

The All Hands

It takes all of us working together, to get the job done!

April 2014

Volume 2, Issue 4



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Deputy Chief's Message

By **DARREL DONATTO**

Deputy Chief

The members of Palm Beach Fire Rescue have always been known for their incredible approach to customer service delivery. Thus, Palm Beach Fire Rescue as an organization has become well known for customer service.

Customer service is a large part of the organizational culture at Palm Beach Fire Rescue. Michael Watkins, in an online article for the Harvard Business Review defines organizational culture as "consistent, observable patterns of behavior in organizations." That definition certainly, applied to us, validates that customer service is a large part of our culture.

Recently, a crew from Station 3 ran a call where their "behaviors" demonstrated just how ingrained customer service delivery is within our organization.

On April 12, 2014 at 4:09AM in the morning, Engine 3 and Truck 3 were dispatched to a high-rise condominium located at 2560 S Ocean Blvd for a fire alarm. While responding, they were advised that a smoke detector in a 3rd floor unit was activated. Once they arrived and made their way to the unit, the crew found that the smoke detector was not activated, but was instead chirping because it needed the battery replaced. The residents didn't have a replacement battery available. In most cases, at most fire departments, the call would have ended at this point – with the crew telling the residents to replace their battery when they could. However, this call didn't end here, because this call didn't happen in just any other fire department and with just any other group of firefighters. The crew went back to their station, retrieved a battery for the detector, as well as batteries for the other detectors in the unit, and returned to the scene where they replaced the batteries for the residents so that they could go back to sleep knowing that they had a working smoke detector to protect them should something occur.

No one told the crew to do this. This is not the normal approach to such a call by most fire departments. But here at Palm Beach Fire Rescue, we don't have just ordinary firefighters, we have extraordinary firefighters; firefighters who consistently behave in a manner that places our residents first.

Ask anyone at Palm Beach Fire Rescue what sets us as an organization apart from most other fire departments and they will respond – our level of customer service.

On that early morning of April 12, 2014 – Acting Lieutenant Danny Dunnam, along with Acting Driver Engineer Christina Weiber, and Firefighter Juan Reyes, all assigned to Engine 3 – were the crew that helped this resident with their emergency. While many would not call a dying battery in a smoke detector an emergency, it was important to this resident.



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Own It – No Excuse

By **CHRISTIAN ADAMS**

Posted at: <http://firefightertoolbox.com/own-it/>
April 10, 2014

Recently I learned a great lesson on bad decision making. Even though my decision had good intentions; I did not follow through with what I said I did. I could sit here and give excuses or play the blame game, but I won't.

I will OWN IT. By doing this I am saying I made a mistake and I am sorry.

We in the fire service have run into a problem one time or another and it is hard when we have to face a mistake that we made. Most of these situations are harmless and good learning experiences, but OWN IT, give no excuses, learn from it and move forward.

Don't dwell on something you cannot change because it has already happened. We cannot correct the past, but we can our future actions.

For the more serious offences you better OWN IT right away. The more we try to give excuses or lie which is the worst thing to do; all we are doing is digging our own grave.

We all make mistakes; it does not mean we are a bad person it just means we need to stop and think about what we are doing and ask ourselves is this right, ethical or moral?

Someone once taught me to look at things from a balcony; if we can see from above that we are about to make a bad decision then from our level on the ground it is a no brainer, don't do it.

Own our mistakes; it is okay we all make them. Learn from them so they can empower us to not make them again. Remember give no excuses, do not lie and explain your thought process so everyone can understand what we were thinking so we can correct or change our thought process.

The process is stressful, as I know, but the quicker we own it and learn from it the quicker we can move on from it in a positive manner. In a future article we will explore eight steps on recovering from our bad decisions.

About the Author: Chris has been in the fire service for 16 years and currently works for the City of Riverside Fire Department in Southern California. He currently holds the position of engineer which he has held for 4 years. He is also part of the USAR CA-TF-6 Team. Engineer Adams holds positions on the team as a PLANS Manager, Technical Information Specialist and Communication Specialist. His passion is leadership which he will discuss in further detail here on FFTB.



Above and Beyond

From page 1

And because it was important to this resident, this crew made it important to them.

They hit the mark on this call – achieving the “WOW – I didn't know that the fire department would do that for me” point.

My sincerest appreciation goes out to Danny Dunnam, Christine Weiber, and Juan Reyes for their consistent, exceptional delivery of customer service.

