. Sussex County should strive to meet and/or exceed the recommendations contained in this report to enhance the overall quality of fire-rescue delivered to citizens and visitors of Sussex County.

This study was requested by a resolution of the Sussex County Board of Supervisors to analyze five working areas which include:

- Organization
- Budget and Administration
- Training
- Delivery of Services/staffing
- Fleet Design and Management (Equipment/Apparatus)

In addition, community risk reduction was included by members of the study team because it encompasses all the above areas.

The study was conducted by the Virginia Fire Services Board, in partnership with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs and the Virginia Department of Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services. The above referenced working areas served as a guide for the study team to identify issues, evaluate current fire-rescue operations, and make recommendations to improve Sussex County fire and rescue services.

Sussex County recently created the Chief of Emergency Services position to oversee fire and EMS. This position replaced the Public Safety Coordinator. This report makes recommendations that should be carried out by the Chief of Emergency Services with the support of the County Administrator and the Sussex County Board of Supervisors. Sussex County should establish and codify the Sussex County Department of Emergency Services, which should be led by the Chief of Emergency Services and include the five volunteer fire departments, two rescue squads, contract staff and future career staff. This department should establish standard operating procedures and guidelines, coordinate recruitment and retention, manage the county's emergency services budget, and ensure training is provided to both career and volunteer personnel.

As part of the creation of the Department of Emergency Services, each public safety agency should sign a memorandum of understanding that outlines expectations and responsibilities for responding to emergencies. The Department of Emergency Services should also oversee one county EMS license from the Virginia Department of Health that all volunteer agencies fall under.

The Chief of Emergency Services should establish county-wide fire-EMS training standards, explore expanding training opportunities, and hire full-time or part-time staff to support volunteers in the delivery of emergency services. Training could include establishing a

relationship with Sussex County Public Schools and providing county level training on a monthly or quarterly basis. As a result of a declining number of volunteer EMS providers, Sussex County should hire part-time or full-time staff that work directly for the Department of Emergency Services to provide staffing on ambulances when volunteers are unavailable. These personnel should be cross trained as firefighters to offer immediate support to the volunteer fire departments when requested.

It is in the best interests of Sussex County to establish a working relationship with Waverly Rescue Squad. In addition, it is in the best interests of Waverly Rescue Squad to work with the Chief of Emergency Services to begin providing more services to the citizens of Sussex County. The equipment and facilities owned by WRS and Stony Creek Rescue Squad could be utilized by county staff to provide EMS when volunteers are not available. The Chief of Emergency Services should work with both squads to expand recruitment and training opportunities to create more volunteer providers or drivers.

The Chief of Emergency Services must examine the current practices and risks in Sussex County to better provide services. The study team recommends that the Chief of Emergency Services complete a community risk assessment to examine possible capital projects such as fleet replacement needs. This should lead to the development of a capital improvement plan to replace apparatus and improve public safety facilities in the county. As a component of the risk assessment, the Chief of Emergency Services should research the use of cooperative purchasing and centralized purchasing.

Other important recommendations contained in this report include efforts to reduce cancer in firefighters, community paramedicine and encouraging the reporting of fires or emergencies to VFIRS and NFIRS.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The following is an overview of the study process:

### **PHASE I: INITIATE PROJECT**

#### ***Objectives: Initiation of Study***

To initiate the study, the Sussex County Administrator sent a Resolution, on behalf of the Sussex County Board of Supervisors, to the Virginia Fire Services Board requesting a complete and thorough review of the fire and EMS system in the county (Reference Appendix A).

The county requested the following areas of concentration:

- Organization
- Budget and Administration
- Training
- Delivery of Services/staffing
- Fleet Design and Management (Equipment/Apparatus)

A study team was convened and the study team began by reviewing county-submitted data including the self-assessment questionnaire completed by the county. The team also began collecting and reviewing existing data, memorandums of understanding and relevant policies and procedures.

As part of Phase I, the study team met with leadership from Sussex County to establish working relationships, make logistical arrangements, and determine communication lines. During these meetings, the study team discussed the objectives of the project and identified any issues and concerns central to the study.

### **PHASE II: OBTAIN STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

#### ***Objectives: Conduct Leadership Interviews & Capture Input from the Departments***

The second phase of the study consisted of leadership interviews and department evaluations. The expectations were as follows:

- Identify opinions of department officials concerning the operations and performance of their department and county coordination;
- Identify issues and concerns of officials regarding fire and rescue services;
- Identify perceived gaps in existing service levels and new priorities in mission; and,
- Identify strengths and weaknesses as perceived by departmental personnel.

The study team, in coordination with county leadership, developed a schedule of face-to-face interviews with the five independent fire departments to include: Jarratt, Stony Creek, Sussex Courthouse, Wakefield, and Waverly. The study team also conducted face-to-face interviews with rescue squads in Stony Creek and Waverly.

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

The study team met with leadership from Sussex County to include the Sussex County Administrator as well as the outgoing Sussex County Public Safety Coordinator. The study team also visited the Sussex County Sheriff's Office 911 Communications Center.

All interviews were conducted during an allotted timeframe and a considerable amount of information was collected. A public hearing was advertised by the county and held on February 27, 2023 to give the public an opportunity to share feedback with the study team regarding the Fire & EMS system in Sussex.

During the interviews and public hearing, the study team received information regarding volunteer staffing levels, service delivery, budget information, apparatus, relationships between contract providers and volunteers, and other information about the operation of each volunteer department. The discussion also provided an opportunity for each organization to share comments regarding service delivery of fire & EMS services in the county and possible areas for improvement.

### **PHASE III: PREPARE ANALYSES AND DEVELOP CORE STRATEGIES**

#### ***Objectives: Evaluate Current Trends and Prepare a Report***

The third phase of the study involved further investigation and understanding of the organizational structures, operations, limitations, achievements, and opportunities for improvement within the fire and EMS delivery system. The activities that supported this process consisted of additional requests for information not already obtained in Phase I and II of the work plan. Data requests, made in this phase of the study, attempt to address any issues that emerged from the interviews, and further evaluate implications of the operational issues cited. During this phase, the study team worked with incoming Chief of Emergency Services Nick Sheffield and Thomas Hicks, Interim Public Safety Director. Data obtained during the study process also assists the study team in identifying issues influencing the current levels of service.

After receiving and critically evaluating information from the interviews and all supporting materials, the study team began identifying the necessary and critical action steps to achieve effective and uniform service levels throughout the county.

### **PHASE IV: PREPARE FINAL REPORT**

#### ***Objectives: Prepare and Present Final Report***

The final phase of the study involved documenting the results of all previous tasks into a written report with critical components, such as an executive summary, methodology, background, and findings and recommendations. Once completed, a draft report was shared with the Sussex County Administrator to ensure the technical content in this report is accurate. Upon receiving corrections, the study team revised the draft report, as needed, to assist in the preparation and issuance of the final report.



## COUNTY INFORMATION

Sussex County is a rural community located southeast of the City of Richmond, Virginia with a primarily agricultural economy. Natural resources in the county are plentiful, with 130 farms and over 250,000 acres of commercial forestry land.<sup>1</sup> The county was developed in 1754 from portions of Surry County, with original settlers arriving in the early 1600s from England.<sup>2</sup>

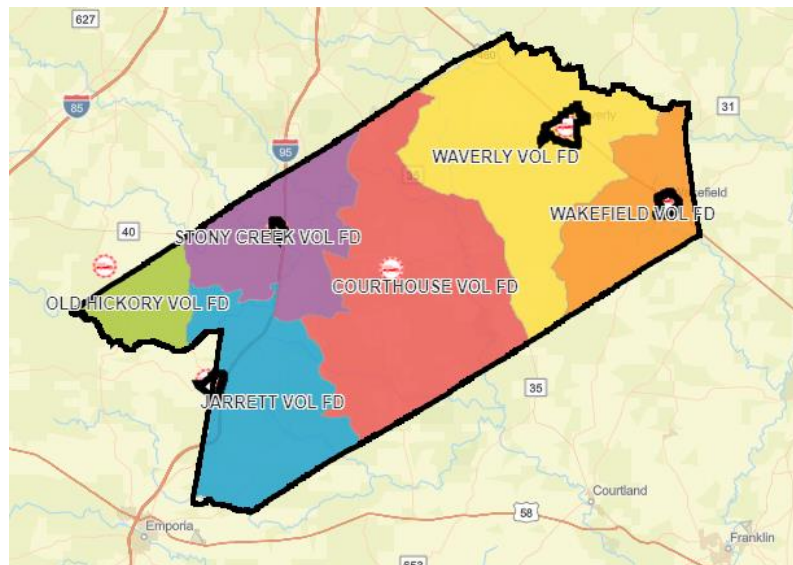
The county has 496 square miles of land, with 4 incorporated towns that include Wakefield, Waverly, Jarratt, and Stony Creek. Interstate 95 traverses the county and splits the county between Eastern and Western areas. Five counties border Sussex County including Dinwiddie, Prince George, Surry, Southampton, and Greenville.

The estimated population in Sussex County in 2021 was 10,763 people with a household income of \$56,968 and a total of 4,677 housing units.<sup>3</sup> The majority of the county's citizens reside in the Eastern half of the County, near the Towns of Wakefield and Waverly.

The county operates under the guidance of the Board of Supervisors. Board members represent each of the six magisterial districts. In addition, there is one at-large member elected to break ties on the six-member Board of Supervisors. The County Administrator serves as the Chief Administrative Officer and executive for the county.

### FIGURE 1: SUSSEX COUNTY EXISTING FIRE DISTRICTS

A snapshot of Sussex County GIS mapping software shows the location of each fire station in the county. EMS stations are not shown.



<sup>1</sup> "About Sussex County" *Sussex County, Virginia* (2023)

<sup>2</sup> "Sussex History" *Sussex County, Virginia* (2023)

<sup>3</sup> "Sussex County, Virginia" *U.S Census Bureau* (2022)

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

## **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations contained in this study are not a requirement for the county to implement. The recommendations are to be used as a guideline of potential solutions that will assist the county as it further develops its capabilities to provide fire and EMS services. The purpose of the study is to review weaknesses and strengths of Sussex County’s current fire and EMS practices, providing recommendations to better serve the citizens and visitors of Sussex County.

Recommendations below refer to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, including NFPA 1720: Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments. According to chapter 1 of NFPA 1720, the standard defines “levels of service, deployment capabilities, and staffing levels for substantially volunteer fire departments. It contains minimum requirements for deploying fire suppression and EMS for service delivery, response capabilities and resources. It also contains requirements for managing resources and systems such as health and safety, incident management, training, communications, and pre-incident planning. It addresses the strategic and system issues involving the organization, operations, and deployment of a volunteer fire department.”<sup>4</sup>

The National Fire Protection Association provides industry-wide best practices for fire and EMS service. Although the NFPA standards are considered best practices, the study team understands that not all NFPA standards are attainable in individual jurisdictions. Sussex County should strive to meet NFPA standards to provide best-in-class service to its citizens and visitors.

It is important to keep in mind who the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) is, which in this case could be the Sussex County Department of Emergency Services. In accordance with all NFPA codes the AHJ is “an organization, office, or individual responsible for enforcing the requirements of a code or standard, or for approving equipment, materials, an installation, or a procedure. (1720 -2020, 3.2.2)

### **I. CREATE A DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Sussex County is experiencing significant strain providing emergency medical services to its citizens and visitors. Historically, volunteers from Stony Creek Rescue Squad and Waverly Rescue Squad provided EMS within Sussex County. Both organizations still have state of the art equipment, are licensed through the Commonwealth of Virginia, and are capable of providing EMS within Sussex County. Stony Creek Rescue Squad continues to provide volunteer staffing for the Western half of Sussex County.

Sussex County utilizes contract EMS providers to provide EMS coverage in addition to volunteer staffing during the day countywide, with contract staff being the sole providers in the Eastern half of the county. The ability of volunteer rescue squads to staff has decreased, resulting in the increased use of contract staff. Sussex County, and some volunteer organizations, have had difficulty with the contract providers and the level of service provided.

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<sup>4</sup> NFPA 1720, *Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments*, NFPA 2020

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

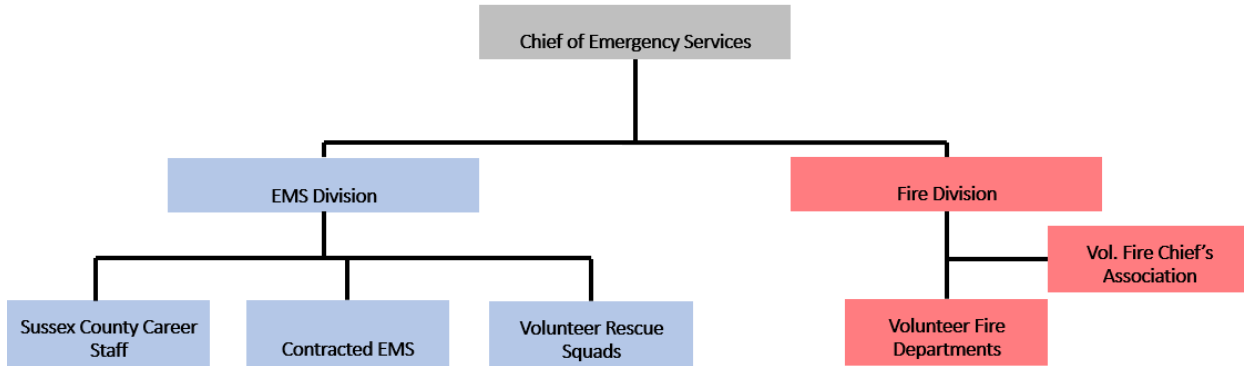
Considering the issues associated with previous contract coverage in Sussex County, and with a decline in volunteer membership at both Waverly and Stony Creek Rescue Squads', it is highly recommended that Sussex County create a Department of Emergency Services.

**Recommendations:**

1. Board of Supervisors should codify a Department of Emergency Services.
2. Board of Supervisors should identify the Chief of Emergency Services as the position responsible for the supervision and authority of the Department of Emergency Services.
  - a. This position should be codified through a local ordinance outlining expectations and responsibilities.
  - b. Administrative staff/support should be considered for the Chief of Emergency Services.
3. The Chief of Emergency Services should be responsible for providing training, oversee county funding for all fire and EMS operations, and for developing Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines for all aspects of emergency operations.
4. The Chief of Emergency Services should create an EMS Division and a Fire Division.
  - a. The EMS Division should include future career staff, contract staff, and the two (2) volunteer rescue squads.
  - b. The Fire Division should consist of the five (5) volunteer fire departments.
5. The Chief of Emergency Services should provide oversight for Waverly Rescue Squad and Stony Creek Rescue Squad. Both squads should retain their own membership and equipment, with clear roles and expectation for both the EMS division and the squads outlined in standard operating procedures.
6. EMS Division career staff should staff ambulances when volunteer staffing is not adequate or available as determined by the Chief of Emergency Services.
7. The County should provide senior volunteer leadership with the tools and responsibility to properly manage the administrative activities of their agencies and assist the Department of Emergency Services.
8. The Department of Emergency Services should oversee the purchase of supplies and equipment.
9. The Chief of Emergency Services should continuously reassess staffing, both career and volunteer, and make appropriate modifications to ensure adequate coverage 24-7.
  - a. If volunteer coverage is unavailable during an allotted time, career or contract staff must be available to ensure adequate coverage.
10. The Department of Emergency Services should utilize the Virginia OEMS Standards of Excellence Program. The purpose of the Virginia Standards of Excellence program is to

identify and recognize EMS agencies that strive to operate above the standards and requirements of the Virginia EMS Regulations (12VAC5-31). The evaluation addresses several areas that collectively make up the operations of an EMS agency from several perspectives.<sup>5</sup>

**FIGURE 2: SUSSEX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**




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## **II. DEVELOP A RELATIONSHIP WITH WAVERLY RESCUE SQUAD**

The study team was provided a draft agreement between Waverly Rescue Squad and Sussex County to continue services, whether through volunteer providers or paid staff utilizing Waverly Rescue Squad resources. The study team makes the following recommendations concerning Waverly Rescue Squad.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Department of Emergency Services and Waverly Rescue Squad sign a Memorandum of Understanding outlining expectations over facilities, equipment, staffing, and response expectations.
2. Waverly Rescue Squad become a component of the EMS Division of the Department of Emergency Services.
3. Any contracted EMS staff should be under contract with Sussex County. If the contracted EMS staff utilize WRS equipment, the county and WRS should establish in the above-mentioned MOU what responsibilities the contracted staff have for maintaining WRS owned property.

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<sup>5</sup> OEMS: Virginia Standards of Excellence Program

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

- a. A formalized process should be developed for WRS to file grievances with county staff or contracted staff.
  - b. The above-mentioned MOU should outline an investigative process and possible consequences if the MOU is not followed by county staff, contracted staff, or WRS volunteers.
4. The Chief of Emergency Services may consult the Virginia Department of Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services for mediation in the process of establishing the future EMS system in Sussex County.
  5. The Chief of Emergency Services should support WRS with recruitment (highlighted in various areas of this report) and training. Increasing the number of volunteer providers benefits the county and continues to support the community's wishes.

### **III. HIRE FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME PROVIDERS**

Sussex County has one full-time position in public safety, the Chief of Emergency Services. This position oversees public safety and emergency preparedness in the county while working with volunteer agencies and contracted providers. A decline in volunteer providers, especially regarding EMS, and issues regarding contract providers, suggest that Sussex County should hire full-time or part-time staffing.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. The Chief of Emergency Services should hire full-time or part-time staff to primarily provide EMS, with additional fire response duties if required.
  - a. This staff should report to the Chief of Emergency Services and fall under the EMS Division.
  - b. This staff should provide primary EMS coverage for Sussex County, utilizing county-owned ambulances or rescue squad ambulances through an agreement with each rescue squad.
    - i. Both Waverly Rescue Squad and Stony Creek Rescue Squad can staff additional ambulances or work with Sussex County to establish a crew schedule to reduce the need for county staff.
2. Enough county staff should be hired/on a shift to cover regular operations and call volume in Sussex County.
  - a. Currently contract providers provide three ambulances during the day and one at night with a total of six (6) personnel. At night, two (2) contracted personnel respond from Waverly and volunteers respond from Stony Creek.
  - b. The study team recommends that the county staff a Quick Response Vehicle at night with paid personnel in the Western half of Sussex County. This would increase paid staffing to four (4) at night.
  - c. The Chief of Emergency Services should explore hiring Sussex County staff to cover the six (6) positions during the day and four (4) at night. Volunteer leadership should be approached to fill these positions with regular duty crews to

reduce the number of career staff needed. Volunteers and county staff should be able to respond together to reduce the number of career staff required.

3. Sussex County should transition from contracted EMS to a combination system of county staff and volunteers as suggested above.
4. County staff should regularly train and interact with volunteer EMS providers and firefighters.

#### **IV. ADOPT ONE COUNTY EMS LICENSE**

The study team noted that Waverly Rescue Squad and Stony Creek Rescue Squad each operated under their own EMS license as issued by the Virginia Department of Health. In addition, contract providers operated under their own license issued by the Virginia Department of Health. Sussex County did not have an EMS license.

