CITY OF ALEXANDRIA FIRE DEPARTMENT

THE RESPONDER

— Dedicated to Our Community, Our Profession and Each Other —

SUMMER 2014

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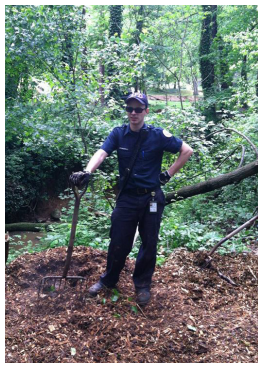
This newsletter is written and compiled by the Alexandria Fire Department's Community Services Unit



Photos: Top left: LT. S. Reyes & FF. K. Bosser; Top middle: FF. L. Vansmiddlesworth & Medic S. Bowman; Top Right: FF. R. Givens, CPT. G. Cook, FF. P. Evans & FF. K Bosser; Middle left: FF. P. Evans & CPT. G. Cook; Middle: CPT. J. Beaven, Medic M. Kohrt, Medic A. Cornell, LT. S. Reyes, Bill Kehoe, FF. M. Ellzy, FF. K. Bosser, FF. D. Scott, FF. J. Porceli, FF. L. Vansmiddlesworth, FF. R. Givens & Medic S. Bowman; Middle right: FF. J. Porceli; Bottom left: FF. R. Givens, FF. K. Bosser & LT. S. Reyes; Bottom middle: FF. P. Evans & FF. R. Givens; Bottom right: FF. D. Scott, FF. L. Vansmiddlesworth, LT. S. Reyes & FF. K. Bosser

Spring for Alexandria

AFD Local 2141 Team "Springs" into Action

By: Shawn Gore

In keeping with the City of Alexandria's springtime tradition, members of Alexandria's Fire Department Local 2141 team participated in "Spring for Alexandria" on Friday, May 16.

Spring for Alexandria is a three-day celebration of giving and service throughout the City. Local businesses, residents, and City government volunteers all worked together to complete a variety of tasks ranging from gardening to painting. The AFD Local 2141 team was selected to volunteer at Ivy Hill Cemetery on King Street where they did landscaping, trail maintenance, and clearing of large debris.

At the conclusion of the day, event organizers of Spring for Alexandria hosted a volunteer celebration at the Old Town Theater where top individual and team fundraisers were announced. This city-wide day of service engages thousands of volunteers and raises thousands for Alexandria-based charities.

For more information, please call 703.836.2176 or visit www.springforalexandria.org.

Community Engagement

Climbing For a Cause

AFD Firefighter Givens Participates in ALA Fundraiser

By: Shawn Gore

On Saturday, June 14, City of Alexandria Firefighter Roxanne Givens participated in the American Lung Association's (ALA) "Fight for Air Climb" at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center, where she climbed to raise awareness for lung disease prevention, education and treatment.

"I climbed, for my very dear friend who lost his battle with Lung Cancer last year and for my fellow firefighters who face this challenge daily, while climbing to rescue a person or to save property and protect the communities that depend on us," said Givens.

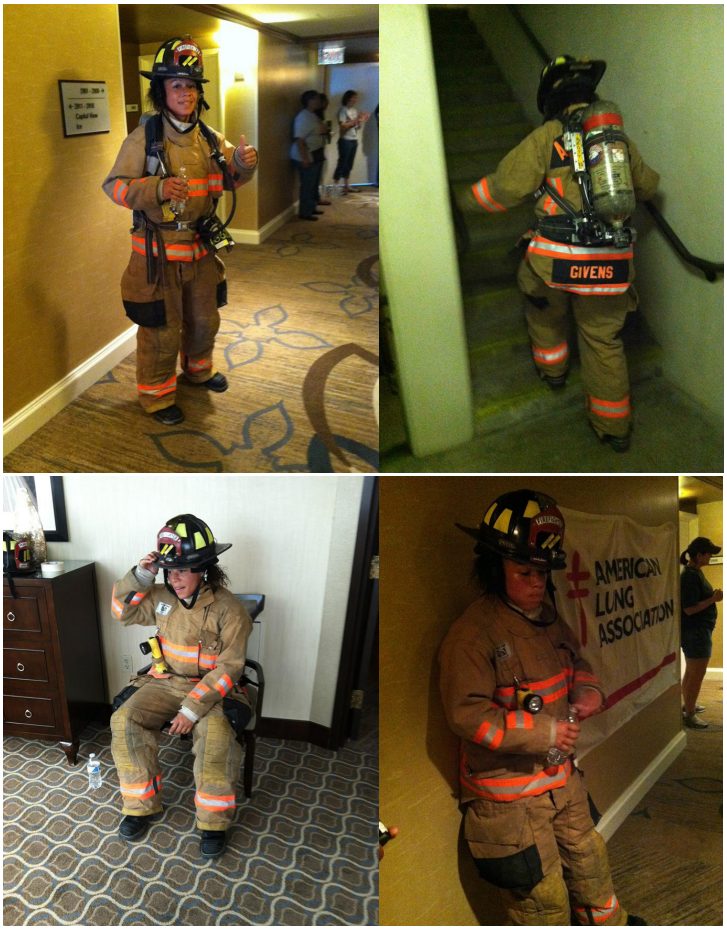
The ALA hosts this signature fundraising event throughout the country, which is designed to raise funds to support the ALA's mission to save lives by improving overall lung health and by preventing lung disease. Participants had the option of climbing the Hilton's 28 floors once or twice for a total of 56 floors. Referred to as the "vertical road race", teams and individual participants climbed the stairs lead by firefighters in full turnout gear.