Aristotle said, “We are what we repeatedly do.” Palm Beach Fire Rescue is a great customer service organization because our people repeatedly go above and beyond to provide great customer service. You are all making Palm Beach Fire Rescue great. 🧯

News and Notables

By **BRODIE ATWATER**

Assistant Chief

It's been another busy month or so here at Palm Beach Fire Rescue. The following information has been compiled in an effort to keep everyone up to date on what's been happening in the Department:

- Lifeguard Dennis Wytrykush was one of two recipients of the Kunkle Award at the annual state of the Town Civic Association meeting at the Flagler Museum. This award was given based on Dennis' outstanding efforts in retrieving a lost prosthetic leg for an area veteran.
- The Town experienced a major computer system shutdown due to several unforeseen issues. The system has been returned to service at this time. Any remaining issues should be reported via Track It and will be routed to IS.
- The Annual Palm Beach Daily News "Empty your pantry" food drive has begun. Once again, all three stations are serving as collection points for donations of food items. These donations will be collected and forwarded to the Daily News for distribution to area organizations which serve the less fortunate.
- A Driver Engineer promotional test was announced, the testing will be conducted in July by Palm Beach State College.
- A new policy was created and distributed which allows for units to shop at grocery stores within the Town. This policy will make it easier for on duty personnel to obtain groceries during their shift hours.
- Rescue 1 was taken to the Palm Beach County apparatus shop for needed repairs and completion of annual preventative maintenance.
- Updates were made to the Operations Manual regarding the use of the Emergency Signal at Station 2, the signal shall be used any time a vehicle exits or enters the station. The Rules and Regulations were also updated to reflect changes in articles pertaining to Damaged Personal Property and Records and Reports.
- Notification by the FDOT indicates that the Flagler Memorial Bridge will close for approximately six months beginning May 12th. The Department developed a plan for dealing with this issue when the bridge closed briefly in November. Personnel should be familiar with the Bridge Disruption Plan and prepare for its implementation.
- The FY15 budget information has been finalized and will be moving forward through the adoption process, beginning with a review by the Town Manager.
- F/P Jordan Euliss expressed interest in re-establishing the Department's ALS competition team. In the past, this team competed every year at the Clincon conference as well as at other regional competitions. Any interested members should contact Jordan for more information.
- The Palm Beach County apparatus shop has evaluated Squad 1 and will be completing repairs and maintenance on the valve panel. All parts have been ordered and the unit will be delivered to the PBC shop for repair when the parts are received. The squad compressor was recently rebuilt and the panel repairs will complete the needed update.
- Administrative personnel participated in a codification project with the Town Clerk's office. As part of this project, all Town Ordinances which pertain to Fire Rescue were reviewed and any needed updates were presented for consideration. All Town departments participated in this process to help ensure that all ordinances are up to date.
- At the direction of the Palm Beach County Fire Chief's association, countywide resource typing and unit identification suggestions were developed by a committee of Operations Chiefs. The goal is to provide for consistent unit typing and unit identification for all departments within the county. This will make interagency operations run more smoothly and effectively as each unit will be clearly defined. The proposed ID numbers for PBFR units will be 97, 98 and 99. The committee will address various other countywide operational issues in the future. Chief Duane is the Department's representative.
- New Quickstop sprinkler tools were purchased for all units and a new flammable material cabinet was purchased for Station 1. 🔥

Training and Safety Division

By **JIM DUANE**
Division Chief

Palm Beach State College completed the Driver Engineer series for Palm Beach personnel, finishing up with Aerial Apparatus. Not accounting for years of service, the majority of our personnel will be qualified to drive the apparatus once they are approved by their Officer and Battalion Chief. Personnel are encouraged to seek out opportunities to hone their skills by furthering their training daily with pumping and driving. Congratulations to Scott McCracken, who just completed his Florida State Driver Engineer Certification.

The Driver Engineer test was announced this month, which will take place in July of this year. The process is slightly different from the past with the addition of procedures on the written test as well as an over the road driving

portion. Time has been set aside on the training calendar so that personnel may have the opportunity to practice for the exam.

The next "Back to Basics" monthly training subject is Forcible Entry. The information is very thorough and encompasses a number of aspects on the subject. Officers should be creative when thinking about how to train on the subject. Throughout the town, there are unlimited doors, windows, locks and gates that you can visualize and talk about with the crews. Station 1 forcible entry prop can be used as well. Chapter 11 of the Essentials of Firefighting outlines all the topics discussed in the training.

Live fire training will take place during the first week in May. Each crew will be training for a full 8 hour day instead of a half day. The training will

begin with a classroom session, which will include hands on training. Each position of the crew (Firefighter, Driver Engineer, and Officer) will be separated in order to focus on the functions that you are responsible for on the fire ground. After breaking for lunch, crews will immediately begin the practical portion of the day, which will encompass 2 live fire scenarios followed by a review.