##### **Recommendations:**

1. Sussex County should have one EMS license and one operational medical director (OMD) under the Department of Emergency Services.
2. Any EMS agency operating in Sussex County should fall under this EMS license.
3. One EMS license and OMD ensures uniformity across the county and reduces liability for personnel working together from different agencies with different OMDs.
4. The Chief of Emergency Services should contact the Virginia Department of Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services for assistance and mediation in the process of establishing a single EMS license in the county.

#### **V. FIRE AND EMS RISK ASSESSMENT**

A fire and EMS risk assessment is essential to make strategic long-term decisions regarding fire and EMS in Sussex County. A comprehensive assessment must look at the apparatus fleet, facilities, staffing, funding, and other aspects of the fire and EMS system deemed necessary by the locality.

The study team visited five fire stations and two rescue squad stations, as well as a county public safety facility, while compiling information for this report. Many of the facilities were in need of repair or expansion. Most of the facilities did not have the ability to accommodate overnight crews and some lacked space for regular business of the volunteer agencies. Of note, Sussex County Public Safety was operating out of a former business that did not provide indoor storage for ambulances or adequate housing for staff.

##### **Recommendations:**

1. The Chief of Emergency Services conduct a fleet risk assessment that includes:

- a. A focus on apparatus that meet community specific needs such as population density, zoning, development, previous call data, etc.
  - a. The assessment should examine what the adequate number of each category of response vehicle is for each fire district or EMS district. The referenced categories of response vehicles include:
    - i. engine/pumper
    - ii. aerial device
    - iii. tanker/tender
    - iv. brush vehicle
    - v. EMS vehicle (ambulance or other).
2. The Chief of Emergency Services should create a fleet replacement schedule in consultation with the volunteer emergency agencies.
- a. The Chief of Emergency Services should prioritize future fleet replacement plans based on the most urgent needs.
  - b. The Chief of Emergency Services should consult volunteer agencies regarding volunteer owned apparatus. This apparatus should be included in the fleet replacement schedule if county funds will be utilized to maintain the vehicle or purchase a replacement.
  - c. The fleet replacement schedule should consider which vehicles gain more mileage or engine time. These vehicles should be rotated with lesser used vehicles of the same type to ensure complete use of a vehicle.
    - i. For example, if station #1's ladder truck runs more often than station #2's, then these units should be swapped to create a longer service life for both ladder trucks.
  - d. Apparatus that cannot be regularly staffed by volunteers or career staff (75% of the time) should be considered surplus apparatus and be of lower priority compared to frequently used apparatus.
  - e. See the below fleet management plan as examples only. The study team does not endorse any of the information contained in these reports produced by outside agencies.
    - i. Tuolumne County, Cal Fire:  
<https://tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/20010/2022-TCFD-Fleet-Replacement-Plan-FINAL?bidId=>
3. The Chief of Emergency Services should analyze staffing for both fire and EMS in the county. NFPA 1720 refers to staffing recommendations for fire apparatus and fire responses in volunteer organizations. This should be used as a reference when making staffing decisions.
- a. This staffing model should consider volunteer recruitment and retention. If volunteer numbers continue to decline, Sussex County must invest in the necessary facilities, equipment, and personnel to provide fire and EMS to citizens and visitors.

4. The Chief of Emergency Services should analyze how fire and EMS is funded. This should include an audit of fire and EMS agencies, a review of major sources of revenue, and an analysis of how other similarly sized jurisdictions are funded.
5. The Chief of Emergency Services should review facilities for building age, location, ability to house current and future apparatus, and connection to the community.
6. The Chief of Emergency Services should plan for the renovation or construction of new facilities that include overnight housing options for potential career staff or volunteers to utilize.
7. The Chief of Emergency Services should consider combining fire and EMS stations in areas that currently have multiple stations serving the same general area. These shared facilities could be utilized by the volunteer fire departments, rescue squads, county staff, and the community. This would foster greater cohesion between all parties involved.

## **VI. DEVELOP STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES**

It was noted that Standard Operating Procedures or Guidelines were either not in place or were incomplete during interviews with the volunteer organizations. Further, it was noted that standards were not uniform from agency to agency, including contract EMS providers.

It was clear to the study team that the county volunteer fire departments operated well together and had a positive relationship with the county. It was also clear that there were operational issues between Waverly Rescue Squad and Sussex County. A proposed EMS plan was provided to the Study Team between Waverly Rescue Squad and Sussex County.

The Study Team found that no formal agreement existed between the 5 fire departments, the 2 rescue squads, or Sussex County.

Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) are written guidelines that explain what is expected of emergency personnel in performing their duties. SOGs are a “how-to” guideline to follow in order to achieve a desired goal. SOGs are not necessarily rules or regulations, but rather a path to achieve specific goals and objectives. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are formal policies that specify a course of action, thereby ensuring efficiency, predictability, consistency, and safety.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Sussex County should form a team that includes representatives from each volunteer emergency agency, the EMS contract provider, and the Chief of Emergency Services to develop SOGs and SOPs. These SOGs and SOPs should reflect the needs of the citizens, capabilities of the involved parties, and the safety of emergency personnel.
2. NFPA 1720 recommends that fire departments have written administrative regulations, departmental orders, and/or procedures. The above recommendation helps Sussex move closer to NFPA compliance.

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.



3. It is recommended that SOPs be developed that outline response expectations, duties of Sussex County, and duties of the individual volunteer organizations.
  - a. The agreements should ensure there is a clear delineation for liabilities, cost of service, authorization to respond, as well as staffing and equipment.
4. This recommendation meets NFPA 1720.<sup>6</sup>

## **VII. BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study team noted that Sussex County provided substantial funding for new apparatus for the volunteer fire departments and assisted with other operating costs. The study team makes the following recommendations to improve the fiscal stability of the Department of Emergency Services because many require long-term planning and funding to be successful. In addition, centralized and cooperative purchasing can be utilized to reduce costs.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Chief of Emergency Services should, in consultation with the volunteer agencies, implement a capital improvement plan that addresses apparatus, equipment such as hose, turnout gear, and self-contained breathing apparatus, facilities, and other long-term projects for fire and EMS as identified in the risk assessment.
2. The Chief of Emergency Services should implement centralized purchasing for fire and EMS. This process should be included in county SOP.
  - a. Many items, including medical supplies and items used daily, can be centrally stored in accordance with OEMS regulation and distributed. In addition, many equipment purchases could be made county-wide to increase interoperability and reduce costs
3. The Chief of Emergency Services should implement cooperative purchasing. This process should be included in county SOP.
  - a. Cooperative purchasing is frequently used by government and among businesses to aggregate demand to reduce prices from suppliers. This option often reduces costs for localities and leverages buying power more effectively than ordering supplies independently. The recommendations below provide information on two cooperative purchasing options. The study team does not endorse either program. Each locality should research cooperative purchasing and find what is best for them.
4. The Department of Emergency Services should work with Sussex County staff to implement centralized purchasing and cooperative purchasing. SOP should establish processes for volunteer and paid staff to request items for purchase.

### **Examples:**

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<sup>6</sup> NFPA 1720 4.8

1. NPPGov: The National Volunteer Fire Council has partnered with NPPGov, a cooperative purchasing organization focusing on fire and emergency medical products and services. NVFC members can use NPPGov’s competitively bid agreements to purchase products and services at national pricing without having to conduct their own RFP process.<sup>7</sup>
2. Sourcewell: Sourcewell is one of the largest cooperative purchasing organizations in the United States. Combining the purchasing power of over 50,000 public agencies, this option also allows localities to purchase products at national pricing without conducting an RFP process.<sup>8</sup>

*Please refer to Virginia procurement policy and your locality’s procurement policy when examining cooperative purchasing.*

## **VIII. DEVELOP COUNTY-WIDE TRAINING STANDARDS**

The importance of training in fire and EMS cannot be overstated. Training can occur at many levels, including local agency specific training, certification level training, or skills-based training offered through private organizations. Many of the fire departments in Sussex County stated they scheduled monthly training for membership. The county does not offer training directly or provide dedicated resources for training. Most departments did not have minimum training standards that required certification level training such as Firefighter I and Firefighter II. VDFP suggests that firefighters receive certification level training such as Firefighter I to be considered interior firefighters and encourages the Chief of Emergency Services to work with VDFP to provide a certification class, such as modular Firefighter I, in Sussex County.

County-wide training standards should be developed for possible paid staff and volunteer fire and EMS professionals.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Chief of Emergency Services, in consultation with the volunteer fire chiefs and rescue squad leadership, should develop county-wide training standards with reasonable timeline requirements.
2. Fire and EMS training standards should be uniform across all agencies.
3. The Chief of Emergency Services should consider adding a training coordinator position under the Chief of Emergency Services (career or volunteer) that schedules county-sponsored training for fire and EMS services. This training should occur at each fire station and rescue squad and be open to all first responders in Sussex County.
  - a. The training coordinator should also be responsible for working with VDFP staff, OEMS staff, and Sussex County first responders to schedule training and continuing education.

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<sup>7</sup> “NPPGOV Provides Cooperative Purchasing Options” *National Volunteer Fire Council*, 2022

<sup>8</sup> “Cooperative Purchasing” *Sourcewell*, 2023

4. The Chief of Emergency Services should explore creating a Firefighter I training program with Sussex County Public Schools. The academic portion of the course could be taught within Sussex County Public Schools, with the Department of Emergency Services handling skills training with the assistance of the volunteer fire departments.
5. The Chief of Emergency Services should explore creating an EMT-basic course with Sussex County Public Schools in partnership with OEMS.
6. The Chief of Emergency Services should implement the EMS Officer Program. The Office of EMS and the State EMS Advisory Board Workforce Development Committee has created an EMS Officer Program that can be implemented in EMS agencies to help boost leadership and help develop and maintain quality leaders in the EMS Community. The program covers topics like human resource management, community and government relations, administration and more.

*Sussex County may need to adopt ordinances for training students under the age of 18 if not already established. Please contact VDFFP to connect with other localities that utilize high school firefighter training programs.*

## **IX. CROSS-TRAIN FIREFIGHTERS AND EMS PROVIDERS**

Currently, Sussex County has two rescue squads and one fire department that are licensed to provide EMS care. In addition, Sussex County utilizes contract EMS to provide care. According to Sussex County response data, the majority of emergency calls in the county are EMS related.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Chief of Emergency Services encourage cross-training of firefighters and EMS providers. This can be accomplished by providing EMT-Basic courses or firefighter level training.
2. Sussex County volunteer agencies encourage joint membership opportunities for members to serve on both the fire department and rescue squad.
3. Sussex County fire departments establish a formal process for providing drivers to each rescue squad when needed to reduce liability.
4. Any full-time or part-time staffing under the Department of Emergency Services should be trained as both firefighters and EMS professionals (EMT-Basic, Paramedic, etc).
  - a. The primary role for staff should be EMS related.
  - b. Staff should have the ability, if requested or approved by the Chief of Emergency Services and the volunteer fire chiefs, to utilize fire department equipment to assist in life safety.

## **X. INCREASE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION EFFORTS**

Volunteerism has been a part of the community tradition of the United States since the beginning of colonization. At the origin of volunteer fire departments, volunteers were often the political leaders in a community. Today, the volunteer labor force consists of citizens who are more technologically savvy and driven by an entirely different set of criteria with a common bond of helping the community. The average age of a volunteer member in the fire service today is above 50 years old.<sup>9</sup> The fire service often tends to subscribe to the belief that all members should be able to do all things. This strategy may not be successful in today's culture. A more productive belief is that a fire department should be viewed as a team with several different groups of individuals being responsible for specific functions.

Sussex County is made up of dedicated volunteer first responders who provide emergency services to their fellow citizens. All Sussex County fire departments and rescue squads expressed issues with recruitment of volunteers. This poses the strongest threat to public safety in Sussex County if numbers continue to decline. The study team learned that there was no formalized recruitment or marketing of volunteer agencies in the county.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Review Fire Department Culture: The Chief of Emergency Services, and each volunteer agency, should encourage a modification of the "how we do things culture". Each department should do an assessment to determine what the main operational areas are for their organization. This would allow for the targeted recruitment of individual members to handle non-emergent functions such as fundraising, entering fire reports, marketing/social media initiatives, fire & life safety education and community programs, human resource management, station & apparatus maintenance, and In- house training. By utilizing these specialized groups to achieve specific tasks, it works to free up the demands on those members that are interested in responding to emergencies and maintaining the necessary training.
2. Develop a "See People Like Me" Culture: The "culture" should become more inclusive. It appeared that white male members outnumbered all other members. It is difficult to recruit members from citizens receiving services if they don't "see people like me". It should be a goal of the Chief of Emergency Services to have membership which reflects the race and gender demographics of the county which are approximately:

White – 39.1%	Black – 55.1%	Other – 1.8%
Male – 58.6%	Female 41.3%	

3. Utilize the "Make Me a Firefighter" Recruitment Tool: The Chief of Emergency Services and each volunteer agency should utilize The NVFC's "Make Me A Firefighter" recruitment tool. This features a department portal filled with resources and tools for implementing a local recruitment campaign as well as a public web site to allow potential volunteers to find local opportunities. There are step-by-step guides and resources on marketing and planning events to engage prospective recruits. It allows the posting of

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<sup>9</sup> "Volunteer firefighters are getting older. It could be a life-or-death issue" *NPR* 2023

volunteer opportunities by entering them into a database which is searchable to potential volunteers who can connect directly with the department through MakeMeAFirefighter.org. It is possible to customize campaign materials with departmental specific information and customize outreach materials for each individual department for use in the community.

4. The Chief of Emergency Services should develop a Recruitment and Retention Plan with consultation from each volunteer agency.
  - a. The National Volunteer Fire Council provides an outline for volunteer agencies to use when developing this plan.<sup>10</sup>
  - b. Sussex County should market volunteer agencies through social media and other means to solicit volunteers.
  - c. Sussex County should explore direct benefits for volunteers such as:
    - i. Pay per call
    - ii. VOLSAP
    - iii. Tax Exemptions

## **XI. COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION PLANNING**

Why do public safety agencies respond to an emergency? They respond to emergency incidents to mitigate the impact, damage, and injury within communities. Communities can proactively approach and possibly prevent these same “risks” or events by utilizing the concepts of community risk reduction (CRR).

CRR is defined by Vision 20/20 as “a process to identify and prioritize local risks, followed by the integrated and strategic investment of resources (emergency response and prevention) to reduce their occurrence and impact.”<sup>11</sup> Fire departments have been actively involved in fire prevention for many years through public education, building inspections and other activities.

CRR provides a more focused approach to reducing local identified specific risks. Although there is no specific blueprint for developing CRR plans, there are some common and essential steps. Much of the current literature and training materials suggest that community risk reduction programs use a six-step approach towards development.

- |                       |                                     |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1) Identify Risks     | 4) Prepare Plan                     |
| 2) Prioritize Risks   | 5) Implement Plan                   |
| 3) Develop Strategies | 6) Monitor, Evaluate, & Modify Plan |

Ultimately, the CRR plan will be unique to each locality, based on the types of risks identified for that community.

Risk assessment is the identification of potential and likely risks within a particular community, and the process of prioritizing those risks. It is the critical initial step in emergency preparedness. This process is based on the collection and review of community profile information comprised

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<sup>10</sup> “Develop a Recruitment and Retention Plan” *National Volunteer Fire Council*

<sup>11</sup> Vision 20/20 Community Risk Reduction, *Institution of Fire Engineers-USA Branch*

of a loss /event history profile and the response environment. The response environment looks at the type of incidents to which public safety organizations in the community respond, and the capabilities of these organizations. The loss/event profile looks at past experiences and trends in response, losses and causes. A risk assessment helps focus the fire prevention/loss prevention activities of the community and department.”<sup>12</sup>

**Recommendation:**

1. The Chief of Emergency Services should conduct a community risk assessment to identify potential and likely risks within Sussex County, prioritize those risks, and analyze the capabilities of fire and EMS agencies in Sussex County. A CRA is the first step in strategically planning for a safer community in Sussex County.
2. The Chief of Emergency Services can request the VDFP CRR Coordinator return and assist the county in its Community Risk Assessment (CRA)
  - a. NFPA 1720 indicates that the emergency services engage in the development of a community risk management plan for fire, emergency medical service, and hazardous materials use, storage, and transportation within the county. (NFPA 1720, 4.2;4.2.1;4.2.2; 4.2.3.1)
3. The Chief of Emergency Services should ensure that all non-reporting county fire departments are strongly encouraged to start or continue fire reporting via VFIRS. Not only does this process provide insight into the county’s emergency responses and trends, but it can also provide a means of comparing local trends to regional and national trends. As stated above this information is critical for the identification and mitigation of any community risks.
4. The Chief of Emergency Services should explore a Community Paramedicine (CP) Program.
  - a. A CP program is designed to alleviate the burden on existing medical, social services, and emergency services by misappropriated requests for resources. Disparities in access to healthcare exist across the system and involve many factors including location, race, gender and income. Due to the inability of some Americans to obtain effective healthcare, patients will turn to one resource that is always available – EMS, supported by hospital-based emergency medicine. Inability to access appropriate care leads to activation of the EMS system as it is the only assistance some people can depend on.
  - b. An effective CP program must be data-driven. A common reason programs fail is that their creation and intent differ from the needs of the community. An effective CP program must be a root cause and data-driven process. Root causes may consist of geographic locations of frequent EMS calls, spikes in call volume at a particular location or for a person, and/or repeated requests for service for another individual. A common reason programs fail is that their creation and intent differ from the needs of the community.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> “Understanding & Implementing Standards” (2010) *NVFC*

<sup>13</sup> *Community Paramedicine: What, why and how?*, 2022

- c. Consult the Office of Emergency Medical Services’ website for more information and important documents or refer to NFPA 451 – Guide for Community Health Care Programs as a resources for this recommendation:  
<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/emergency-medical-services/community-paramedicine-mobile-integrated-healthcare/>

## **XII. CANCER PREVENTION**

As stated in the Lavender Ribbon Report developed by the NVFC and IAFC, cancer is the leading health risk facing firefighters, largely due to the chemicals and carcinogens they are exposed to while engaged in response activities.<sup>14</sup> Chemically based plastics are in use in nearly every product in our homes, business and vehicles and when they burn, their chemical composition changes.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Chief of Emergency Services should develop operational SOP’s that establish safe cancer prevention practices such as:
  - a. Gross decontamination after fire incidents
  - b. Washing of firefighter PPE following fire or hazardous materials incidents
  - c. A fire hood exchange program
  - d. Shower facilities at fire stations
2. The Chief of Emergency Services should encourage /facilitate National Firefighter Registry (NFR) sign up.
  - a. The Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2018 mandated the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) create a voluntary registry of firefighters to collect health and occupational information to determine cancer incidence in the U.S. fire service. In response to this mandate, CDC’s National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) established the National Firefighter Registry (NFR).<sup>15</sup>
  - b. There have been no comprehensive, national data sources in the United States for studying the relationship between firefighting and cancer among all firefighters. The NFR will help researchers better understand and reduce cancer in firefighters by matching the information provided by participating NFR firefighters with cancer diagnosis information from state cancer registries. This matching process will allow NIOSH to study the relationship between firefighting and cancer outcomes over time.