"It was important for me to participate in the Climb because the work done by the ALA is so important," said Givens. "What better way than a challenge that we as firefighters may face on any given day on a routine call, all the way up to an event such as 9/11. I think of those firefighters faces as they climbed going into certain danger together, to answer the call the last time. If they could do it under those conditions, I can do it to help a great cause, in full gear as they did."

Givens recalls the experience as both challenging and exciting and looks forward to participating again next year with a larger team of AFD firefighters by her side.

"I have a new goal to complete two rounds wearing full gear and air pack next year," said Given.

Photo: Alexandria Firefighter Roxanne Givens with Fairfax County Firefighters



Photos: Alexandria Firefighter Roxanne Givens

Regional Safe Summer Campaign

By: Shawn Gore

On Thursday, May 16, officials from Prince William County hosted the "Safe Summer" Campaign news conference/ cookout. This year's theme, "Keep It Safe and You Won't Get Burned" included a live safety demonstration that showed safe and unsafe grilling practices as well as legal and illegal fireworks. The event was held at Pfitzner Stadium in Woodbridge, VA.

Area Fire Chiefs, Fire Marshals, and Law Enforcement officials were on hand to address the dangers associated with the use of grilling fires and illegal fireworks, and to show how these traditional summer time activities can be dangerous if used improperly.

This region-wide campaign is aimed at educating the public about the safe use of grills and fireworks while helping to kick off a safe summer season.

In the City of Alexandria fireworks are banned. Offenses are Class One misdemeanors and are punishable by a $2,500 fine and/or up to 12 months in prison. For more information, contact Andrea Buchanan/ Russell Furr, Assistant Fire Marshal, Alexandria Fire Department, Andrea.Buchanan@alexandriava.gov / Russell.Furr@alexandriava.gov

Suppression Field Training Office Provides Drills to Department

By: Hilary Gates

Amid intense smoke and heat, the Alexandria firefighter was found out of air and unresponsive on the upper floor of an apartment building. Thanks to the Rapid Intervention Team, he was carried down the stairs, removing him from the building and handed him to Alexandria medics who promptly treated and transported him to the appropriate hospital.

Fortunately, this scenario wasn't an actual fire, but instead a burn building drill conducted by the Suppression Field Training Office (FTO). Created by former chief Adam Thiel in 2012, the FTO is charged with providing quality, consistent training drills to the members of the fire department. Based at the Professional Development Center (PDC), Lieutenants Larry Lee and Patrick Lyon serve as the FTOs. Captain Jason Wehmeyer serves as the Supervisor.

Wehmeyer stresses the importance of both officers' focus on quality and hard work. The officers have a tremendous amount of planning, organizing and documentation to develop programs from the ground up, with the success of the program lying on their shoulders.

"They have to be competent, capable, and committed to delivering the highest quality training our department has ever seen," he said. "This is the standard I have set for them and they have exceeded all expectations."

Lieutenant Wells Wilson was the first to be placed into the office in 2012, spending approximately six months establishing Alexandria's program. Wilson reviewed like programs around the country, gathered input from department members and laid the framework for the FTO program. He focused on creating delivery of consistent training material to department members prior to beginning a hands-on drill. Wilson selected Target Solutions as the best fit for a learning management system, and the FTO uses it to deliver initial training for company drills as well as providing a variety of drills for individuals to self-select.