Much thanks to all of the personnel who have worked very hard training and to those who have assisted with creating programs and teaching the programs. Without everyone's help, training wouldn't be what it is. Please continue to document every hour of training in Target Safety so that you receive credit for the hard work you do. I welcome ideas for future training. If you would like to see something or there is something you specialize in and would like to teach, call me with your thoughts. 🔥

Battalion Chief's Message—Taking the Door

By **KEITH GOLDEN**
Battalion Chief B Shift

During emergency situations unless the Officer can definitively determine that there is no emergency, entry should be made; but a simple task like forcible entry can be made very difficult if you do not understand the doors construction and locking mechanism that you are attempting to force or how to utilize the tools at your disposal. Security conscious residents and commercial entities fortify their doors with deadbolts and panic hardware and it's our job to understand the mechanism and be able to defeat it quickly in our quest to save lives and property. Most times there is no need to force entry because a responder is nearby with a key and that can allow us access to the structure or there is a Knox Box readily available with the keys inside. When we are unsure or unable to determine if further interventions is needed we need to contact the responder via dispatch. While we are waiting at" least 30 min. for a responder to arrive our focus shifts to checking for Knox Box on premises, if none found contact dispatch for any special instructions regarding the property (key w/ neighbor etc.) Remembering to ladder the structure if it's greater than 1 story to check applicable doors and windows for visual confirmation is imperative as it may prevent having to force entry. However, in emergency situations where the door needs to be forced to get to a patient desperately in need of assistance, or in case of a fire raging just behind it we have to remember that all things begin with the size-up.

When sizing up a door we must determine if it's an inward swinging or outward swing door, determine the doors construction and what it is encased in including the door frame and adjoining wall and also the number and types of



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Admin Update

By **DARREL DONATTO**

Deputy Chief

The significant issues being addressed this month include the finalization of our proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2015, the looming temporary closure of the Flagler Memorial Bridge, the update of some of our policies and procedures, the development of a new Officer Development Program / Task Book, and labor negotiations.

We have submitted our budget proposals for consideration by the Town Manager and will be meeting with the manager soon to discuss the same. I will not go into the details of our requests until the manager has had the opportunity to comment and make his changes; but suffice it to say that training and safety are the two largest priorities from a budget request perspective. We have ordered the new quint, and thus we are asking to reclassify three positions so we can promote three new lieutenants to staff Rescue 2. This will require Town Manager and Town Council approval – but we are hopeful of

their support.

Everyone is aware of the proposed closure of the Flagler Memorial Bridge starting May 12, 2014 and lasting approximately 6 months. From our past experiences, we have created a plan to address any potential impact to emergency response and patient transportation to hospitals. Everyone should be familiar with the department's Bridge Disruption Plan by now. While we spent a significant amount of time developing the plan we have, we are certainly open and would welcome any suggestion that you have that might make what we do and how we do it better. This is going to be a challenging period of time for us, both from a service delivery as well as a personnel impact perspective. We are committed to doing our best for the resident and doing our best for the employees to mitigate the impact.

As we strive to update our policies and procedures, please help us out by submitting any suggestions you may have. It can be as simple as taking an

existing policy, writing in your suggestions in red ink, and submitting up through the chain of command for consideration. We want to make our policies more current, more effective, and better for you to operate from.

D/C Duane is currently working on a new Officer Development Program. I will leave the details to him for a future time, but this new tool is going to be a great way to ensure we adequately prepare our future lieutenants for the roles they will one day serve in. I have seen a small part of the work D/C Duane has done and I am very excited about this new program.

Finally, the Town has been working hard to reach a resolution in the current labor negotiations process. A lot of progress has been made, but there are still some items to work out. We are hopeful that the last remaining items on the table will be resolved at the next scheduled meeting which is May 9, 2014. 🗨️

Taking the Door

From page 4

locks used to secure the structure. As with the many tools pictured above there are many techniques to gain entry and even other tools that can be utilized such as a rotary saw, pair of grip pliers, screwdriver etc... Although most doors that we run into are very formidable and work as designed I think a set of irons and two members that understand basic forcible entry concepts can and will defeat any door. When tasked with taking the door you have to decide between 3 main techniques;

- Conventional forcible entry - which primarily uses the force of hand tools and leverage to overpower the door locking assemblies.
- Through the lock techniques- which as the name suggest you would drive the adz of a Halligan (or another striking tool) through the lock or a K tool then utilize a screwdriver to manually operate the lock.
- Power/Hydraulic tools such as a Rotary saw and rabbit tools to force inward swinging doors that are steel and hung within a steel frame/door jamb. When the order is given to take the door remember that efficiency, expertise and effectiveness will help protect lives and property and provide good customer service. 🗨️

A Forcible-Entry Trick-of-the-Trade

By HOMER ROBERTSON

Published Thursday, July 1, 2010 Issue of FireRescue magazine

If you read this column regularly, you know that we focus on the basics of firefighting and rescue ops. Being able to do the basics well is the trademark of great firefighters and great fire departments. But let's be realistic: For a training officer or company officer to successfully keep people motivated to train, you have to mix a little "new" in with the basics. And when I learn a new tip or technique, I'm excited to share it with someone else.