Step 1: Firefighters sign up for the NFR.

Step 2: NIOSH researchers match firefighter profiles with potential information in state cancer registries over time. This makes it possible to study the relationship between firefighting and cancer over time, even if cancer diagnoses occur in the future.

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<sup>14</sup> “Lavender Ribbon Report-Best Practices for Preventing Firefighter Cancer” (2021) *NVFC & IAFC*

<sup>15</sup> H.R. 931 “Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2018”. (2018) *115<sup>th</sup> U.S Congress*

Step 3: NIOSH captures work history details. This information can be used to better understand firefighters' exposures and how they may be related to cancer.

Step 4: Stronger evidence can help inform new health and safety measures to protect firefighters from cancer. Combining information from firefighters across the U.S. will help researchers better understand cancer and its risk factors in the fire service, which could ultimately help reduce cancer among firefighters for generations to come.

### **XIII. COMMUNICATIONS**

Sussex County should consider updating its communication system to provide countywide radio coverage. During multiple meetings, fire and EMS personnel expressed concern over “dead” zones in the county where radio traffic could not be maintained.

*911 Communications was not within the scope of this study. The below recommendations are based on comments by fire and EMS personnel and are suggestions for Sussex County to investigate.*

#### **Recommendation:**

1. The Chief of Emergency Services should conduct a study of radio communications in Sussex County, working with each volunteer agency to determine areas that are not able to be reached.
2. The Chief of Emergency Services should work with the Sussex County Sheriff's Office to address the reported “dead” zones in the county.
3. Sussex County should reference NFPA 1225: Standard for Emergency Services Communications to review current radio usage and procedure



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## APPENDIX A

Resolution requesting the Virginia Fire Services Board conduct a comprehensive analysis of the Fire and EMS system of Sussex County, Virginia

RESOLUTION #22-86



REQUESTING THE VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD  
TO COMPLETE A COMPREHENSIVE FIRE AND EMS ANALYSIS OF SUSSEX COUNTY

ON MOTION OF SUPERVISOR TYLER, seconded by SUPERVISOR W. JONES and carried:  
RESOLVED that the Sussex County Board of Supervisors hereby approved resolution requesting Virginia Fire Services (VFS) Board to complete a comprehensive Fire and EMS Analysis of Sussex County, to-wit:

WHEREAS, fire and EMS studies are conducted by the Virginia Fire Services Board at the request of a local jurisdiction, per Section 9.1-203.4 of the Code of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the study is to provide an objective view of the fire and EMS services provided in a local jurisdiction, and to provide feedback in areas that are successful and areas that need improvement, to include recommendations on how to improve fire and EMS service delivery; and

WHEREAS, the Sussex County Board of Supervisors wishes to provide excellent fire and EMS service delivery to its residents in the most cost-effect manner; and

WHEREAS, recognizing that fire and EMS volunteers have declined in number but have been historically relied upon to provide these services both in the rural areas and towns of Sussex County, the Sussex County Board of Supervisors wishes to maintain the involvement of fire and EMS volunteers to the maximum extent possible while maintaining adequate response standards in the interest of public safety; and

WHEREAS, given the Sussex County Board of Supervisors' objective to support volunteer organizations, and as a standard part of the study process of the Virginia Fire Services Board, this analysis will include the involvement of all volunteer fire and EMS organizations within Sussex County, to include the Waverly Rescue Squad, which as of January 2022 is not providing direct EMS service delivery; and

WHEREAS, the Sussex County Fire and Rescue Association has endorsed this request to address all fire and rescue needs across the entire county.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Sussex County Board of Supervisors requests the Virginia Fire Services Board to complete a comprehensive fire and EMS analysis (fire and EMS study) of Sussex County, with the objective of identifying strengths and areas of needed

Page 2: Resolution R-22-86: Request for VFS Board to Complete a Comprehensive Fire & EMS Analysis  
July 28, 2022

improvement in the provision of fire and EMS service delivery across the county, in order to best meet the public safety needs of the residents in the most cost-effective manner.

Adopted this 28<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2022

  
Susan B. Seward, Chair  
Sussex County Board of Supervisors

*A COPY TESTE:*

  
Richard Douglas, Clerk

## APPENDIX B

### Scope of Agreement between the County of Sussex and the Virginia Fire Services Board



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Keith H. Johnson  
VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES  
BOARD CHAIR

### **Virginia Department of Fire Programs**

#### ***Scope of Fire and EMS Study Agreement***

***between the***

***County of Sussex***

***and the***

**Virginia Fire Services Board**

#### **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of this agreement is to establish mutually accepted duties, responsibilities, and expectations between the Virginia Fire Services Board, its designated Fire and EMS Study Committee and the locality which has requested the Fire and EMS Study/Technical Assistance from the Virginia Fire Service Board. The agreement is provided to help define activities and expectations between both parties.

#### **AGREEMENT**

- Study results/recommendations shall be comprehensive in nature and shall be consistent with and organized according to a final revised scope of work as negotiated between the Study Committee and the locality prior to the formal commencement of the Study. ***\*\*Refer to Self-Assessment Questionnaire for Scope of Study.***
- While questions of staffing ratios, response time, capital equipment purchases, etc. are relevant to the Study process, the locality should not expect detailed recommendations in these areas beyond system-wide recommendations.
- Study Results will be openly presented to the elected/appointed governing body, the requesting agency as well as any additional requesting organization(s);
- The time frame noted for technical assistance will be accepted;

- All relevant organizational data will be made available to the study committee; and,
- Locality will provide to the Virginia Department of Fire Programs a central point of contact. Please ensure the contact is available Monday – Friday from 9 am to 5 pm, and nighttime and weekends as needed.
- Within 6 to 9 months of the Study completion, the Department of Fire Programs will email the locality a feedback follow-up survey. It is requested that the locality complete the survey so the Agency and Board can gain valuable in-sight into the success and areas of improvements for future studies. Your participation in the feedback survey is important to the Agency and Board.

**REVIEW AND TERM**

This agreement shall be in effect until the end of the Fire and EMS Study.

**SIGNED**

We do hereby acknowledge and agree to abide by the provisions of this Memorandum of Understanding.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Kath H. Johnson  
 Chairman, Virginia Fire Services Board

3-3-2023  
 Date

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 County Administrator

1-30-23  
 Date



# Virginia Fire Services Board Fire and EMS Study Manual

**An informative guide for Fire and EMS Studies conducted by the  
Virginia Fire Services Board pursuant to § 9.1-203.4**

*Prepared by the*  
Virginia Fire Services Board  
Virginia Department of Fire Programs

# Fire and EMS Study Manual

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- Fire and EMS Study Overview
- Role of VFSB
- Role of VDFP, DOF, and OEMS
- Fire and EMS Study Types
- Type I Fire and EMS Study
- Type I Fire and EMS Review
- Application Period
- Selection Criteria
- Required Documents





# Fire and EMS Study Manual

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## **Fire and EMS Study Overview**

The Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB) is a policy board appointed by the Governor of Virginia consisting of 15 members. The duties of the VFSB are outlined in *Code of Virginia* § 9.1-203. One of the duties outlined in § 9.1-203 states the board can “provide technical assistance and advice to local fire departments, other fire services organizations, and local governments through Fire and Emergency Medical Services studies done in conjunction with the Department of Fire Programs.” Studies include representatives from the Office of Emergency Medical Services at the Department of Health (OEMS), the Department of Fire Programs (VDFP), the VFSB, and when applicable the Department of Forestry (DOF).

The VFSB has been conducting studies of fire and EMS systems free of charge for over thirty years. Each study results in a report that offers an unbiased look at a locality's fire and EMS system. Studies could consist of a preliminary review of documents, site visits with local departments and government entities, a public hearing, and a presentation of the finished report to the local government body. In an effort to produce an accurate and thorough study, the VFSB limits the number of Type I studies it completes in 18 months to four. The number of Type II reviews is determined by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs with consultation from the board. This number can be increased by the VFSB in the event of an emergency. Studies shall not be construed as legal advice to a locality or department.

The goal of a fire and EMS Study or review is to provide guidance for localities to promote safety and risk reduction in their community.

## **Role of VFSB**

The Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB) has a statutory role of providing these studies/reviews in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The VFSB is the primary sponsor of fire and EMS studies/reviews and it is under their authority that the process exists. The VFSB shall, through the Department of Fire Programs, receive applications, review applications, and select localities for studies/reviews during each application period. The VFSB shall also oversee the process and make necessary changes to the Fire and EMS Study Manual. All VFSB members shall participate in one or more fire and EMS studies/reviews when available.

The VFSB Administration, Policy, and Finance Committee shall be the entity that accepts applications and recommends approval to the VFSB. This committee shall oversee the process and review draft studies prior to the VFSB. The Administration, Policy, and Finance Committee shall select a Fire and EMS Study Coordinator from the VFSB to work with each locality and the Department of Fire Programs, as deemed appropriate by the Administration, Policy, and Finance Committee Chair.



# Fire and EMS Study Manual

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The VFSB Fire and EMS Study Coordinator should be a VFSB member with relevant fire service experience that serves as a liaison with the Department of Fire Programs and the locality that the study/review is being completed in.

The coordinator shall:

- Report to the Administration, Policy, and Finance Committee updates on ongoing studies/reviews
- Communicate with VDFP staff regarding the scheduling of studies/reviews and collection of documents
- Communicate with the locality, in consultation with VDFP staff, on the progress of the studies/reviews
- Assist the Vice Chair of the VFSB with selecting members to participate in studies/reviews

## **Role of VDFP, DOF, and OEMS**

The Virginia Department of Fire Programs, Department of Forestry, and Office of Emergency Medical Services provide technical assistance and support to the Virginia Fire Services Board.

### **VDFP:**

The Department of Fire Programs provides technical assistance as a part of the study team and provides logistical support. VDFP staff serving on Type I studies include the Government Affairs Manager and the Community Risk Reduction Coordinator. The Vice Chair of the VFSB or the Executive Director of VDFP may also add additional staff members, when required. These staff members will provide comments/recommendations for the report.

The VDFP Community Risk Reduction Coordinator will primarily complete the Type II reviews with the assistance of a VFSB member.

VDFP will also serve as the primary contact point for localities applying for a study/review and will retain records of fire and EMS studies/reviews. VDFP will also provide logistical support to include drafting schedules, providing documentation, and securing lodging. The final report will be drafted by VDFP staff in consultation with the study team. These duties primarily fall to the Government Affairs Manager or their designee.

### **DOF:**

The Department of Forestry will provide a local forester or other qualified member of their staff to assist the VFSB with Type I studies when requested. A DOF representative is not necessarily required for each study. The Fire and EMS Study Coordinator should use discretion based on the request of the locality regarding whether a DOF representative is needed. The DOF



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representative will be a member of the study team. DOF per diem is billed to DOF, while lodging is provided by the Department of Fire Programs.

## **OEMS:**

The Office of Emergency Medical Services will provide a qualified member of their staff to assist the VFSB with Type I studies or by request for Type II reviews. The representative should be well versed in EMS regulations, EMS systems, and best practices in EMS. The Office of EMS representatives will be members of the study team and offer comments/recommendations to be included in the report. OEMS per diem is billed to OEMS, while lodging is provided by the Department of Fire Programs.

## **Fire and EMS Study Types**

**Type I Study:** A Type I study is a full-length study requested by the locality's governing body to be completed by the Virginia Fire Services Board under *Code of Virginia* § 9.1-203. Only four (4) Type I studies will be completed every 18 months. A Type I study consists of 2-3 VFSB members, VDFP staff, OEMS Staff, and DOF staff. These studies consist of a preliminary review of information, site visits by study team members, and a comprehensive report on fire and EMS in a locality. These studies could take 3-4 months to be completed and should be requested when significant issues need to be addressed. Type I studies must be requested during the application period. The VFSB reserves the right to determine if requests are approved as a Type I study. Type I study requests can be recommended by the VFSB as a Type II review.

**Type II Review:** A Type II review is an abbreviated study that is requested by the locality's governing body that does not involve significant issues and is meant as a review of fire and EMS practices in the locality. There is no limitation on Type II reviews completed each year. These reviews primarily consist of a community risk assessment completed by the locality with the assistance of the VDFP Community Risk Reduction Coordinator and a member of the VFSB. The length of these reviews varies by request. The Vice Chair of the VFSB reserves the right to determine if requests are accepted in consultation with the Community Risk Reduction Coordinator. A member of the Department of Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services can also participate depending on the needs of the locality.

## **Type I Fire and EMS Study**

A Type I fire and EMS study consists of four (4) components that include:

1. Pre-Site Documentation Review
2. On-Site Visit
3. Post Visit Review
4. Final Presentation



# Fire and EMS Study Manual

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**Pre-Site Documentation Review:** The study team will request documentation, such as standard operating procedures, apparatus lists, the fire and EMS budget and other information from the locality. The Department of Fire Programs will work with the locality to schedule the on-site visit and related public hearing.

**On-Site Visit:** The on-site visit consists of meetings with each of the fire and EMS components in the locality. For example, if a county has five fire companies and two rescue squads, the study team will meet with each independently. The study team also meets with the chief executive of the locality, any other public safety entity, and fire/rescue associations if they exist. An important component of the on-site visit is the public hearing. The public hearing should be publicly communicated via local media, posted on the locality website, and communicated through other means by the locality. This event allows study team members to hear public input regarding the study. The locality is responsible for providing a location and notice of this hearing.

**Post-Visit Review:** The study team members will provide their observations and recommendations to VDFP staff for inclusion in the report. Study team members may request additional information from the locality during this time. The report will be drafted by VDFP staff. A draft of the report will be provided to the locality for technical review only.

**Final Presentation Review:** After approval of the draft by the VFSB, the Fire and EMS Study Coordinator or designee will present the findings of the report to the locality's governing body at a public meeting.

The Type I study team consists of 2-3 members of the Virginia Fire Services Board, a staff member of the Office of EMS, two staff members of the Department of Fire Programs, and if needed, a staff member of the Department of Forestry. These numbers can be altered at the direction of the Vice Chair of the VFSB.

## **Type II Fire and EMS Review**

A Type II fire and EMS review could consist of, but is not limited to, the following components as determined by the locality, the VFSB, and the Coordinator of Community Risk Reduction. Type II reviews are more flexible by design to give the locality more tailored technical advice regarding fire and EMS.

1. **Documentation Review:** A basic review of documentation such as Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines, memoranda of understanding, mutual aid agreements, fiscal information, call volume, response districts, etc.
2. **Completing a Community Risk Assessment:** An effort to identify and prioritize local risks, develop and execute action plans and evaluate process outcomes.



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- 3. Virtual or In Person Meeting:** Meeting with local fire and EMS stakeholders or locality representatives to determine issues and make recommendations specific to the localities request.

## **Application Period**

The Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB) accepts applications for Type I studies during two application periods each year. Type II applications may be submitted year-round. During each application period, 1-2 localities will be selected for a Type I study. Documents listed under “Required Documents” are required to be submitted by the dates below to be considered:

<b>Application Periods</b>	
Period 1	Period 2
1 January – 15 February	1 August – 15 September

Type I applications will be reviewed by the VFSB at their next regularly scheduled meeting. Regular meetings of the VFSB occur in February, June, September, and December. Type II applications will be sent to the Vice Chair of the VFSB and the VDFP Coordinator of Community Risk Reduction for review. Selections for Type I studies will be made by the VFSB and communicated to applicants at least one week after a regularly scheduled meeting.

Once notification is made that a study has been accepted, the locality and VFSB will schedule a site visit for Type I visits and Type II visits if required. The locality is responsible for providing a schedule of meetings during the site visit and providing transportation. Studies must be completed within 18 months of approval by the VFSB.

## **Selection Criteria**

The Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB) strives to provide the best recommendations to localities regarding their fire and EMS system. The VFSB consists of members appointed by the Governor of Virginia who are not compensated and often hold positions in various parts of the state. In order to be good stewards of state resources and cognizant of the demanding work posed by completing a Type I study, the VFSB limits how many Type I studies are completed every 18 months to four, with the possibility of adding additional studies in an emergency situation.

The VFSB will review all required documents submitted by a locality and will make an impartial and unbiased decision during each application period. If a locality is not chosen for a Type I study, they may choose to submit an application again during following application period or elect for a Type II review. Localities are invited to attend the Administration, Policy, and Finance Committee meeting at which their application will be considered to provide comment. The VFSB considers the following when selecting a locality for a fire and EMS study:



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- Financial Need
- Recent fire and EMS studies
- Private studies/reports related to fire/EMS
- The localities reasoning for requesting a study
- Major incidents/issues related to fire/EMS

## **Required Documents**

Required documents for localities to submit before the close of an application period include the following:

1. Scope of Study Agreement
2. Self-Assessment Questionnaire
  - a. Any documents listed by the applicant in this questionnaire should also be submitted if available
3. Request Letter
  - a. A request letter must provide detailed reasoning on why the locality is requesting a study and must state which type of study/review the locality is requesting (Type I or II).
  - b. A request letter must be on locality letterhead and signed by the City Manager, Town Manager, or County Administrator.