Additionally, Wilson focused on challenging members to build on their basics, whether during company drills on apparatus to improve a skill set or on shift drills with multiple units that test the application of a company's expertise. The drills allow for individual variability, even while the FTOs communicate very deliberate objectives and preferred actions to the firefighters.

"We are hoping to see some innovation by each company," Wilson said.

Lee and Lyon have since created a variety of drills totaling over 2000 hours of training, ranging from search and rescue to reviewing the roles of first due engine and truck, with potential future drills reviewing bailout procedures and roof operations. The FTOs provide resources that are Alexandria-specific, so that all members start with the same playsheet, language and skill set.

"We succeed by incorporating the repetition of basic firefighter skills into every shift drill," said Wehmeyer. "Through these drills, we have also identified safety issues and processes that needed to be changed or addressed."

Knowing that many members of the department bring real-life expertise and first-hand knowledge of many subjects, the FTOs solicit ideas and drills from individual firefighters, considered assets to the program.

Firefighter Josh Turner crafted a hose drill and says that he is proud to know that he can be a part of equipping firefighters with training and skills that make them more effective.

Firefighter Jason Kuehler created the lecture portion of a chimney fire drill and assisted with the practical portion. He said that he appreciates the FTO using subject-matter experts.

"[This program] is about identifying people in the department who have put time and effort into researching a topic," said Kuehler. "By pulling from the whole department, your range of topics is from real-world experience, not just the internet or a trade journal."

In addition, the FTO has recruited Lieutenants Jack Hoffman and Andrew Beckett to construct training devices and also construct a new FTO-designed burn building so that the building more closely resembles the reality of the calls the department responds to in the city.

Wehmeyer and his team go to great lengths to research different options and address modern firefighting tactics so that a specific company or individual can choose the one that is the safest and most effective. The office receives immediate feedback when department members use the actual skills on the street, and when members refine their skills by reviewing the FTO's thorough After Action Reports.

"The FTO program is a success, with excellent training and a great presentation," said Captain Mark Dalton. "They have assured us worthwhile drills so we can learn."

ADMINISTRATION & LOGISTICS NEWS

Welcome Robert C. Dubé Alexandria Fire Chief

Eisenhower Avenue Fire Station 210 Update

Construction for Station 210 is ongoing and the building is on schedule to be completed early summer.

Photo: Roofing Membrane Installed at Training and Main Apparatus Bays

Photo: Installed Membrane Roofing Installation Over SCBA

Photo: Installation of Split Face Masonry at PDC Along Northern Elevation

Photo: Steel Balcony Framing at Training Stair Tower (Stair Tower #1)

New Employees

Amanda Jackson
Fire HR Manager II

Chris Thompson
HR Recruiter/ CSU

Shawn Gore
Community Education Specialist

Retirees

Many Herrera
Fire HR Manager II

Richard Snyder
Firefighter II

Paul Valencia
Firefighter II

Alex Von Guggenberg
Medic II

William Jordan
Medic II

James LeCruise
Fire Captain

Meet Dave Dell

Q: What is your position with the AFD?

A: Admin Support IV

Q: What does a typical work day consist of?

A: That's a good question; the answer is there is no typical day in supply. The day depends on the current needs of the department at any given moment. A "typical Day" consists of first prioritizing what needs immediate attention, whether it's filling supply request from stations or personnel, placing orders for equipment or other items, attending to walk in customers, or answering phone calls and emails. Things change constantly all the time. Additionally, a typical day consists of delivering items to stations and picking up equipment that needs to be repaired, sent back or dropped off at various vendors; it also includes finding contracts and getting multiple quotes for items that are needed for the department. It could also include cleaning gear that was used in a fire the night before or taking things to emergency incidents to support the operation. Simply put, the day depends on the needs of the department at any given time during the day.

Q: Why is your position important for the AFD?

A: This position keeps the department moving and orders all the supplies for every facility within the fire department with the exception of the FD shop. This position obtains everything the department needs to operate just short of ordering vehicles and apparatuses.

Q: How has your role evolved since you've been with the AFD?