## FY-2023 Fire Programs Fund Aid to Localities Payments

Pay Cycle	Date Pymt. Requested	No. of Localities	% of Localities	Amount	% of Funds
1	9/24/22	126	39.1%	\$15,966,245	43.9%
2	12/23/22	50	15.5%	\$6,186,264	17.0%
3	3/17/2023	46	14.3%	\$2,572,046	7.1%
4	6/22/23	98	30.4%	\$11,654,646	32.0%
					0.0%
Funds Released		320	99.4%	\$36,379,201	99.9%
Total Funds Not Released		2	0.6%	\$30,000	0.1%
ATL Total		322	100.0%	\$36,409,201	100.0%

### Localities Forfeiting Funds 2023

1 Dendron (Town)	\$15,000.00
2 Hamilton (Town)	<u>\$15,000.00</u>
	<b>\$30,000.00</b>

**FY-2024 Fire Programs Fund Aid to Localities Payments**

Pay Cycle	Date Pymt. Requested	No. of Localities	% of Localities	Amount	% of Funds
1	9/22/2023	107	33.2%	\$15,606,285	38.5%
2			0.0%		0.0%
3			0.0%		0.0%
4			0.0%		0.0%
			0.0%		0.0%
Funds Released		107	33.2%	\$15,606,285	38.5%
Total Funds Not Released		215	66.8%	\$24,924,545	61.5%
ATL Total		322	100.0%	\$40,530,830	100.0%



# FY2024 Live Structural Budget:

Carried forward Balance from FY23	4,560,417
FY24 Annual Appropriation	975,000
VFIRS FY23 Carryover	8,900
<b>Total FY 24 Funding</b>	<b>5,544,317</b>

	Total Project Awarded	Prior Year Payments	FY24 Estimated Payments	FY24 Actual Payments	Obligation Balance
<b><u>Burn Building Construction Projects</u></b>					
FLUVANNA, County FY18	480,000	112,500	0		367,500
HANOVER County FY20	450,000	112,500	337,500		337,500
SUFFOLK County FY21	480,000		112,500		480,000
GOOCHLAND County	480,000		112,500		480,000
RICHMOND City	480,000		112,500	-	480,000
	<u>2,370,000</u>	<u>225,000</u>	<u>675,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2,145,000</u>
<b><u>Burn Building Renovation / Repair Projects</u></b>					
Lynchburg City (repair) FY22	38,849		38,849		38,849
Virginia Beach City (repair) FY22	34,549		34,549		34,549
Buckingham County (repair) FY22	8,820		8,820		8,820
Roanoke City (repair) FY23	78,909		78,909	78,909.00	0
Wise Town (repair) FY24	12,800		12,800		12,800
Chilhowie Town (repair) FY24	17,800		17,800		17,800
	<u>191,727</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>191,727</u>	<u>78,909.00</u>	<u>112,818</u>
Impingement Project (Repair-Thermal Lining FY22)	732,284		366,142		732,284
Estimated full compliance over 5 years, per yr cost	732,284	0	366,142	0	732,284
<b><u>Regional Fire Services Training Facilities Projects</u></b>					
Richmond City FY22	50,000		50,000		50,000
Rockingham County FY23	50,000		50,000		50,000
	<u>100,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>100,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>100,000</u>
<b><u>DFP BBldg Supt - A/E Contract</u></b>					
DFP BBldg - Inspections A/E Contract	525,000	-	250,000		525,000
DFP BBldg - Consulting	75,000		75,000		75,000
DFP (DIRECT) BBldg - Mobile Burn Cells	0	-	0	-	-
	<u>600,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>325,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>600,000</u>
<b>NEW Construction Projects</b>	<b>2,370,000</b>	<b>225,000</b>	<b>675,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,145,000</b>
<b>RENOV / REPAIR Projects</b>	<b>191,727</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>191,727</b>	<b>78,909</b>	<b>112,818</b>
<b>Impingement Project (Repair-Thermal Lining)</b>	<b>732,284</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>366,142</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>732,284</b>
<b>RFSTG Projects</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100,000</b>
<b>DFP <u>direct</u> BBldg Support</b>	<b>600,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>325,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>600,000</b>
<b>Total Multi-Year Awards</b>	<b><u>3,994,011</u></b>	<b><u>225,000</u></b>	<b><u>1,657,869</u></b>	<b><u>78,909</u></b>	<b><u>3,690,102</u></b>

Estimate Cash on hand 7/1/23 5,465,408

**Unobligated 1,775,306**

## FY24 VFIRS Grant

### Fire Departments Recommended for VFIRS Hardware Grant, FY2024

	FIPS	Locality	FDID	Fire Department	Amount
1	345	Colonial Beach Town	19301	Colonial Beach Volunteer Fire Department	\$700.00
2	350	Culpeper Town	04706	Little Fork Volunteer Fire & Rescue Company	\$700.00
3	051	Dickenson County	5103	Clincho Volunteer Fire Depart	\$700.00
4	051	Dickenson County	5101	Clintwood Volunteer Fire Depart	\$700.00
5	051	Dickenson County	5102	Haysi Volunteer Fire Depart	\$700.00
6	051	Dickenson County	5104	Sandy Ridge Volunteer Fire Department	\$700.00
7	442	Richlands Town	18505	Richlands Fire & Rescue	\$700.00
8	450	Saxis Town	00105	Saxis Volunteer Fire Company	\$700.00

\$5,600.00

### Summary Award per Locality for VFIRS Hardware Grant, FY2024

	FIPS	Locality	Amount Recommended
1	345	Colonial Beach Town	\$700
2	350	Culpeper Town	\$700
3	051	Dickenson County	\$2,800
4	442	Richlands Town	\$700
5	450	Saxis Town	\$700

**Total      \$5,600**

# Summary of Open Project 9-1-23

## Burn Building Construction Projects: 5 open

FLUVANNA County awarded FY18 480,000

- Locality would like a two year extension and building type change. On agenda for September meeting. This would be their 5<sup>th</sup> extension request.

HANOVER County awarded FY20 450,000

- Project is near completion. Ribbon cutting ceremony is being planned, tentatively for October.

SUFFOLK County awarded FY21 480,000

- No update to report.

RICHMOND City awarded FY23 480,000

- Received several FOIA inquiries concerning their project over the last two months. Community did not want building in the neighborhood chosen by the Fire Department. Recent News report states Richmond Fire have changed the location of their building project.

GOOCHLAND County awarded FY23 480,000

- No update to report.

## Burn Building Renovation / Repair Projects

LYNCHBURG City (repair) FY22 awarded \$38,849

- Issued a second no cost extension in August 2023. New end date December 17, 2023

Virginia Beach (repair) FY22 awarded \$34,549

- Project end date November 12, 2023. Division Chief review repairs in August. Additional work needed.

Buckingham County (repair) FY23 awarded \$8,820

- A repair grant award was issued in November 2022. The locality has until November 2023 to complete the repairs outlined in the application.

Town of Wise (repair) FY24 awarded \$12,800

- A repair grant award was issued in June 2023. The locality has until June 2024 to complete the repairs outlined in the application.

Town of Chilhowie (repair) FY24 awarded \$17,800

- A repair grant award was issued in June 2023. The locality has until June 2024 to complete the repairs outlined in the application.

2024 Regional Fire Training Grant Applicants

	<u>FIPS</u>	<u>Lead Locality</u>	<u>Project Total</u>	<u>Amount Requested</u>	<u>Proposed Project</u>
1	097	King and Queen County	68,369.50	34,184.75	2 Forcible Entry Door Simulator =\$9,072.5 each 2 Digital Fire Training Panels =\$25,112.25 each

68,370

34,184.75

Available Funding 100,000.00

-

**Policy on Award Amount**

The maximum amount of any project award shall not exceed \$50,000 per fiscal year funding cycle (July 1 – June 30). A locality may submit one application containing multiple training props but is only allowed to receive a maximum award of \$50,000.

**Policy on Funding Criteria**

A locality submitting a standard application is eligible to receive up to 50% of the proposed project. The locality is expected to contribute the remaining 50%. Funding may be considered using an 80/20 formula if a hardship can be shown and justification is included. A request for a 100% funding formula will be considered in an extreme hardship situation and must be adequately justified. Total funding will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.



**General Instructions & Notices**

- Applicants are directed to "**Regional Fire Services Training Facilities Grant Program Policy**" as amended for the current funding year which is incorporated by reference to all applications and any subsequent awards. (Such practices document is inclusive of all *terms & conditions*.)
- The filing of an application does not bind the Board to award nor the Department to pay any such grant.
- Incomplete applications and those received after the deadline will not be considered.  
(Deadline each year) → **September 1st** postmarked
- Completed applications executed by the competent authority will only be accepted directly from jurisdictions not fire departments.
- Timeliness of filing and subsequent receipt by the Agency are solely the applicant's responsibility – all applications must be completed in ink and sent directly to: **VDFP Budget and Grants Manager,**  
Address → **1005 Technology Park Drive, Glen Allen VA 23059-4500**
- All decisions regarding grant awards made by the Board are final; applicants may appeal decisions in writing to the address provided above within 15 business days of the notice of awards.

**A. Applicant Information**

1. Title of Lead Jurisdiction Making Application (Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> only one, then make entry)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	County of	King and Queen
		City of	
		Incorporated Town of	
2. Employer Identification Number (EIN)	[REDACTED]		
3. Principal Point of Contact	(Include salutation, name & title.) Mr. Greg Hunter, Emergency Services Chief		
4. Mailing Address (Include zip code)  Identify COUNTY if appropriate	King and Queen County Department of Emergency Services 242 Allens Circle, Suite L, P.O. Box 177 King and Queen CH, VA 23085		
5. Telephone Number	( 804 ) 592-7920		
6. FAX Number	( 804 ) 785-5999		
7. Internet e-mail address	ghunter@kingandqueenco.net		

<b>B. Additional Parties</b>	Identify ALL jurisdictions (Not Fire Departments) participating in the proposed project. Attach additional sheets as may be required.
1. Formal Agreement Among Parties	<p>In accordance with Program Policy, multi-jurisdictional regional training partnerships must be documented (e.g. MOA, MOU, etc.) as required supporting documentation to the Application for consideration of Program funding.</p> <p>A copy of the Agreement has been attached to this application.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><i>If a copy of the Agreement has not been attached as required supporting documentation, this Application will be considered incomplete and funding will not be approved.</i></p>

Department of Fire Programs

SEP 01 2023

Administration



( Reproduce and complete as many additional blocs as may be necessary for complete disclosure )

2a. Complete <u>one</u> each for ALL other Parties of Interest	Number <u>2</u> of a total of <u>2</u> parties to proposed project (Count the LEAD Locality as #1, thereby start with #2.)
2b. Title of Jurisdiction <small>(Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> only one, then make entry)</small>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County of <u>Middlesex</u> <input type="checkbox"/> City of _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Incorporated Town of _____
2c. Employer Identification Number (EIN)	_____
2d. Principal Point of Contact	<small>(Include salutation, name &amp; title.)</small> <u>David Layman, Emergency Services Coordinator</u>
2e. Mailing Address  <small>Identify COUNTY if appropriate</small>	<small>(Include zip code+4)</small> <u>Middlesex County Department of Emergency Services</u> <u>PO Box 428, 877 General Puller Hwy</u> <u>Saluda, VA 23149</u>
2f. Telephone Number	<u>( 804 ) 758-4330</u>
2g. FAX Number	<u>( 804 ) 758-0061</u>
2h. Internet e-mail address	<u>d.layman@co.middlesex.va.us</u>

( Reproduce and complete as many additional blocs as may be necessary for complete disclosure )

3a. Complete <u>one</u> each for ALL other Parties of Interest	Number <u>    </u> of a total of <u>    </u> parties to proposed project (Count the LEAD Locality as #1, thereby start with #2.)
3b. Title of Jurisdiction <small>(Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> only one, then make entry)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> County of _____ <input type="checkbox"/> City of _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Incorporated Town of _____
3c. Employer Identification Number (EIN)	_____
3d. Principal Point of Contact	<small>(Include salutation, name &amp; title.)</small> _____
3e. Mailing Address  <small>Identify COUNTY if appropriate</small>	<small>(Include zip code+4)</small> _____
3f. Telephone Number	<u>(    )   </u>
3g. FAX Number	<u>(    )   </u>
3h. Internet e-mail address	_____

( Reproduce and complete as many additional blocs as may be necessary for complete disclosure )

4a. Complete <u>one</u> each for ALL other Parties of Interest	Number <u>    </u> of a total of <u>    </u> parties to proposed project (Count the LEAD Locality as #1, thereby start with #2.)
4b. Title of Jurisdiction <small>(Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> only one, then make entry)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> County of _____ <input type="checkbox"/> City of _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Incorporated Town of _____
4c. Employer Identification Number (EIN)	_____
4d. Principal Point of Contact	<small>(Include salutation, name &amp; title.)</small> _____
4e. Mailing Address  <small>Identify COUNTY if appropriate</small>	<small>(Include zip code+4)</small> _____
4f. Telephone Number	<u>(    )   </u>
4g. FAX Number	<u>(    )   </u>
4h. Internet e-mail address	_____



**C. Previous Applications/Awards**

1.	Has the Applicant previously applied for a RFSTF Grant from the Board? - check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
2.	Has the Applicant previously received a RFSTF Grant from the Board? - check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
3.	If yes what year and how much was the award.	Year	Amount

**D. Matching/Cost Share**

1	Which statement best describes the matching funds contributions? check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 50%	<input type="checkbox"/> 20%	<input type="checkbox"/> None
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**E. ATL Funding**

1a.	What is the amount of the lead Applicant's last Aid to Localities (ATL) allocation from the Fire Programs? check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one and complete as necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 or \$20,000 exactly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other - Enter amount here	\$ 30,000.00
1b.	Did the lead Applicant have cash carry forward balance on their last ATL report? check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one and complete as necessary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	If "Yes", enter carry forward amount: 16,187
2a.	What is the amount of the other jurisdiction's last Aid to Localities (ATL) allocation? check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one and complete as necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 or \$20,000 exactly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other - Enter amount here	\$ 40,655.00
2b.	Did the jurisdiction have cash carry forward balance on their last ATL report? check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one and complete as necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	If "Yes", enter carry forward amount:
3a.	What is the amount of the other jurisdiction's last Aid to Localities (ATL) allocation? check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one and complete as necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 or \$20,000 exactly	<input type="checkbox"/> Other - Enter amount here	
3b.	Did the jurisdiction have cash carry forward balance on their last ATL report? check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one and complete as necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	If "Yes", enter carry forward amount:

**F. Project Narratives**

<b>Financial Need: Please provide a description of your locality's funding need.</b>	
1. King and Queen and Middlesex Counties wish to purchase two (2) East Coast forcible entry simulator doors to train on inward and outward swinging doors, thru-the lock procedures, plunge cutting with rescue saws, drop bar forcible entry, and cutting or spiking carriage bolts. The forcible entry door, add-on props, wheels, and shipping is quoted as \$18,145.	
2. King and Queen and Middlesex Counties wish to purchase two (2) Lion Attack Digital Fire Training "Panel Plus" packages. Our grant request proposes to leverage the VDFP Gloucester Burn Building as a location to utilize alternative training resources, namely artificial smoke and digital flame panels to quickly and efficiently set-up and execute efficient fire attack evolution/scenarios; providing an ability to quickly deploy training simulators, execute training, and pack-up equipment and return volunteers home at a reasonable time and to provide sufficient rest and the ability to return to their employment the following day. A minimum of two packages are required to adequately provide sufficient smoke and flame at the burn building in order to provide realistic training. Two (2) Lion Attack Digital Fire Training "Panel Plus" systems, each including an artificial smoke machine, digital flame panel, water-filled base, smoke fluid, cleaning fluid, and remote control unit is quoted as \$50,224.50.	
← Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IF a Continuation F Sheet is used to provide more detail on your financial need.	

<b>Impact on Training: Please provide a description of the impact not receiving the funding will have on your locality.</b>	
King and Queen and Middlesex Counties currently do not have available resources to conduct sufficient fire suppression/attack and forcible entry training to provide for the safety of their citizens and firefighters. Both counties are constrained by NFPA 1403, Live-Fire training requirements, including the required numbers of instructors, personnel, equipment, time, and coordination involved. In fact, the VDFP Regional Burn Building in Gloucester County, VA is seldom utilized by these departments due to these identified factors. Failing to receive the requested funding, fully or in part, will prevent or drastically reduce the fire departments of both counties to conduct routine fire attack/suppression training and will also prevent firefighters from both counties to receive sufficient and realistic forcible entry training. Note: although carry-over funds are identified by the lead applicant, this money is currently earmarked for the purchase of rural water firefighting equipment and appliances for four (4) county fire departments, and is not available for this project.	
← Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IF a Continuation F Sheet is used to provide more detail on the impact on training	



<b>G. Project Title(s) and Description(s)</b>		Enter a descriptive 'Title' and brief Description for the lead training project <sup>and/or</sup> program proposed for funding from any Grant which may be awarded pursuant to this application.		
	(Project Title)	(Description)		
1	Fire Attack and Forcible Entry Simulation Training Program	This program provides realistic structure fire attack/suppression and forcible entry training in a safe environment where flame and smoke is simulated. It provides an training environment that can be set up and dismantled quickly, providing a greater opportunity for firefighters to train in these critical skills. Routine training promotes firefighter safety and reduced property loss within the community.		
Which statement best describes the above proposed project and/or program? <i>check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one</i>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> Change to existing	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing
Which statement best describes how many training programs may benefit from the proposal? <i>check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one</i>		<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Programs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Single Program	
<input type="checkbox"/> ← Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IF a Continuation G Sheet is used to account for <i>more than one (1) project / program</i> . <b>IMPORTANT</b> , if box above is checked and no continuation sheets are attached, the application will not be further considered.				

<b>H. Project Goods &amp; Services Requested</b>		In the below table, itemize in priority order – starting with the most needed first, ALL items of "Goods" (e.g. equipment, hardware or other durable items) or categories of "Services" which are to be funded in whole or in part from any Grant which may be awarded pursuant to this application.				
	Enter Project Title from [G] above	<i>Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One</i>	Description	Total Cost	Less any Matching Funds	Grant Amount Requested
1	Fire Attack and Forcible Entry Simulation Training Program	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goods <input type="checkbox"/> Services	Lion Attack Digital Fire Training "Panel Plus" package, including digital fire panel, smoke machine remote control, panel base, smoke solution, and cleaning solution.	(a) \$ 50,224.50	(b) \$ 25,112.25	(a-b) \$ 25,112.25
2	Fire Attack and Forcible Entry Simulation Training Program	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goods <input type="checkbox"/> Services	East Coast Forcible Entry Door G3 Prop, including a thru the lock attachment, and dolly wheel system.	(a) \$ 18,145.00	(b) \$ 9,072.50	(a-b) \$ 9,072.50
3		<input type="checkbox"/> Goods <input type="checkbox"/> Services		(a) \$ -	(b) \$ -	(a-b) \$ -
4		<input type="checkbox"/> Goods <input type="checkbox"/> Services		(a)	(b) \$ -	(a-b) \$ -
5		<input type="checkbox"/> Goods <input type="checkbox"/> Services		(a)	(b) \$ -	(a-b) \$ -
<input type="checkbox"/> ← Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IF a Continuation G Sheet is used to account for <i>more than one (1) project / program</i> . <b>IMPORTANT</b> , if box above is checked and no continuation sheets are attached, the application will not be further considered.						

1	Enter here the <b>lesser</b> amount of: • Sum of <u>all</u> items (1 thru n) under "Grant Amount Requested" • OR \$50,000 (Grant maximum)	<div style="color: red; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">SEP 01 2023</div>	<b>\$ 34,184.75</b>
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<b>Remarks</b>	Make entries or check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> None	<b>Important *</b> If the sum (1 to n) of individual "Grant Amount Requested" in I above exceeded \$50,000, an explanation must be entered here as to how the shortfall would otherwise be made up.

**EFT (EDI)**  
 Grant awards are paid as an **Electronic Funds Transfer / EDI** to the current *account-of-record* for the jurisdiction's annual allocation of Aid to Localities (ATL) from the Fire Programs Fund.

**Certification:**  
 To be completed by either:

- County Administrator –or- Executive, City Manager, Town Mayor –or- Administrator; Deputy, or...
- Other duly authorized official whereby the application is accompanied by a copy of an 'Ordinance' or other such formal instrument clearly granting that party such authority.

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This grant application is entered on behalf of the APPLICANT jurisdiction identified above with the knowledge and belief that all representations herein made are true and correct; with the understanding that all grant terms & conditions in-force as of the date of such application are hereby included by reference; with the further understanding that if an award is granted pursuant to this application that the recipient is bound by those same terms & conditions.

	<span style="font-size: 1.5em; font-family: cursive;">8/24/2023</span>
Signature	Date
Vivian Seay	King and Queen County Administrator
Printed Name	Title

(All applications must be notarized to be valid. Incomplete forms shall be returned.)

State of Virginia ) City / County of <u>King and Queen</u>		Linda Wilkins Cooke <b>NOTARY PUBLIC</b> Commonwealth of Virginia Reg. # 7855165 My Commission Expires December 31, 2023
On this <u>24<sup>th</sup></u> day of <u>August</u> (month) in <u>2023</u> (year), before me, the undersigned a Notary Public for the Commonwealth of Virginia, personally appeared <u>Vivian Seay</u> to me known ( or to me proved ) to be the identical person named herein and having in my presence executed the above, and acknowledged that he executed same as his voluntary act and deed.		
My Commission expires:	<u>8/24/23</u> Date	 Notary Public

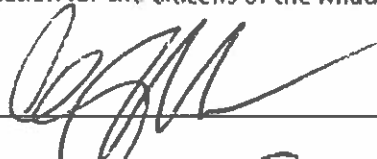
(Seal)

August 23, 2023

**Memorandum of Understanding  
Between King and Queen County and Middlesex County  
For Funding, Maintenance, and Use of Fire Attack and Forcible Entry Simulation Training Equipment**

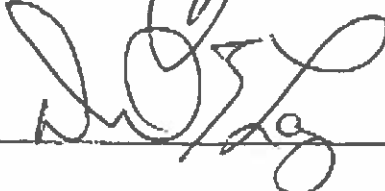
- King and Queen County and Middlesex County are both excited to apply for the VDFP Regional Fire Service Training Facility Grant and believe that the requested funds for training simulation equipment will be crucial in providing realistic fire suppression and forcible entry training for our firefighters from nine separate departments.
- Each county is committed to increase the utilization of the VDFP Middle Peninsula Burn Building to leverage this existing resource as a location to maximize equipment use.
- Each county supports the proposed Fire Attack and Forcible Entry Simulation Training grant and financially commits to an equal share of the of the remaining unfunded portion of approximately \$17,092.
- Each county agrees to house and maintain one forcible entry door simulator and one fire attack simulator, and agrees to assist the partner jurisdictions, when feasible, by providing an additional unit to meet increased training demands.
- Additionally, each county is committed to share assets with regional jurisdictions, when feasible, to promote increased fire service training within the Middle Peninsula.
- Furthermore, we believe that the increased opportunity for our firefighters to wear SCBA, provide forcible entry, advance hose lines, and flow water, in a simulated fire training environment, will increase both the performance and safety of our firefighters, and provide increased fire protection for the citizens of the Middle Peninsula of Virginia.

King and Queen County:



, Date: 8-24-23

Middlesex County:



, Date: 8-24-23

Department of Fire Programs

SEP 01 2023

Administration

Our application submission of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) Regional Training Grant seeks to address a critical need for enhanced training opportunities for firefighters in King & Queen and Middlesex counties. With a commitment to ensuring the safety of our communities and our dedicated emergency responders who protect them, this grant proposal aims to acquire two forcible entry door props and two Lion Attack Digital Training Panel Plus Packages. These resources will significantly contribute to improving the structural firefighting and forcible entry skills of our firefighters, ultimately leading to increased operational efficiency and enhanced public safety. Furthermore, receipt of this equipment will allow both counties to leverage previous VDFP funding and construction of the Middle Peninsula Burn building as a suitable location to provide structural and forcible entry training in a more achievable environment and on a more frequent basis.

**Importance of Training Equipment:** Firefighters operate in high-stress and dynamic environments that demand quick decision-making and precise execution. To effectively combat fires and safeguard lives and property, it is crucial that firefighters are well-trained and equipped with the latest tools and techniques. The proposed forcible entry door props and Lion Attack Digital Training Panel Plus Packages represent state-of-the-art training equipment that will simulate real-life scenarios, allowing firefighters to develop and refine their skills in a controlled setting.

**Enhancing Structural Firefighting Skills:** Structural firefighting involves complex challenges, requiring firefighters to navigate through confined spaces, identify hazards, and execute effective firefighting strategies. The Lion Attack Digital Training Panel Plus Packages will provide a virtual environment where firefighters can practice tactics, decision-making, and coordination in various fire scenarios. This interactive platform will enable them to enhance their situational awareness, develop effective communication strategies, and improve their ability to respond to evolving firefighting situations. By simulating realistic fire conditions, these training tools will instill confidence and competence in our firefighters, leading to more successful outcomes in real emergencies.

**Mastering Forcible Entry Techniques:** Forcible entry is a critical skill in firefighting, enabling firefighters to swiftly access buildings to rescue occupants and suppress fires. The acquisition of two forcible entry door props will allow firefighters to train in a controlled setting, mastering techniques such as using hydraulic tools, lock-breaking tools, and battering rams. Through repetitive practice and exposure to various door types and locking mechanisms, firefighters will gain the proficiency needed to efficiently and safely enter structures during emergencies. This will result in quicker response times, reduced property damage, and enhanced rescue capabilities.

**Community Impact and Collaboration:** The proposed training equipment will have a direct positive impact on the communities of Middlesex and King & Queen Counties. Firefighters who are better trained and more confident will be better equipped to protect lives and property during emergencies. Moreover, this grant will foster collaboration among fire departments, encouraging the sharing of best practices,

Department of Fire Programs

SEP 01 2023

Administration

joint training exercises, and improved regional response capabilities. By investing in our firefighters' skills and knowledge, we are investing in the safety and well-being of our entire community.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the acquisition of two forcible entry door props and two Lion Attack Digital Training Panel Plus Packages through the Virginia Department of Fire Programs Regional Training Grant is essential for the advancement of firefighter training in Middlesex and King & Queen Counties. These resources will empower our firefighters to develop proficiency in structural firefighting and forcible entry skills, resulting in improved response capabilities, enhanced community safety, and strengthened collaboration among local fire departments. We respectfully request the support of the grant committee in providing these invaluable resources for the benefit of our brave firefighters and the residents they serve.

Department of Fire Programs

SEP 01 2023

Administration



# East Coast Rescue Solutions

4940 Merrick Road Suite 172  
Massapequa Park, NY 11762

# Quote

Date	Estimate #
8/14/2023	5994

Name / Address
King and Queen Fire Department 398 Allens Circle P.O. Box 26 King & Queen C.H., VA 23085

Ship To
King and Queen Fire Department 398 Allens Circle King & Queen C.H., VA 23085

P.O. No.	Terms	Due Date	Rep
		8/14/2023	CM

Description	Qty	Rate	Total
<p>East Coast Rescue Solutions Forcible Entry Door Simulator.</p> <p>Door Features: GEN 3 DOOR Inward and outward swinging forces Drop Bar Forcible Entry Cutting or Spiking of Carriage Bolts Plunge Cutting with K12 Drop bar brackets are removable and can mount directly to the steel door Full Door Stop 65" Three Locks for varying degrees of difficulty 2x2 and 1x2 wood block used for resistance Replaceable Door Sleeve and Jamb for added longevity Fixed bracket to mount walls for restricted space FE Can be disassembled for easy transport. Optional dolly system for easy transport is available Adjustable door gap - outward swing All In-One Prop Receivers Professionally powder coated Two year warranty Includes Operational Guide and Videos</p>	2	7,000.00	14,000.00
<p>East Coast Rescue Solutions Thru-The Lock Prop</p> <p>The ECRS Thru-the Lock Prop mounts to the side of the ECRS Door Prop and allows your students to pull and manipulate a commercial Mortise Lock. Our TTL prop uses a milled lock cylinder so it can be reused thus eliminating expensive lock cylinders.</p>	2	785.00	1,570.00

Department of Fire Programs

SEP 01 2023

Contact us with any questions. Chris Minichiello- owner 917-886-579. chris.ecrs@gmail.com	<b>Total</b>	Administration
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# Quote

Date	Estimate #
8/14/2023	5994

Name / Address
King and Queen Fire Department 398 Allens Circle P.O. Box 26 King & Queen C.H., VA 23085

Ship To
King and Queen Fire Department 398 Allens Circle King & Queen C.H., VA 23085

P.O. No.	Terms	Due Date	Rep
		8/14/2023	CM

Description	Qty	Rate	Total
Drop Ship door 2 doors to King & Queen C.H., VA 23085 Liftgate and call ahead delivery provided	1	895.00	895.00
East Coast Rescue Solutions Door Dolly System  The ECRS Door Dolly System allows you to easily lift and move your Forcible Entry Door Prop.	2	840.00	1,680.00

Department of Fire Programs

SEP 01 2023

Administration

Contact us with any questions. Chris Minichiello- owner 917-886-579. chris.ecrs@gmail.com	<b>Total</b>	\$18,145.00
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101 Independence Way  
 Coatesville, PA 19320  
 www.wpsginc.com  
 mcarson@wpsginc.com  
 (610) 857-8070

# Quote

<b>Quote#</b>	QUO114375
<b>Date</b>	08/05/2023
<b>Exp. Date</b>	09/04/2023

**Bill To:**

King And Queen County Board  
 of Supervisors  
 PO Box 177  
 King And Queen Court House,  
 VA 23085-0177  
 United States

**Ship To:**

King & Queen Emergency  
 Services  
 242 Allens Cir  
 King And Queen Court House, VA  
 23085-2007  
 United States

**Plus package 1**

ID	Name	Terms	Sales Rep	Shipping Method
10916	King And Queen County Board of Supervisors	Net 30	Michael Carson	FedEx Ground

#	Item Name	Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Amount
1	LION-ATTB002-P#	Lion ATTACKâ„¢ Digital Fire Training Panel Plus Package	1	24,712.25	24,712.25

<b>ACCEPTANCE OF QUOTATION</b> The above prices, specifications, and conditions are satisfactory and are hereby accepted. Freight charges are estimated at the time of quote. Applicable freight costs will apply at time of shipment. <b>Quotation is valid until Sep 04, 2023</b>  Signature: _____ Date: _____	<b>Subtotal:</b>	24,712.25
	<b>Discount:</b>	0.00
	<b>Tax Total:</b>	0.00
	<b>Freight:</b>	400.00
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>25,112.25</b>

x2 = 50,224.50

Department of the Registrar

SEP 01 2023

Administration



## AID TO LOCALITIES PROGRAM



*Grant awards to localities through the Fire Programs Fund*

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS**

and the

**Virginia Fire Services Board**

1005 Technology Park Drive  
Glen Allen, Virginia 23059-4500

Tel: (804) 249-1958

Fax: (804) 371-3358



## 1. PURPOSE and AUTHORITY

This policy document describes the practices by which the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP or the Agency) executes the administration and expenditure of allotments from the Fire Programs Fund (Fund) established in *Code of Virginia* (the Code) [§ 38.2-401](#). The Fund is derived from an annual assessment against all licensed insurance companies doing business in the Commonwealth writing a Code-defined type of insurance. The Fund is used to provide an annual population-based allocation to qualifying jurisdictions within the Commonwealth collected by the State Corporation Commission. These funds are transferred during June. As provided in the Code and described in this Policy, the allocation may only be used for fire service purposes and may not supplant or replace locally appropriated funds.

## 2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

**“Aid to Localities (ATL)”** means the annual allocation to jurisdictions in the Commonwealth authorized by *Code of Virginia* [§ 38.2-401](#).

**“Annual Report”** means the document that jurisdictions are required to submit to VDFP which reports on the use of the funds allocated to the jurisdiction for the previous year. Jurisdictions also provide one completed Fire Programs Fund Disbursement Agreement forms in accordance with Code of Virginia [§ 38.2-401.B](#).

**“Eligible Jurisdiction”** means each independent city, county, and town incorporated within a county, as listed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth in the Annual Report.<sup>1</sup>

**“Eligible Use of ATL Funds”** means use of ATL Funds as described in the *Code of Virginia* [§ 38.2-401](#) and clarified in this Policy.

- ATL Funds allocated to the jurisdictions shall be used solely for the purposes of;
  - Training volunteer or career firefighting personnel in each of the receiving localities.
  - Funding fire prevention and public safety education programs.
  - Constructing, improving and expanding regional or local fire service training facilities.
  - Purchasing emergency medical care and equipment for fire personnel.
  - Payment of personnel costs related to fire and medical training for fire personnel;
  - or
  - For purchasing personal protective equipment, vehicles, equipment and supplies for use in the receiving locality specifically for fire service purposes.
  - Diesel exhaust removal systems, decontamination equipment, and commercial extractors, that are designed to reduce the incidence of cancer among firefighters.

ATL Funds allocated to the jurisdictions shall **not be** used directly or indirectly to supplant or replace any other funds appropriated by the counties, cities and towns for fire service operations.

**“Fiscal Period”** means the Commonwealth’s fiscal period which begins on July 1<sup>st</sup> and runs through June 30<sup>th</sup> of the next calendar year, *e.g.*, July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023 is FY23.

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<sup>1</sup> In this Policy, “Jurisdiction” is sometimes used interchangeably with “Locality.”  
Page 2 of 7

“Reporting Period” means the 12-month period that is documented in the jurisdiction’s annual report.

### 3. PRECEDENCE OF LAW & DISCLAIMER

Nothing contained within this document shall be construed to supersede the *Code of Virginia*. In the event of a conflict, the *Code of Virginia* shall supersede the conflicting provision of this Policy document.

### 4. REPORTING

Section [§ 38.2-401.B](#) requires jurisdictions to satisfactorily complete and submit timely two (2) documents to VDFP annually before the jurisdiction is eligible for the ATL allocation:

- A. **An Annual Report in which they must report to the Agency on the prior year’s ATL usage:**
  - Cash carry forward from previous funding years (if applicable).
  - Current ATL funding for the year being reported.
  - Qualifying expenditures for the current funding year being reported.
  - Cash carry forward balance into future reporting years (if applicable).
  - Tentative spend plan for carry forward balances (if applicable).
- B. **A complete Disbursement Agreement form as prescribed by the Virginia Fire Services Board as located on the VDFP website.**

If, at the end of any annual reporting period, the eligible jurisdiction has not submitted to VDFP a satisfactory Annual Report and one complete Disbursement Agreement form, any ATL funds due to that locality for the next year shall not be allocated to the locality. The allocation shall be retained in the Fund.

Beginning with the FY2015 funding year, accounting documentation (such as General Ledger reports, bank statements, or detailed spreadsheets) must be maintained by the jurisdiction for audit purposes.

5. **FORFEITURE:** Jurisdictions that fail to submit annual documents shall forfeit the allocated amount. Such amount is retained in the Fund for distribution to localities in the next allocation cycle. Funds are made available on July 1 of the current fiscal year funding cycle and are available for collection by the locality until June 30 of the same fiscal year.

**Example:** For example, funds made available July 1, 2022, for the FY2023 funding cycle will be available for collection by the jurisdictions until June 30, 2023.

### 6. DISBURSEMENTS FROM THE FUND

1. Jurisdictions Eligible for ATL –Eligibility is restricted to jurisdictions within the Commonwealth of Virginia as provided in Code of Virginia [38.2-401.B](#). Fire Departments

or fire service organizations are **not eligible** to directly receive ATL funds from the Agency.

2. ATL Allocation period Defined – Funds received each June 30 from SCC are used for ATL in the fiscal period beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>.
3. Minimum Allocations – Section [§ 38.2-401.B](#) specifies that minimum allocations for Counties, Cities, and Towns must be based on population as provided for in Code [§ 4.1-116](#) and [4.1-117](#). If the calculations of a jurisdiction’s population-based allocation are below the statutory minimum, then the jurisdiction’s allocation is increased to the statutory minimum for the fiscal period in question.
4. Authorized Use of ATL – Pursuant to [38.2-401.B](#) of the Code, ATL funds shall be used to construct, improve or expand fire service training facilities, fire-related training provided at such training facilities shall be by instructors certified or approved according to policies developed by the Virginia Fire Services Board.
5. Distribution Calculation –As provided in [38.2-401.B](#), distributions from the Fund shall be made on the basis of population; however, no eligible county or city shall receive less than \$10,000, nor eligible town less than \$4,000. The Virginia Fire Services Board shall be authorized to exceed allocations of \$10,000 for eligible counties and cities and \$4,000 for eligible towns, respectively. Any increases or decreases in such allocations shall be uniform for all localities.
6. Annual Report Categorical Descriptions - The following items expand upon the allowable uses of ATL funds by category as listed on the ATL Annual Report Document.

**Category 1 (C1) - Training of Fire Services personnel NOT reported in [C6] –**

(a) Training expenses such as registration fees and all travel costs associated with attendance and participation in support of the fire services at educational opportunities held within and outside Virginia. Examples include, but are not limited to conference registration/tuition, lodging, mileage, and meals while traveling to the fire services training. Examples also include but are not limited to support of health and safety initiatives for fire service personnel in compliance with the NFPA Standards. (b) Personnel cost to establish new training positions within the fire services training division. Example includes salary expenses for permanent, temporary, contract, part-time and full-time fire training personnel.

**C2 –Public Fire Safety Education Programs** – Cost of fire services personnel to provide fire prevention and public safety educational programs. Examples include, but are not limited posters, advertisements, and salary expenses for permanent, temporary, contract, part-time and full-time workers.

**C3 – Local Fire Service training facilities as such principally or solely serves the locality** – Cost to construct, improve or expand fire service training facilities and fire-related training props/aids and equipment storage provided at such training facilities. Examples include but are not limited to the construction of burn buildings, flammable liquid pits, mazes, props for hazardous materials and heavy technical rescue, and classroom space.

**C4 – Fire Service training facilities including those that are Regional/multi-jurisdictional** – Cost of constructing, improving and expanding regional or local fire service training facilities and equipment storage. Examples include but are not limited to the construction of burn buildings, flammable liquid pits, mazes, props for hazardous materials and heavy technical rescue, and classroom space.

**C5 - Emergency medical care and equipment for Fire Personnel** – Equipment and care used solely for fire personnel who are first responders in the direct commission of firefighting or fire suppression and are in need of emergency medical care. Examples include but are not limited AED machines and first aid kits to be used solely for the emergency care of fire personnel.

**C6 - Payment of personnel costs related to fire and medical training for fire personnel NOT reported in [C1]** – Payroll expenses to cover the direct fire service operations while the fire services personnel are attending the fire or medical training for fire personnel. An example includes backfilling the usual fire services personnel shift with a second shift of direct firefighting personnel to work while the usual shift attends the training as described in C1.

**C7 - Personal Protective Equipment for Fire Service Personnel** – Personal protective equipment, breathing apparatus, equipment, and tools used to support operational needs. Examples include but are not limited to the purchase of or emergency/critical repair of items such as boots, SCBA, fire protective clothing including turnout gear, personal fire shelters used in wild land fire suppression.

**C8 - Fire Services Vehicles** - Vehicles used for fire services purposes. Examples include but are not limited to the purchase of fire engines, pumpers, ladder trucks, and fire boats where there is an established marine firefighting program.