A: Since, I started seven years ago the role has grown immensely from filling supply request and delivering things to the stations. I've added a property tracking system to track our inventory. I've taken over the departments gear cleaning and maintenance program. I take care of all the ordering and financial aspects associated with the job. I serve on several different committees' that help in choosing new items or equipment for the department. I've also taken over the insuring of the department's annual hose testing.

Q: What's your favorite part about working for the AFD?

A: I would have to say there are a couple of things that I enjoy about the AFD. The first would be the people; this department has a great group of people working here which makes coming to work fun and enjoyable. The second would be there is no "typical day" every day brings new and exciting challenges.

New Cardiac Arrest Protocol Focuses on Improving Patient Outcomes

By: Hilary Gates

Citing the latest in cardiac arrest resuscitation science, the AFD will be rolling out its newest protocol this month, named Survival-Oriented Arrest Resuscitation (SOAR). The protocol prioritizes interventions and choreographs provider roles so that cardiac arrest patients are given the best chance for a meaningful survival.

Arguably the most important aspect of the protocol is the focus on uninterrupted, high-quality chest compressions. EMS Operations Chief Brian Hricik stresses that every time a patient is moved or chest compressions are stopped, patients are being denied the best chance of survival.

"This program puts the BLS providers in the driver's seat for chest compressions," he said. "They can monitor efficacy and make sure we rotate providers every two minutes so that ALS providers can focus on treatment plans and advanced assessment."

All Firefighter EMTs and paramedics were trained on two separate occasions this year, both online and in the classroom. In conjunction with the SOAR protocol rollout, an additional training with the Mobile Simulation Unit (MSU) is scheduled for July.

To date, a number of crews have already implemented the basic principles of SOAR and found them to be helpful. Firefighter Jeremiah Sisler has run several cardiac arrest calls with his crew out of Station 207.

"By outlining an action plan prior to the call, there is a smooth operation on scene," Sisler said. "Lieutenant [Jack] Hoffmann has even had our crew switch positions periodically so we can become well versed in each one."

The protocol is based on data that has been shown to increase the likelihood of two important outcomes. First, high-quality, uninterrupted chest compressions contribute to more patients regaining a pulse after a cardiac arrest (known as Return of Spontaneous Circulation or "ROSC"). More importantly, the end goal of the SOAR protocol is for cardiac arrest victims to receive the most appropriate care in the field so that they are also discharged alive from the hospital (referred to as Survival to Discharge).

Dr. Joseph Marfori, the department's medical director, stresses the importance of quality of life for patients.

"ROSC without brain function means nothing," Marfori said.

The SOAR protocol continues an AFD tradition of practicing progressive medicine based on the most recent medical research.

"We have everything the Emergency Department has to resuscitate a patient, so we give the patient the best chance to survive by staying where we are until we achieve ROSC," Hricik said. "Fewer than 1% of patients who receive CPR in a moving ambulance survive to be discharged from the hospital."

The SOAR program has been in the making in one form or another since early 2013. Paramedic Mario Weber began spearheading these efforts after the Quality Management Systems Committee (QMS) reviewed a cardiac arrest call and identified a need to both formalize provider roles and also focus on interventions that improve patient outcomes. Weber initiated a pilot program at Station 207 that had mixed results due to inconsistency in training and implementation.

"It became clear that in order for this program to work, all providers needed to be trained," said Weber.

After creating a Target Solutions presentation that explained the science behind these changes, Weber then analyzed the department's cardiac arrest call data. He found that relative to national averages and in comparison to other high-performing EMS systems, AFD's numbers were lower than they should be.

"The SOAR protocol is an opportunity for AFD to be truly progressive by embracing evidence-based medicine and patient-centered care," Weber said. "There is a reason to change the way we have been doing things when it comes to cardiac arrest resuscitation—patient survival."

Now that the protocol is in place, the department will analyze SOAR's effectiveness with software that measures several CPR variables, including interruptions in chest compressions. There will also be continued review and tracking of patient outcomes.

Marfori and Hricik are both confident that despite some initial resistance to change, AFD providers will embrace the new protocol because they want the best for their patients.

"More and more, we are coming to realize that the key to helping anyone survive a cardiac arrest is time on the chest," Hricik said.