**Emergency/Critical Repairs:** Emergency/critical repairs are eligible only when agency approval is obtained prior to expenditure. *Emergency/Critical Repairs are those repairs that allow inoperable equipment/ vehicles to meet its intended use. Routine maintenance and repairs are not included.*

**C9 - Fire Services Equipment and Supplies** - Equipment and supplies used to support and expand the support of fire services operations as well as to support the health and safety initiatives for fire service personnel in compliance with the NFPA Standards. Examples include but are not limited to the purchase or emergency/critical repairs for items such as hoses, ladders, and handheld and power tools used in the performance of fire services operations along with diesel exhaust removal systems, decontamination equipment, and commercial extractors designed to reduce the incidence of cancer among firefighters. *Emergency/Critical Repairs are those repairs that allow inoperable equipment/ vehicles to meet its intended use. Routine maintenance and repairs are not included.*

7. Non-Authorized Use - The following items are **not permitted** as an allowable use of ATL funds.
1. Sales Tax.
  2. Routine maintenance expenses.
  3. Medical equipment, supplies, and vehicles used for emergency or ambulatory medical treatment for non-firefighting personnel.



4. Compensation for lost wages due to class attendance or participation.
  5. Replacement of or to supplant locally appropriated funds.
8. Review Process - Inquiries regarding the use of ATL funds are to be sent to VDFP Budget and Grants Manager for review and consideration. VDFP will make an evaluation of the inquiry considering [§38.2-401](#) of the Code of Virginia and the most current ATL Policy. VDFP will provide a provisional decision to localities via certified e-mail. Review of ATL Denial Notice will be added as a standing item for the Administration, Policy and Finance Committee to enable localities denied use of funding to present their request for reconsideration.
- Localities shall provide a notice of review to VDFP’s Budget and Grants Manager within 30 calendar days from receipt of the e-mail correspondence. Failure to submit a notice of review will render VDFP’s provisional decision final. Upon receipt of a notice of review, VDFP will notify the locality of the next scheduled Administration, Policy and Finance Committee and/or VFSB meeting, encouraging the locality to be present to discuss its review request. If the next VFSB meeting occurs in less than seven (7) business days, the review will be scheduled for the following VFSB meeting.

**Tracking Database:** The Agency maintains tracking database to capture all denials by fiscal year. The denials tracking database will be provided to the Virginia Fire Services Board at the conclusion of each fiscal year.

9. “Carry-forward” of ATL by Jurisdictions – Jurisdictions may ‘carry-forward’ ATL funds. Any such balances carried-forward shall be accounted for by the jurisdiction in its mandated Annual Report.

**CERTIFICATION:**

We the undersigned as Chairm of the VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD and Executive Director of the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS jointly adopt the foregoing Policy which supersedes all prior Policies/Policy Statements effective as of 22 September 2023.

	
Keith Johnson Chair Virginia Fire Services Board	L. Brad Creasy Executive Director Virginia Department of Fire Programs

**History of Applicable ATL Minimums**  
 Exhibit [A]

Effective	Cities & Counties	Towns	Initial Fiscal Period...
Origin	\$8,000	\$3,000	FY-1984
July 1997 – VGA Action	\$10,000	\$4,000	FY-1997
April 2001 -- BOARD Action	\$12,000	\$6,000	FY-2001
June 2006 - BOARD Action	\$16,000	\$8,000	FY-2007
February 2013 - BOARD Action	\$20,000	\$10,000	FY-2014
April 2020 – Board Action	\$30,000	\$15,000	FY-2021 only
June 2021 – Board Action	\$30,000	\$15,000	FY-2022 only
June 2022 – Board Action	\$30,000	\$15,000	FY-2023

**CONFERENCE AND EDUCATION  
ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM**



*Grant Awards to Provide Financial Assistance to Further the Education and  
Training Needs of Virginia's Fire and Emergency Services Personnel*

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS**

1005 Technology Park Drive  
Glen Allen, Virginia 23059-4500

Tel: (804) 249-1958

Fax: (804) 371-3358

## 1. PURPOSE

In accordance with §38.2-401-F of the *Code of Virginia*, the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program was established to provide additional financial assistance for professional development for member's of Virginia's fire and emergency services. The Conference and Education Assistance Program shall be administered by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VD FP) under the guidance and direction of the Executive Director or their designee.

The purpose of the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program is to provide needed financial support for training conferences and seminars sponsored by Virginia-based non-profit organizations that further the education of fire and emergency services personnel throughout the Commonwealth.

## 2. PRECEDENTS OF LAW & DISCLAIMER

Disbursements from the Virginia Department of Fire Programs Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program will be made from the Fire Programs Fund (§38.2-401 of the *Code of Virginia* as amended) consistent with the policy set forth within this document.

Nothing contained within this document shall be construed to supersede the applicable laws and regulations of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Should such conflict or question arise, or appear to arise, the applicable law or regulation shall supersede and nullify any such questionable provision outline in this policy.

## 3. DEFINITION OF TERMS

**CONFERENCE AND EDUCATION ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM** – Administered by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, this program provides financial assistance to Virginia-based non-profit or governmental entity offering a conference or symposium targeted specifically for fire and emergency services providers and their respective agencies. Grant funds shall be used for the purposes of providing training to volunteer or career firefighting personnel and funding fire prevention and public safety education courses. The award of such monies is determined following a review of acceptable criteria and an establishment of need.

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS** – The state agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia responsible for the administration of the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program. Herein also referred to as “VD FP”.

**FISCAL PERIOD** – The twelve (12) month period in which the Commonwealth of Virginia applies its approved budget for the benefit of the state and its citizens. This cycle begins on July 1 and terminates on June 30 of each calendar year.

**GRANT PERIOD** – A twelve (12) month time period coinciding with the Fiscal Period in which the awarded organization (or “grantee”) must expend any funds received from the Conference and Education Assistance Program. The expenditure of funds must be for the stated purpose and be within proper guidelines for which money was awarded.



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## 4. GRANT APPLICATION

Any eligible organization may submit an application for the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program by completing and filing the prescribed form as approved by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. Applications will be received and reviewed annually and shall be postmarked by July 1 each year for that fiscal year unless otherwise posted. A copy of the prescribed form can be found on the VDFP website at <http://www.vafire.com>.

All applications, including attachments and supplemental documentation, become the property of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs and, upon determination of eligibility, become public information subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act and all other appropriate statutes. The determination of eligibility and that of any potential amount or other conditions shall be consistent solely with guidance and practices contained within this or any successor document.

Hard copies of grant applications should be sent directly to:

**Grants and Budget Manager  
Virginia Department of Fire Programs  
Attn: Conference and Education Grant Administration  
1005 Technology Park Drive  
Glen Allen, VA 23059-4500**

The filing of an otherwise completed grant application by an eligible entity in no way binds the Department of Fire Programs to disburse any Fire Programs Fund monies.

The determination of eligibility and that of any potential amount or other conditions shall be consistent solely with guidance and practices contained within this or any successor document.

## 5. ELIGIBILITY AND AWARD CRITERIA

The Executive Director of VDFP shall determine the amount of any financial awards as funds are available. The non-availability of funds may prevent the approval of any application for grant assistance.

Eligibility of applicants and the awarding of the Conference and Education Assistance Grant funds shall be based on the following criteria:

1. Legally recognized non-profit or governmental entities representing the local, regional, or statewide interests of the fire community shall be eligible.
2. Neither the applicant nor governing authority of the conference shall not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, political affiliation, or against otherwise qualified persons with disabilities.
3. It is strongly encouraged that the scheduled conference be held within the legally recognized boundaries of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Training programs outside Virginia may be approved on a limited basis when the needs are justified in the application.

4. The host organization may allow participants outside the Commonwealth to participate.
5. The content of the grant-funded training event must align with the mission and needs of Virginia's fire and emergency services community.

## **6. GRANT REVIEW**

Beginning with the FY2020 funding year, the Executive Director shall appoint a review panel to analyze the applications. The review panel will consist of command staff members to include the Deputy Director along with Budget and Grants Manager. At the discretion of the Executive Director, a Virginia Fire Services Board member shall be appointed should there be a need for a substitute. Applications will be evaluated for accuracy, eligibility and its impact on the Commonwealth of Virginia. VDFP's command staff will provide funding recommendations to the Executive Director. Final funding levels will be made by the Executive Director based on the analysis provided.

## **7. GRANT AWARD ADMINISTRATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program shall be administered through the Grants Section at the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. The grant recipient or host organization shall publicly acknowledge the services of VDFP during the scheduled conference and other activities supported through the Conference and Education Grant Program.

## **8. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS**

VDFP shall reserve the right to determine the method and amount of financial assistance disbursement on a case-by-case basis. Examples of acceptable methods include electronic transfer and check writing.

1. **CONCEPT OF OPERATION AND FUND USE** – Monies from the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program shall be used to enhance the educational and practical instruction available to Virginia's fire and emergency services personnel.
2. **ACCEPTABLE USES OF MONIES** - Include, but are not limited to, instructor fees, reservation fees, honorariums, renting multimedia supplies and equipment beyond services that VDFP may already provide, production of presentation materials, technical assistance and instructors travel expenses. The use of money towards non-learning or recreational activities is acceptable on a limited basis. The use of grant funds to provide light refreshments, such as snacks and non-alcoholic beverages, may be acceptable when it has been determined that such items would materially enhance the training event.

## **9. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the conference, the grant assistance recipient shall submit a detailed written report summarizing the training and how the funds were utilized. The total number of verifiable attendees and a complete list of training courses offered shall be included in the documents provided. Additionally, within 30-calendar days after the conclusion of the grant term, all unexpended funds – including any interest accrual remaining – shall be returned to VDFP.

1. **Return of Unexpended Funds by Check:** Funds being returned to the Agency via a check:
  - Must be made payable to the *Treasurer of Virginia*, and
  - Forwarded to the attention of the Agency at the address specified in [H] above. (Funds are **NOT** to be sent directly to the Treasurer’s Office or any other State agency.)
2. **Direct Deposit:** Funds may also be returned to the Agency via electronic transfer as may be provided for within the contractual agreement among parties.

**10. FUND MISUSE**

Should any audit reveal inappropriate or questionable expenditures, the Conference and Education Grant recipient shall submit a written explanation to the Executive Director of VDFP within fifteen (15) days of notification and be subject to an investigation of improper use. Any entity believed to have provided false, misleading, or improper information will be subject to a review by VDFP and possibly other authorities. The Office of the Attorney General will be consulted regarding these matters as necessary.


If any financial assistance recipient is deemed to have misused any monies, in whole or in part, of the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program, such funds shall be re-paid to VDFP within 30 days from the date of determination of misuse. Said organization shall then be ineligible to receive VDFP supplemental financial assistance for a period of up to five (5) years from the date of the original award. The deliberate and/or malicious misuse of monies from the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities for review.

**11. BURDEN OF PROOF & LIABILITY TO AUDIT**

It is the responsibility of the jurisdiction to maintain all necessary fiscal records. Such records are subject to audit by this Agency or its assignees, for a period of not less than five (5) years following the date of the last transfer of award moneys to the grant recipient.

**CERTIFICATION:**

The undersigned Executive Director of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs adopts the foregoing policy as of 22 September 2023. As such, this revised policy supersedes all prior adopted versions of this Policy.


Brad Creasy Executive Director Virginia Department of Fire Programs

# LIVE FIRE TRAINING STRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM



*Grant Awards to Construct, Renovate, or Repair Live Fire Training Structures throughout the Commonwealth*

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS**

and the

**Virginia Fire Services Board**

1005 Technology Park Drive  
Glen Allen, Virginia 23059-4500

Tel: (804) 249-1958

Fax: (804) 371-3358

## **1. PURPOSE**

In accordance with [§38.2-401-D](#) of the *Code of Virginia*, the Live Fire Training Structure Grant Program (hereinafter referred to as "the Grant") was established to provide defined grants to Virginia localities seeking to construct, renovate (including additions), or repair permanent Live Fire Training Structure in accordance with the most current edition of NFPA 1402.

The Grant is a matching/cost sharing program. The percentage of match/cost share is relative to the size of the capital project the locality intends to construct; however, the purpose of the Grant for permanent Live Fire Training Structure is to provide funding to localities for the construction, renovation, or repair of the Live Fire Training Structure only.

As approved by the Virginia Fire Services Board, the Grant may also provide exclusive funding to the Virginia Department of Fire Programs for the acquisition, renovation, repair, service, and management of the Mobile Live Fire Training Structure Props Program to provide training opportunities to multiple jurisdictions in support of Fire Fighter I and Fire Fighter II Training throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia per the most current edition of NFPA 1001 & 1403 training standards.

As approved by the Virginia Fire Services Board, the Grant may also provide funding for the execution and delivery of an exclusive contract for engineering consulting services to the VFSB. The engineering firm is on contract to VDFP exclusively, and to prevent conflict of interest may not contract with local jurisdictions on the Grant projects for which funding is sought through the Grant.

## **2. GENERAL OVERVIEW**

Grant disbursements to eligible jurisdictions for permanent Live Fire Training Structure construction, renovations and/or additions, or repairs are administered by the *Virginia Department of Fire Programs*, VDFP, ("the Agency") from the Commonwealth's *Fire Programs Fund* as provided for in the *Code of Virginia* ([§38.2-401:D](#)) and consistent with policy guidance provided by the *Virginia Fire Services Board*, VFSB, ("the Board") as set forth within this document. All grants to construct or renovate permanent Live Fire Training Structures shall be approved by the *Virginia Fire Services Board*. All grants to repair permanent Live Fire Training Structures shall be approved by the Department of Fire Programs as directed in this document.

## **3. CODE OF VIRGINIA CITATION**

- 1) [§38.2-401](#) and [§9.1-203](#) of the *Code of Virginia* as amended – "Fire Programs Fund," is incorporated herein by reference.

## **4. PRECEDENTS OF LAW & DISCLAIMER**

Nothing contained within this document shall or be construed to supersede the applicable laws and regulations of the Commonwealth of Virginia. In the event of a conflict the applicable law shall supersede the conflicting provision of this policy statement.

## 5. TRAINING FACILITIES COMMITTEE

The Live Structure Committee will review and analyze the Live Fire Training Structure Grant Program and make recommendations to the full board.

The following positions have been appointed to the Committee and must include a minimum of the following:

- \*Either a Board of Housing & Community Development or General Public member;
- \*Either a VACO or VML member;
- \*The Insurance Industry member;
- \*Training Committee chair (as currently appointed); and
- \*Chair of Committee (to be appointed by the Board Chair).

## 6. DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Engineering/Architect (E/A) Fees** – The Registered Design Professional in responsible charge of the E/A firm’s work must be registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Grant awards for new construction projects may include up to \$30,000<sup>00</sup> in additional monies for E/A fees and expenses for the current grant award amount. E/A fees will not be granted for renovations and/or repairs. These fees and expenses shall include adapting the approved model structure design to the selected site, featuring contract drawings and specifications, and providing limited construction services.

**Live Fire Training Structure** – A structure specifically designed for conducting live fire training evolutions on a repetitive basis in accordance with the most current edition of NFPA 1001 and 1402 (NFPA 1402, 3.3.1).

**Combination Buildings/Training Structures:** As stated in NFPA 1402, at some training centers, because of a lack of available space or funds, individual structures for drill tower functions, live fire training, smoke training, or any combination thereof, might not be built.

In these instances, a combination training structures can be utilized. These training structures must meet the below criteria:

1. Engineering design and construction must be reviewed and approved by the Agency’s E/A Firm.
2. Consideration will be within the scope of new construction only.
3. No additional funds will be awarded outside of this policy’s specifications.

*As such, the structure shall not be used as an occupied dwelling.*

**Live Fire Training Structure (Construction Project)** – A project to construct a new or replacement permanent Live Fire Training Structure.

**Live Fire Training Structure Renovation/Addition Project** - A project to renovate an existing permanent Live Fire Training Structure; add an addition to an existing permanent Live Fire Training Structure (must not exceed the funding level of \$450,000 in accordance with the Grant policy); conduct repairs or renovations that involve structural components of a permanent Live Fire Training Structure; or conduct repairs that exceed the funding authorized for a Live Fire Training Structure Repair Project.

**Live Fire Training Structure Repair Project** – A project to conduct a repair to an existing permanent Live Fire Training Structure that does not exceed \$50,000. Projects allowed in this category include: Temperature monitoring equipment repairs; thermal lining tile repair and replacement; sacrificial block wall replacements (concrete masonry unit walls), fire brick; minor, non-structural, spalled concrete repair; door/window repairs; or similar repairs. Cosmetic work such as painting and cleaning are not eligible to be funded as a Live Fire Training Structure repair project. Prior to the approval of any repair funds, a copy of the inspection report must be submitted to substantiate the request.

**Eligible Jurisdiction** – Localities within the Commonwealth of Virginia otherwise eligible ([§38.2-401 et al](#)) to receive *Aid to Localities* from the *Fire Programs Fund*; nominally all **Counties, Independent Cities, and incorporated Towns** within those counties; herein also referred to simply as *Jurisdiction* or *Locality*.

**Grant Completion** – Grant completion is defined as local construction contract is at final completion with all project expenses processed for payment, all construction completion documents including AIA certifications submitted to Agency staff, and final walk-through inspection performed by Agency Division Staff including curing of any and all deficiencies identified.

**Lead Locality** – In the event that an award is to be made for a Live Fire Training Structure serving more than one eligible jurisdiction, then that consortium of eligible jurisdictions shall identify one of their own to serve as the agent for all; such agency shall include the intake and custody of grant funds, the filing of reports, and all administrative interface with the Agency.

## 7. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

1. Disbursements from the VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICE GRANT PROGRAM for permanent Live Fire Training Structure are made as a grant to a specified jurisdiction or a lead locality. Consistent with other provisions of this document, payments are not made until the completion by/or through that locality of an instrument contractually binding the locality to adhere to the terms and conditions of the grant. The jurisdiction's authorized representative shall, acting as the jurisdiction's exclusive agent, execute such an agreement/contract where periodic withdrawals are made at various intervals as specified in the contract. (Disbursements are never made to individual Fire Departments.)
2. The following pertains to the receipt of monies by eligible jurisdictions:
  - a) Payments of any grant will be provided solely through an electronic transfer of funds to a banking institution.
  - b) Transfer amounts –
    - i. **New Construction** – Payments will be made at five (5) benchmarks: The payment for Engineering/Architect (E/A) fees are at the completion of that work and with submission to VDFP of supporting documentation of eligible costs incurred. The first 25% of the grant award is payable upon submission to VDFP of a valid building permit, civil site plans, and Engineering/Architect drawings. The remaining 3 installments of 25% each shall be issued upon completion of 50%, 75%, and 100% of the work. The payments will be issued after receipt of a certificate of completion of each stage by the registered design professional (RDP) in responsible charge of the E/A firm's work. Final disbursement at 100% will be made after a final walk-through is made by VDFP staff during which time a live burn scenario has been successfully

completed and witnessed by VDFP personnel. All Live Fire Training Structure project deficiencies will be communicated to the lead jurisdiction point of contact and must be resolved before final disbursement will be authorized.

- Jurisdictions may elect to receive disbursements at 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100% of project completion. To remain eligible to receive total funds, jurisdictions must submit to the VDFP the American Institute of Architects (AIA) 702 and AIA 703 at 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100% project completion whether or not funding requests are made at these completion intervals.
  - ii. Renovations – Payments will be made in up to two (2) payments on a reimbursement basis at 50% and 100% completion not to exceed the total amount approved by the Board. Payment of more than an approved amount will not be made without consent of the Board. The payments will be issued after receipt of a certificate of completion of each stage by the registered design professional (RDP) in responsible charge of the E/A firm's work. Final disbursement at 100% will be made after a final walk-through is made by VDFP staff. All Live Fire Training Structure project deficiencies will be communicated to the lead jurisdiction point of contact and must be resolved before final disbursement will be authorized.
  - iii. Repairs – Payments for repair projects completed in accordance with the approved application package will be authorized by the Department of Fire Programs upon completion of the repair project, and made in one reimbursement payment at completion of the project, and upon submission to VDFP of supporting documentation of eligible costs.
- c) All funds **must** be deposited into an **interest-bearing account**.
- d) Any interest earned by funds so deposited may be utilized by the eligible jurisdiction in the construction or renovation of their Live Fire Training Structure. The eligible jurisdiction shall be fully accountable for **BOTH** the *Principal* and the *Interest*.
3. **Use of Funds** – Grant funds may not be used for anything other than Live Fire Training Structure construction or renovation as specified in the contract between parties. Grant funds may only be used for the construction/erection, renovation, or repair of the Live Fire Training Structure, and direct-related costs to the construction/erection, renovation, or repair within 15 feet of the Live Fire Training Structure including E/A costs. (The 15 feet was established as a safety zone for firefighting evolutions.)

Grant funds will not be approved for any civil engineering site plan implementation or any other ancillary costs assumed as overhead or ordinary cost of managing a capital project. Examples of site plan implementation, or ordinary costs of managing a capital project include but are not limited to site clearing, grubbing, excavation with the exception of the foundation, back filling with the exception of the foundation, seeding, fencing, or any other form of site restoration, site surveys, site layouts, water testing, soil testing, water run-off analysis, air quality analysis, access roads, paving/graveling, easement or land lease costs, running lines or conduit for electrical supply or water source, bonding for contractors or jurisdictions, or any other overhead expense that is not directly related to the construction/erection, renovation, or repair of the Live Fire Training Structure.



Grant funds may not be used for routine maintenance or operations costs for new or existing Live Fire Training Structure.

Building Signage: Proper VDFP required signage is required to be placed on the exterior of all sides of the permanent Live Fire Training Structure that have points of entry (ingress or egress). Proper VDFP required signage includes the octagonal sign that recognizes the Board's financial investment in the structure, and the rectangular sign addressing usage criteria. Production and installation of the signs is an allowable cost to the grant program.

## **8. GRANT APPLICATION**

Any eligible jurisdiction may submit an application for a new construction Live Fire Training Structure grant or a renovation to a Live Fire Training Structure by completing and filing the prescribed form.

Applications for new construction or renovation projects will be received for review bi-annually and must be postmarked by either January 1 or July 1.

Emergency renovation applications may be submitted at any time for consideration provided the application meets the "Emergency Renovations" qualification.

Any renovations applications received that are not identified as "taken out of service by VDFP for certified training" will be held until the next application deadline cycle.

Repair Project application submissions, up to \$50,000 will be accepted by the Agency at any time throughout the year.

Grant applications should be sent directly to:

**Budget and Grants Manager  
Virginia Department of Fire Programs  
1005 Technology Park Drive  
Glen Allen, VA 23059-4500**

The filing of an otherwise completed grant application by an eligible jurisdiction in no way binds the Agency to disburse any FIRE PROGRAMS FUND monies, including a Live Fire Training Structure Grant, to that locality.

**Construction/Renovation Applications:** Application submissions will be reviewed by the Live Structure Committee prior to recommendation to the full Virginia Fire Services Board. Applicants will make presentations to the Live Structure Committee and be available for questions from the Committee Members.

## **9. GRANT AWARD**

1. Grant recipients can download construction drawings and the project manual for Live Fire Training Structure prototypes at no charge on the agency website. A current edition of the VFSB Live Fire Training Structure Policy document is available online at [www.vafire.com](http://www.vafire.com).

2. Grants recipients will be required to attend one (1) Orientation Meeting that must be held within thirty (30) days of award notification. The meeting will be held at one of VDFP's seven office locations or virtually.
  - a. The purpose of the Orientation Meeting will be to introduce VDFP staff to new grants recipients, provide an overview of the Live Fire Training Structure Grant Program, and offer an opportunity for grants recipients to ask questions about the grants process.
3. Grants recipients will be required to attend one (1) Pre-Building Permit Submission Meeting that must be held sixty (60) days prior to the submission of a valid building permit according to the terms of this Policy. The meeting will be held at one of VDFP's seven office locations or virtually.
  - a. It is understood that grants recipients must have an approved set of building plans prior to being issued a valid building permit, which is due to the Agency no later than twelve (12) months from the date of award notification.
  - b. Grants recipients are encouraged to contract with a qualified engineer that may provide advisement in the development of the grant recipient's project bid solicitation.
  - c. The purpose of this meeting is to provide an opportunity for grants recipients to discuss specific issues relative to their Live Fire Training Structure design that can be resolved prior to a bid solicitation being published, and to ensure that the building design plans meet the Prototype specifications as referenced in this Policy. Structure plans must be submitted to the Agency no less than one (1) week in advance of the meeting to permit adequate time for the Agency's engineer on contract to review the plans.
4. Grants recipients will be eligible to participate in at least one (1) one-hour teleconference call at any time during their grant project.
  - a. The Agency will engage in ongoing communications with grants recipients, addressing all project issues relating to the administration, financial management, and technical aspects. Any technical issues that require advisement or review by the Agency's engineer on contract will be coordinated directly through the Agency and will require grants recipients to provide their request for consideration in writing; responses to technical inquiries will be provided to grants recipients within a reasonable time frame.

## **10. TERM OF GRANT**

For new construction, the grant term shall not exceed twenty-four (24) months from the date of award notification without approval from the Agency and/or the Virginia Fire Services Board. The grant recipient shall have up to twelve (12) months from the date of award notification to provide to the Agency a valid building permit. The grant recipient shall have up to (an additional) twelve (12) months to complete the construction project.

Concurrent with the submission of the valid building permit, the grant recipient will also provide VDFP with two (2) original copies and one (1) electronic copy of the construction building drawings, including specifications.

For renovations or repairs, the grant term shall not exceed twelve (12) months from the date of award notification without approval from the Agency and/or the Virginia Fire Services Board.

During the grant term, all repair and construction work is to be completed and all documentation pertaining to such activities shall be submitted to the Agency in a timely manner.

Additionally, within 30-calendar days after the conclusion of the grant term, all unexpended funds – including any interest accrual remaining – shall be returned to the Agency.

1. **Return of Unexpended Funds by Check:** Funds being returned to the Agency via a check:
  - Must be made payable to the *Treasurer of Virginia*, and
  - Forwarded to the attention of the Agency at the address specified in [H] above. (Funds are **NOT** to be sent directly to the Treasurer’s Office or any other State agency.)
2. **Direct Deposit:** Funds may also be returned to the Agency via electronic transfer as may be provided for within the contractual agreement among parties.

## 11. EXTENSIONS

An extension of up to 90-days or the next regularly scheduled Virginia Fire Services Board meeting may be granted by the Agency. All requests for extension must be received by the Agency not less than 30-calendar days prior to the scheduled termination of the original grant period. Such requests must list the compelling reason(s) for extension and/or circumstance(s) that prevent project completion by the end of the initial grant period. Extension requests for any period of time greater than 90-days will need to be addressed by the Virginia Fire Services Board for approval; such should always be directed to the Agency’s Executive Director.

## 12. MAXIMUM AMOUNT

1. There shall be a cap on the maximum amount of funds to be awarded in any single grant for either totally new or the total replacement of an existing permanent Live Fire Training Structure; the current cap is \$450,000.00. An additional amount up to \$30,000.00 shall be available to offset E/A costs pertaining to site adaptation.
2. The maximum amount of funds to be awarded for any renovation project will be set by the Virginia Fire Services Board, but in no case will it exceed the cap that can be awarded for a new or replacement building.
3. The maximum amount of a repair project award shall not exceed \$50,000 per project and no Live Fire Training Structure will be funded over \$50,000 per fiscal period (July 1 – June 30).
4. For renovation and repair project awards, if the permanent Live Fire Training Structure exceeds the base Prototype model, applications must include conceptual plans/design plans with the total square footage of the Live Fire Training Structure and the number of burn rooms per floor. The award will be based on square footage of the Live Fire Training Structure and number of burn rooms compared to the base Prototype model. (i.e. If the total existing Live Fire Training Structure square footage is 3,000 and the base prototype model square footage is 1,200, the award will be capped at 40% of the total estimated cost; or if the existing Live Fire Training Structure has more than 2 burn rooms, the award will be based on the minimum requirements of 2 burn rooms.)

### **13. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Localities shall provide progress reports to VDFP every ninety (90) days until their project is completed. The foregoing measured from the date of the transfer of funds to the eligible jurisdiction. Reports shall be made to the Budget and Grants Manager.

### **14. INSURANCE**

No person or entity shall commence construction or repair work, unless and until such person or entity has obtained all insurance required by the “Virginia Fire Services Grant Fund Agreement” from insurers licensed to provide such insurance in the Commonwealth of Virginia. These types of insurance must be maintained at all times when any construction or repair work is being performed. Before any such work commences, the locality shall submit to VDFP a Certificate of Coverage or Certificate of Insurance evidencing that the required insurance coverage is in effect for the appropriate entities, including coverage for subcontractors. The locality must be named as an additional insured party for certain types of insurance as specified in the “Virginia Fire Services Grant Fund Agreement”.

### **15. PROCUREMENT**

It is the responsibility of the Localities to adhere to the Virginia Public Procurement Act (VPPA) when pursuing the solicitation process for New Construction, Renovation and Repair projects. The entire VPPA manual can be found on the Virginia Department of General Services web page.

### **16. AUTHORIZATION FOR RENOVATIONS**

The foregoing authorization shall be based upon verification by a licensed Engineer duly authorized to conduct business in Virginia as to scope of need. The cost of such survey may be part of any total grant. Localities making application for a grant for repairs to their permanent Live Fire Training Structure and choosing to obtain an Engineer’s review in advance of submission may therefore include the eventual reimbursement for this cost as part of their total grant request.

### **17. FULL CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS**

To be eligible for any grant award to construct a new or replacement permanent Live Fire Training Structure recipient shall agree to expend such funds to construct one of the Agency’s identified prototypes from the specifications provided by the Agency or a design that meets the minimum criteria and construction requirements identified in the Live Fire Training Structure Policy for either:

- Prototype I for Class A fuels (permanent concrete structure)
- Prototype I for Class B fuels (permanent pre-manufactured steel structure)
- Prototype II for Class A Fuels (permanent concrete structure)
- Prototype II for Class B fuels (permanent pre-manufactured steel structure)
- Prototype III for Class B fuels (reserved to Mobile Live Fire Training Structure Props administered by VDFP)

- A stand-alone permanent Live Fire Training Structure or other structure whose Live Fire Training Structure part shall meet the basic requirements of the outline/performance specifications provided in the prototypes listed above. If building plans deviate from or have been modified/enhanced from the basic requirements of the above referenced Prototypes, the applicant must define the building concept and include proposed plans with their application. All modifications to proposed and approved building plans must be submitted to the Agency for review and approval in writing prior to commencement of construction.
- From the time such new construction or said repair is authorized to begin, the lead locality shall have one (1) year to begin and one additional year to complete the actual construction. Should they fail to meet this deadline (Section J) or request an extension (Section K), the award will expire and the application shall be resubmitted.

## **18. REPAIRS/RENOVATIONS REQUIREMENTS**

For awards made on or after January 1, 2009, any structural repairs or renovations must be certified by a Virginia licensed engineer or architect to certify that repairs or renovations were completed in compliance with the engineered plans for projects that are more than \$50,000 or by the recommendation of the Live Structure Committee, and must be provided to VDFP prior to final walk through of VDFP staff and final funds disbursement.

Prior to any award, localities/jurisdictions must be current with their annual inspection and must provide documentation with grant application.

## **19. PERMANENT LIVE FIRE TRAINING STRUCTURE INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS**

Localities shall provide annual inspection for Class A Fuel and biennial inspection for Class B Fuel to be performed by a licensed professional engineer retained by the locality.

The Live Fire Training Structure Inspections Schedule can be found online.

Prior to the fiscal date of July 1, if a locality fails to comply with the adopted Live Fire Training Structure Inspection Schedule per building class and submit a copy of the inspection report to VDFP, the building will not be certified for approved VDFP certification training and a notice will be provided to the lead locality.

Failure to comply with the established Live Fire Training Structure Inspection Schedule criteria will result in the reduction of repair or renovation funds available to the locality. All repair and renovation funding is based on the maximum allowable amount criteria listed in this document. Funding decisions will be based on available funding, inspection compliance and circumstances surrounding a specific request.

As a general practice, a request will be placed into one of three categories: Compliant, Semi-Compliant, Non-Compliant.

**Compliant (may receive up to 100% of allowable funding)** – required Structure Inspection Schedule has been followed for the past 5 years and the locality has maintained supporting documentation on file during this period.

**Semi-Compliant (may receive between 25% - 75% of allowable funding)** – required Structure Inspection Schedule has been followed for the past 2-4 years within the previous 5 year period and the locality has maintained supporting documentation on file during this period.

**Non-Compliant (may receive up to 25% of allowable funding)** – required Structure Inspection Schedule has been followed for the past 0-1 years within the previous 5 year period and the locality has maintained supporting documentation on file during this period.

**Note:** The Board may deviate from this general practice based on extraordinary and/or uncontrollable circumstances.

**Comprehensive Audit:** Per the requirement of the Live Fire Training Structure Funding Policy, localities must participate in the fifth-year audit conducted by the Agency’s E/A Firm. The fifth-year audit is provided to localities at no cost. This will satisfy the inspection for that year. However, at the discretion of the Board – lack of participation in the fifth-year audit will result in automatic disqualification for funding until the next comprehensive audit cycle.

## 20. OWNERSHIP OF SITE



- 1. NEW CONSTRUCTION:** It is required that the eligible jurisdiction or other governmental entity own the site (land) and not be subject to any restriction or limitation that would prohibit or impair the use of the property as a Live Fire Training Structure . On a case-by-case basis, the VFSB may consider a long-term lease. The length of the lease shall be consistent with the expected life of the building.
- 2. RENOVATIONS:** It is strongly recommended that the eligible jurisdiction or other governmental entity own the site (land) and not be subject to any restriction or limitation that would prohibit or impair the use of the property as a Live Fire Training Structure. On a case-by-case basis, the VFSB may consider a long-term lease. The length of the lease shall be consistent with the expected life of the building.

## 21. AUDIT

It is the responsibility of the jurisdiction to maintain all necessary fiscal records. Such records are subject to audit by this Agency or its assignees, for a period of not less than five (5) years following the date of the last transfer of award moneys to the grant recipient.

**CERTIFICATION:**

We the undersigned as Chair of the Virginia Fire Services Board and Executive Director of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs jointly adopt the foregoing policy as of 22 September 2023. As such, this revised policy supersedes all prior adopted editions of this Policy.

	
Keith Johnson Chair Virginia Fire Services Board	Brad Creasy Executive Director Virginia Department of Fire Projmmccoy40@yahoo.comgrams

# REGIONAL FIRE SERVICES GRANT POLICY



*Grant Awards to Provide Training Props for Regional Fire Services Facilities throughout the Commonwealth*

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS**

and the

**Virginia Fire Services Board**

1005 Technology Park Drive  
Glen Allen, Virginia 23059-4500

Tel: (804) 249-1958

Fax: (804) 371-3358



## 1. PURPOSE and AUTHORITY

In accordance with [§38.2-401.D](#) of the *Code of Virginia*, the Regional Fire Services Grant Program (the Grant) was established to provide regional fire services training facilities to Virginia localities. The term Regional Fire Services Training Facilities refers to any facility within the Commonwealth of Virginia constructed or improved with §38.2-401.D funds that provides multi-jurisdictional training within the Commonwealth per the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 and 1403 training standards.

As approved by the Virginia Fire Services Board, the Regional Fire Services Grant Program may also provide exclusive funding to the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP). The funding will be utilized for the acquisition, renovation, repair, service, and management of fire services training props to provide training opportunities to multiple jurisdictions in support of training throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia per the NFPA 1001 and 1403 training standards.

- 1) [§ 38.2-401](#), and [§9.1-203](#) of the *Code of Virginia* as amended – “Fire Programs Fund”

## 2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

**“Fire Services Training Prop”** – means training equipment used exclusively for fire services training purposes per NFPA 1001 and 1403 training standards. The Regional Fire Services Grant Program shall not include training props as defined under NFPA 1402.

**“Grant Completion”** – means local jurisdiction acquisition and/or installment of regional fire services training prop with all project expenses processed for payment, and final walk-through inspection performed by VDFP staff including curing of any and all identified deficiencies.

**“Jurisdiction”** – means counties, cities, and towns in the Commonwealth as provided in § 38.2-401.D. eligible to receive Regional Fire Services Training Grant funds from the Fire Programs Fund; herein also referred to as Locality.

**“Lead Locality”** – means the locality that undertakes all administrative and reporting requirements related to the Regional Fire Services Grant. Grant awards made to Regional Fire Services Facilities serving multiple jurisdictions must identify one jurisdiction to serve as the Lead Locality. The duties of the Lead locality shall include but not be limited to, the receipt, management, and control of grant funds, the filing of reports with VDFP, and responsibility for all administrative contact with VDFP.

**“Regional Fire Services Training Facility”** – Any training facility owned by a jurisdiction with the *exclusive or primary* purpose of being used for fire services training delivery for two or more jurisdictions.

## 3. PRECEDENTS OF LAW & DISCLAIMER

Nothing contained within this document shall be construed to supersede the [Code of Virginia](#). In the event of a conflict, the *Code of Virginia* shall supersede the conflicting provision of this Policy document.

## 4. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE GRANT

Grant disbursements to jurisdictions for acquisition of Regional Fire Services Training props are administered by the *Virginia Department of Fire Programs*, VDFP, (“the Agency”) from the Commonwealth’s *Fire Programs Fund* as provided for in the *Code of Virginia §38.2-401.D* and consistent with policy guidance provided by the *Virginia Fire Services Board*, (“VFSB”) or (“the Board”) as set forth within this document. All grants to acquire Regional Fire Services Training props shall be approved by the *Virginia Fire Services Board*.

## 5. GRANT APPLICATION

Any jurisdiction may submit an application for acquisition of Regional Fire Services Training props by completing and filing with the Agency the prescribed application form. Each grant application shall name the Lead locality and identify the other localities (non-lead) in the region to be served by the grant. The Lead locality can participate in only one Grant application per fiscal year. A non-lead locality may participate as non-lead in multiple grant application per fiscal year.

All application forms must be executed by the:

- County Administrator / Executive, City Manager, Town Mayor / Town Administrator; Deputy Town Administrator; or
- A duly authorized designee whereby the application is accompanied by a copy of an ‘Ordinance’ or other such formal instrument clearly delegating authority to such party.