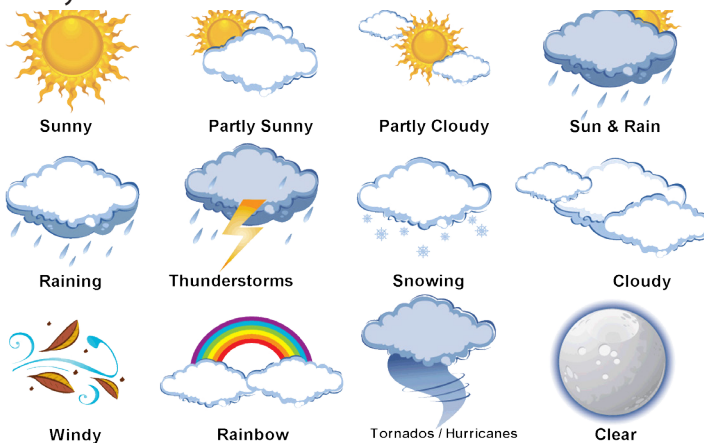
FIRE PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY TIPS

Summer Safety Tips

By: Russell Furr

Summer is usually a fun time, where many people take family vacations and spend more time outside. The Fire Marshal's Office would like to take this time highlight some safety tips to ensure a safe and enjoyable summer:

Grills – Grilling is a common practice in the summer. Grills should be located at least 10 feet from any combustible construction and should be located where smoke and cooking odors will not create a nuisance to neighbors. Grills should not be located near a window or door opening where smoke can enter a building. Inspect grills prior to each use to ensure that the grill is in good working condition. Regular checks should be completed of fuel lines, LP gas cylinders, and regulators to ensure there are no leaks. Ashes from charcoal grills should be disposed of in a covered metal container and should never be placed in a plastic or paper bag. Lighter fluid for charcoal grills should be used sparingly and should not be applied once the fire has been lit. Grills should never be used inside of a structure or garage. A fire extinguisher should be kept nearby.



Fireworks – Fireworks are popular during the summer months, especially during the Independence Day holiday. In Alexandria, all fireworks are illegal, including sparklers and novelty items such as snap pops and poppers. In most other areas fireworks such as fountains, sparklers and pinwheels are permissible unless prohibited by local ordinance. Fireworks that explode or travel through the air such as firecrackers, rockets, missiles, and shells are illegal. Always check with the local jurisdiction as to what fireworks are permissible in your area where you live. Where fireworks are permitted, fireworks should only be used outside on a hard surface that is free of combustible materials, tall grass or vegetation. Fireworks should not be held by the hand and children should be supervised at all times. Always follow manufacturer's instructions for use and do not attempt to re-light any fireworks that malfunction. Malfunctioning and spent fireworks should be soaked in water and allowed to cool down before disposal.

Weather Events – Thunderstorms are a common occurrence during the summer months and may result in power outages. When portable generators are used for emergency power, they should be located outside and well-ventilated area. Never run a generator inside of a building or in a garage to prevent excessive carbon monoxide gas from exhaust. Always refuel generators in a well-ventilated area after allowing the generator to cool down. Gasoline should be stored in a safety container in a cabinet rated for flammable liquids or well-ventilated area. Ensure that smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are installed and are working properly in your homes on each level. Electronics and appliances such as TV's, computers and satellite receivers should be protected with a surge protector in the event of a power surge or lightning strike. During power outages, it is recommended not to use candles for emergency lighting. Candles should be constantly attended whenever used and should only be used in proper containers.

SPRING 2014 RUN STATISTICS

(MARCH, APRIL & MAY)

	UNIT	MEDICAL	FIRE SUPRESSION	TOTAL	2014 YTD	2013 YTD
Station 201	E201	142	197			
	Total			339	589	1319
Station 202	M202	399	97			
	U202	2	2			
	Total			500	842	2091
Station 203	E203	158	175			
	T203	35	159			
	Total			527	992	2294
Station 204	E204	174	183			
	M204	265	74			
	T204	32	347			
	Total			1075	1752	3478
Station 205	E205	208	303			
	M205	484	107			
	Total			1102	1902	4627
Station 206	E206	288	309			
	M206	560	145			
	RS206	65	115			
	Total			1482	2433	5460
Station 207	E207	242	240			
	M207	431	74			
	Total			987	1713	4209
Station 208	E208	422	361			
	M208	522	153			
	T208	96	349			
	Total			1903	3165	7219
Station 209	E209	167	185			
	H209	0	16			
	U209	2	5			
	Total			375	669	1493
Total				**8290**	**14057**	**32190**