Projects approved with funding provided under the Regional Fire Services Grant may not be funded under the Live Structure Grant.

### Required Supporting Documentation to the Application

- Training Plan to:
  - 1) Explain how the fire services training prop being requested in the application will enhance regional fire services training.
  - 2) A signed Letter of Agreement for all localities participating in the grant project stating the intended purpose of the project and their support of the project.
- Price quotes/information for fire services training props being requested. All submitted applications must be supported by a cost estimate proposal/price quote provided from a potential vendor to document reasonable cost forecasts. Failure to include cost estimate supporting documentation will render the application incomplete, and funding for the application will be denied.
- If requesting to build a training prop that deviates from VDFP Prototype specifications, a site plan and training prop drawings must be provided with the application and must include a projection of raw materials and paid labor costs. Volunteer labor may be included as a match towards the grant project at the then accepted construction labor rate, but will not be eligible for reimbursement of grant funds. Volunteer labor claimed as match towards the grant project must be calculated and delineated as local match separate from grant funds being requested.

#### Eligible Regional Fire Services Training Props

The following list is not all inclusive but identifies examples of training props which support a locality's specific training needs and supports NFPA compliant training programs:

- Drafting Pit (excluding Dry Hydrants)
- Mayday Training designed to provide minimum training elements
- LP Gas Simulator
- Flashover Simulator
- Stationary Confined Space SCBA Maze Training Prop limited to training prop materials only (construction of a building to house the training prop is ineligible)

The Virginia Fire Service Board will consider applications requesting training props not listed in this policy. Please be aware if applying for a training prop not identified in this policy, all requirements listed for the submission of a grant application will still apply to these training props.

#### Application Period

The annual application period shall be from July 1 through September 1.

Completed applications must be postmarked by September 1.

Grant applications should be sent directly to:

**Budget and Grants Manager  
Virginia Department of Fire Programs  
Attn: Regional Fire Services Grant Administration  
1005 Technology Park Drive  
Glen Allen, VA 23059-4500**

## **6. FUNDING CRITERIA AND PROPOSAL REVIEW**

The filing of a completed grant application by a locality in no way binds the Agency to disburse any FIRE PROGRAMS FUND monies, including this grant to that locality. There is no guarantee of a particular level of funding and awarded grants shall not exceed the balance of the available funding from the previous fiscal year's budget.

Regional Fire Services Training prop award amounts shall be based upon the Funding Criteria and Proposal Review process.

**Funding Formula:** A locality submitting a standard application is eligible to receive up to 50% of the proposed project. The locality is expected to contribute the remaining 50%. Funding may be considered using an 80/20 formula if a hardship can be shown and justification is included. A request for a 100% funding formula will be considered in an extreme hardship situation and must be adequately justified. Total funding will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

**Funding Criteria:** The review of Grant funding requests shall be based on the following criteria (listed in no prioritized order):

- Number of jurisdictions involved
- Availability/Proposal of matching funds
- Previous grants requested and/or awarded
- Proper/Complete application, supporting documents, and timeliness
- Financial and/or training program impact if grant not awarded

## 7. EVALUATION

The VFSB Chairman will appoint a workgroup, to include VDFP Staff, to evaluate applications based on the scoring criteria that measure the substance of the application. The workgroup will submit its recommendation to the Administration, Policy, and Finance Committee of the Board. The Committee's recommended application will then be forwarded to the Board for final approval.

### Scoring Criteria

**Grade 1 – High:** Request is an immediate need, alternative funding sources have been exhausted or are unavailable; the need is of the highest priority with the greatest negative impact to citizens and communities if not funded.

**Grade 2 – Medium High:** Request is a high need; alternative funding is limited or delayed; the need is high with significant adverse impact to citizens and communities if not funded.

**Grade 3 – Medium:** Request is a moderate need; funding is available in the future; the project can be delayed; the need is moderate with limited negative impact to citizens and communities if not funded.

**Grade 4 – Low:** Request is a minimum need; local funding is available; the need is not immediate; the project can be delayed and there is little to no impact to citizens and communities if not funded.

**Grade 5 – Very Low:** Request is not a need; funds or other resources are available; there are no impact to citizens and communities if not funded.

## 8. GRANT AWARD

Grants for acquisition of Regional Fire Services Training props are made by the Board in accordance with this Policy based on the needs of the Commonwealth's Fire Services. Grants awarded shall not exceed the balance of the available funding from the previous fiscal year's budget. Following approval of grant award, the Agency shall send the Lead locality appropriate forms for grant acceptance and release of reimbursement funds.

## 9. TERM OF GRANT

The grant term shall not exceed twelve (12) months from the date of award notification.

## 10. EXTENSIONS

An extension of up to 90-days may be granted by the Agency. All requests for extension must be received by the Agency not less than 30-calendar days **prior** to the scheduled termination of the original grant period. Such requests must list the compelling reason(s) for extension and/or circumstance(s) that prevent project completion by the end of the initial grant period. Extension requests for any period of time greater than 90-days will be addressed by the Board. The Agency shall be responsible for transmitting the extension request to the Board.

## 11. MAXIMUM AMOUNT

The maximum amount of funds to be awarded for any Grant project will be set by the Board and shall not exceed the balance of the available funding from the previous fiscal year's budget. The maximum amount of any project award shall not exceed \$50,000 per fiscal year funding cycle (July 1 – June 30). A locality may submit one application containing multiple training props but is only allowed to receive a maximum award of \$50,000.

## 12. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Within thirty (30) days of project completion or within thirty (30) days of grant term expiration, the Lead locality will submit a final written report to the Budget and Grants Manager. This report shall describe the grant project fulfillment, use of grant funds, and benefit to fire services agencies and/or the community served by such organizations. The final project report will include the jurisdiction's request for reimbursement of funds, including required supporting documentation as provided below in Section 13. Disbursement of Funds.

## 13. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

1. Payments are not made until the Lead locality has entered into a Disbursement Agreement binding the locality to the terms and conditions of the grant. The jurisdiction's authorized representative shall execute the Disbursement Agreement. Disbursements are never made to individual Fire Departments.
2. The following items pertain to the receipt of monies by jurisdictions:
  - a) Payments of any grant will be provided solely through an electronic transfer of funds to a banking institution.
  - b) Transfer amounts – Payments for projects completed in accordance with the approved application package will be authorized by the Agency upon completion of the project. One reimbursement payment will be made at the completion of the project and upon submission to the Agency of supporting documentation. Supporting documentation of eligible costs may include vendor invoices, receipts, etc.

- 3. Use of Funds – Grant funds may not be used for any purpose other than acquisition of regional fire services training props as approved in the grant application and as specified in the Disbursement Agreement.

**14. INSURANCE**



No person or entity shall commence construction or repair work, unless and until such person or entity has obtained all insurance required by the “Virginia Fire Services Grant Fund Agreement” from insurers licensed to provide such insurance in the Commonwealth of Virginia. These types of insurance must be maintained at all times when any construction or repair work is being performed. Before any such work commences, the locality shall submit to the Agency a Certificate of Coverage or Certificate of Insurance evidencing that the required insurance coverage is in effect for the appropriate entities, including coverage for subcontractors. The locality must be named as an additional insured party for certain types of insurance as specified in the “Virginia Fire Services Grant Fund Agreement”.

**15. OWNERSHIP OF SITE**

The Lead locality or other governmental entity must own the site (land) for any permanent installation of training props and not be subject to any restriction or limitation that would prohibit or impair the use of the property as a Regional Fire Services Facility. On a case-by-case basis, the Board may consider a long-term lease. The length of the lease shall be consistent with the expected life of the Regional Fire Services Training Facility.

**CERTIFICATION:**

We the undersigned as Chair of the VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD and Executive Director of the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS jointly adopt the foregoing Policy which supersedes all prior Policies/Policy Statements effective as of September 22, 2023.

	
Keith Johnson Chair Virginia Fire Services Board	Brad Creasy Executive Director Virginia Department of Fire Programs

## VFIRS HARDWARE GRANTS



*(VFIRS: Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System)*

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS**

and the

**Virginia Fire Services Board**

1005 Technology Park Drive  
Glen Allen, Virginia 23059-4500

Tel: (804) 249-1958

Fax: (804) 371-3358

## 1. PURPOSE

This document describes the practices, consistent with the *Code of Virginia* and current policy guidance from the Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB / Board) by which the Department of Fire Programs (VDFP / Agency) administers grants to jurisdictions for the title purpose.

**The explicit purpose of this grant program is to provide an incentive to those jurisdictions not currently participating in VFIRS to do so by significantly lessening their economic burden of start-up.**

## 2. GENERAL OVERVIEW

Grant disbursements to eligible jurisdictions to acquire ‘hardware’ are to be administered by the *Department of Fire Programs* from the Commonwealth’s *Fire Programs Fund* as provided for in the *Code of Virginia* [§38.2-401:D] and consistent with policy guidance provided by the *Virginia Fire Services Board* as wholly set forth within this document. All VFIRS Hardware grants shall first be authorized by the *Virginia Fire Services Board*.

The “Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System” (VFIRS) is provided for under the *Code*. This “mandate” is a component part of a greater national initiative in compliance with policy guidance provided by VFSB. That national initiative – voluntary participation, is under the control & direction of DHS – U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) which is a sub-division of FEMA.

The national reporting format – NFIRS / National Fire Incident Reporting System, is designed for collecting, analyzing, and reporting injuries and losses of life <sup>and</sup>/or property caused by fire and similar hazard. VFIRS follows the NFIRS format without variation.

- Prospective GRANTEES are required to timely file a formal VFIRS Hardware Grant Application.
- Timeliness of filing the properly completed application and subsequent receipt by the Agency of such are solely the applicant’s responsibilities.
- ***The filing of an application does not bind the Board to award nor the Agency to pay any grant.***
- All grants are disbursed upon award determination to jurisdictions – never directly to a department or fire service organization and as such, it is the jurisdiction that is responsible for compliance to terms.
- Such disbursements are made almost exclusively as an electronic funds transfer / EFT (EDI) to each locality’s *account-of-record*.
- The GRANTEE (as award recipient) is required to commence incident reporting within six (6) months of receipt of any award and to thereafter report monthly for 3-continuous years.
- ***Awards are forfeitable – whole or in part, for any failure in compliance.***



### 3. **CODE OF VIRGINIA CITATION**

§38.2-401 and §9.1-203 of the *Code of Virginia* as amended – “Fire Programs Fund,” is incorporated herein by reference.

### 4. **PRECEDENTS OF LAW & DISCLAIMER**

Nothing contained within this document shall or be construed to supersede the applicable laws and regulations of the Commonwealth of Virginia. In the event of a conflict, the applicable law shall supersede the conflicting provision of this policy statement.

### 5. **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Grantor** – The Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Fire Programs consistent with any applicable policy guidance from the Virginia Fire Services Board.

**Fire Incident** – Such as defined for the purposes of this grant as the following types of calls: structure fire; outside of structure fire; vehicle fire; trees, brush, grass fire; refuse fire; explosion, no after-fire; outside spill leak with ensuing fire; other fires.

**Grant Acceptance Period** – Upon notification to a jurisdiction of any award, up to six (6) continuous months from the effective date of the award. During this period, the GRANTEE shall acquire the hardware, conclude necessary local system configuration, possibly embark on ‘beta’-level testing and then commence participation; this “ACCEPTANCE PERIOD” terminates upon the commencement of the GRANT PARTICIPATION PERIOD – the start of ‘production’-level reporting.

**Grant Application Period** – Nominally July 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup> of the fiscal period for which an award is being granted.

**Grant Participation Period** – 3-years; having commenced participation, the “GRANTEE” is required – as a fundamental condition of the award, to report fire and non-fire incidents monthly to VDFP for a period of not less than 36-consecutive months – see also “GRANT ACCEPTANCE...” above.

**Grantee** – Any of the independent Cities, Counties or Towns incorporated.

**Eligible Jurisdiction** –Localities within the Commonwealth of Virginia otherwise eligible (§38.2-401 et al) to receive *Aid to Localities*.

### 6. **TERM OF THE GRANT**

Consistent with Board guidance to the Agency, all awards granted for the title purpose shall be disbursed by the Agency to the GRANTEE after the acceptance of the grant.

**Upon receipt, the GRANTEE is thereafter responsible for the use of such funds consistent with all terms & conditions as enumerated within this document.**

## 7. AWARD AMOUNT

There shall be a cap on the maximum amount of funds to be awarded in any single grant to a jurisdiction based upon the number fire departments listed in their grant application for the titled purpose. An amount of **\$700<sup>00</sup>** per department shall generally be allowed in computing any Locality's award, potentially subject to a maximum amount for each jurisdiction as may be determined by the BOARD and thereafter uniformly applied to all award recipients for that fiscal period.

## 8. MAKING APPLICATION FOR A GRANT

All prospective GRANTEES must submit a properly completed application executed by competent authority, within the Grant Application Period.

Upon the timely receipt of an application, the Agency shall review that application and make a determination as to completeness, eligibility, and verification / mathematical consistency of the amount requested.

All such completed applications – those received by the deadline, shall then be forwarded to the Board for deliberation and any award(s) determination.

***The filing of an application neither binds the Board to award nor the Agency to pay any such grant.***

## 9. SIGNATORY (GRANTEE)

All documents requiring execution by the GRANTEE must be signed by competent authority.

- a) The Agency recognizes (without further qualification) the following titles for such execution:
  - **Independent Cities** of the Commonwealth – The City Manager or principal Deputy.
  - **Counties** of the Commonwealth – The County Administrator or principal Deputy.
  - **All Towns** incorporated within the Counties – The Mayor or Town Manager/Administrator.
- b) The Agency will also recognize another duly authorized official whereby the application / document is accompanied by a copy of an ordinance or other such formal instrument clearly investing that responsibility in and granting that party such authority.

## 10. CONDITIONS

- a) The primary use – over fifty (50%+) percent of the mix of hardware acquired pursuant to any award, must be utilized for the proper reporting of incidents under VFIRS.

- b) The locality must participate thereafter for not less than thirty-six (36) consecutive months upon termination of the GRANT ACCEPTANCE PERIOD *as defined herein*.

## 11. DESCRIPTION & ALLOWED USE OF AWARD

VDFP will disburse seven hundred (\$700) dollars per awarded department as identified on the GRANTEE's application, each amount for either:

The acquisition or upgrade of a Personal Computer and/or Tablet and defined peripherals. All such 'acquisition' actions shall be concluded **AFTER the award date**. (Any items procured prior to the award date are not eligible under the grant.)

Grant funds can be used to purchase or upgrade the following hardware.

- **Personal / Laptop Computers (Non-Mac/Apple)**

**Minimum Specifications:**

- 2 GB RAM Memory
- 120 GB Hard Drive
- Microsoft Operating System or latest version
- Color Monitor / Display
- Network Connection Equipment
- Mouse / Keyboard
- Antivirus Software (Norton, McAfee, etc.)

- **Computer Tablets (Non-Apple / iPad) and Mi-Fi Peripheral**

**Minimum Specifications:**

- Any Windows or Android Operating System (Not Apple iOS)
  - (Internet Explorer or Firefox browsers required)
- Internal Memory - 2 GB RAM
- Hard Drive Storage - 32 GB, 100-300 GB Recommended
- Internet Connection Equipment – Mi-Fi Peripheral
- Keyboard and Mouse Accessories
- Antivirus Software (Norton, McAfee, etc.)

All items acquired under the grant award are and remain the property of the GRANTEE consistent with all terms & conditions as set forth throughout this document. (The GRANTEE may at any time, if they so wish, transfer title to others – such as 'departments' participating under the GRANTEE's award.)

**IMPORTANT: Expenditure of Grant funds for other than uses as authorized within this document shall subject the GRANTEE to forfeiture.** (Under no circumstance may grant funds be used for the following items: sales taxes, reporting software such as Microsoft Office, training, maintenance, support, or extended warranties.)

## 12. PROJECT COMPLETION

VFIRS Grant projects and/or program start-ups shall be completed within six (6) months following receipt of an award. Awarded localities shall submit a written

report to VDFP, including invoices, within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the VFIRS Grant six (6) month cycle. This report shall describe the fund’s use and benefit.

### 13. TIMELINESS OF REPORTING

During the GRANT PARTICIPATION PERIOD the GRANTEE is required to report all incidents monthly.

#### Timely Reporting of Incidents

All incidents shall be reported (submitted) no later than the 15th of the calendar month for incidents that occurred in the previous month. For example: January incidents are due on February 15th each year. (The originating department can update or delete any incidents they submitted through VDFP.)

### 14. FORFEITURE

- a) If the GRANTEE shall fail to commence timely reporting within the GRANT ACCEPTANCE PERIOD they shall irrevocably forfeit their entitlement to the award previously tendered. If in the judgment of the Agency there shall be extenuating circumstance, then VDFP may temporarily suspend this provision until such time, in the sole judgment of the Agency, the GRANTEE shall have had opportunity to properly commence report input.

If the Agency shall deem that the Grantee has failed to report or has failed to report timely during the Grant Participation Period for the numbered month specified in this table, then the Grantee shall reimburse the Agency the corresponding amount shown.

Month	Amount	Month	Amount	Month	Amount
1	\$700.00	13	\$466.72	25	\$233.44
2	\$680.56	14	\$447.28	26	\$214.00
3	\$661.12	15	\$427.84	27	\$194.56
4	\$641.68	16	\$408.40	28	\$175.12
5	\$622.24	17	\$388.96	29	\$155.68
6	\$602.80	18	\$369.52	30	\$136.24
7	\$583.36	19	\$350.08	31	\$116.80
8	\$563.92	20	\$330.64	32	\$97.36
9	\$544.48	21	\$311.20	33	\$77.92
10	\$525.04	22	\$291.76	34	\$58.48
11	\$505.60	23	\$272.32	35	\$39.04
12	\$486.16	24	\$252.88	36	\$19.60

**Payment of Forfeiture** – A jurisdiction forfeiting any part of their award is required to reimburse VDFP within 30 calendar days of receipt of a formal demand for such from the Agency. (All decisions on the part of VDFP shall be final upon the expiration of the aforementioned 30-day period.)

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All reimbursements shall be marked payable to the *“Treasurer of Virginia”* and tendered to VDFP at the address – and none other, designated by the Agency in their notice.

**Appeal** – The GRANTEE may appeal to the Board any decision on the part of the Agency to impose forfeiture. Such appeal must be made in writing, executed by the competent authority for the jurisdiction, and received by the Board *no later than 15 days after receipt of the initial notification.*



**15. AGENCY PROVIDED INSTRUCTION**

It is solely the responsibility of the Grantee to commence and thereafter report incidents timely.

The Agency shall endeavor to provide ‘basic conceptual training’ both periodically and geographically disbursed throughout the Commonwealth to meet Grantees’ departmental needs.

**CERTIFICATION:**

We the undersigned as Chair of the VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD and Executive Director of the DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS jointly adopt the foregoing policy as such supersedes all such prior policy statements for the titled purpose; effective this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of September 2023.

	
Keith Johnson Chair Virginia Fire Services Board	Brad Creasy Executive Director Virginia Department of Fire Programs