This month's Quick Drill covers the "baseball swing," a simple, one-person forcible-entry technique that works great on lot of residential inward-swinging doors.

A Two-Person Job

The single-family residential structure and the multi-family apartment make up the bulk of our firefighting work these days. Incidents in these structures are usually room-and-contents fires that can be handled with some good old-fashioned aggressive firefighting. But before you can get a handline on the seat of the fire, you must make quick entry. Sometimes personnel on the first handline have to handle the task of getting into the structure; sometimes a member of the truck company is assigned the task of forcing entry for the attack team.

Whoever has the door-entry assignment must carry the right tools with them to get the job done right, and every fire department has weapons of choice based on their response area characteristics. One of the most commonly used tools is a "set of irons"—a Halligan bar and a flat-head axe or maul paired together to form a powerful forcible-entry duo. The problem with using the irons: To use them to their full potential, you need two firefighters, one to hold and manipulate the Halligan bar (the barman), and the other to strike with the flat-head axe as commanded by the barman.

But two firefighters aren't always assigned to forcible entry; in the first few minutes of an attack, the firefighter assigned the forcible entry duties may have to force the door without help from other crewmembers because they're performing other tasks, like stretching the hoseline or securing utilities.

Why Not Just Kick It In?

This is about the time that a lot of folks are going to say, "We just kick the front door in, or someone puts a shoulder to it." I know that's fun and macho; kicking in a door definitely gives you a rush.

But there are several problems with doing that: First, kicking in a door can injure your knees, ankles or back. Second, when you kick in the door, you often lose control of it. You've essentially created a ventilation opening, which can lead to an uncontrolled venting of heat, fire gases and even flame. Remember: Those fire gases and heat follow the path of least resistance, which many times is the opening you just created. If you've ever been run off the porch of a house that's on fire because you lost control of the door, you know what I'm talking about.

The final downfall of kicking in the door is public perception. You don't see a journeyman carpenter trying to cut boards by chopping them. Of course not; they use the right tools for the job—and so should we.

The Baseball Swing

The "baseball swing" is a Halligan technique that's performed by one firefighter, without another person having to use the maul. It works best on inward-swinging doors that are set in wooden door-frames. Here's how it works:

1. Position yourself so you have a clear swing at the doorframe, making sure that no one is standing behind you that you could hit on the back swing.
2. Swing the Halligan like you would a baseball bat and drive the pike end of the Halligan into the wooden doorframe just high enough so the adz end lines up with any locks on the door.
3. By driving the pike into the doorframe, you achieve a pivot point from which you can use the adz to push against the door.
4. On right-hand swinging doors, the adz will be pointed up, or in the 12-o'clock position. The length of the bar will give you leverage as you push down on the bar, thereby using the adz to push on the door, forcing it inward.
5. On a left-hand swinging door, the adz will be pointed down as you swing, forcing the pike into the doorframe. After you set the pike, you again use the leverage of the bar, but this time you push the bar up, forcing the adz against the door and defeating the locks.

The baseball swing allows you to force the door with a certain amount of control using only one firefighter. It's a down-and-dirty trick-of-the-trade that's much safer than attempting to kick doors open.

Fire Prevention

By **TIMOTHY POMPOS**

Division Chief

In the month of March, the Fire Prevention and Life Safety Division completed 150 fire prevention activities with the assistance of Fire Operations shift personnel. Just a friendly reminder while completing your Fire Company Inspections or any public interaction, please utilize this opportunity to remind residents, employees, and business owners to check their smoke alarm devices. Please convey the following important smoke alarm safety measures:

Make sure their smoke alarms are working. This means testing smoke alarms monthly, replacing batteries once a year or when a low-battery alarm chirps. Also, performing all other maintenance as NFPA and your smoke alarm manufactures recommend. If a smoke alarm is disabled because of nuisance alarms, it provides no protection at all.

It is important to not have just one smoke alarm, but a smoke alarm in every location required by NFPA standards. (On each level of your home, outside each sleeping area and inside each bedroom.) Tens of millions of U.S. homes are estimated to have smoke alarms but not enough smoke alarms to meet the standards to protect their homes properly.

Interconnect your smoke alarms so that a fire detected by any smoke alarm will sound an alarm at every location where a smoke alarm is installed. Interconnection can be done using hard-wiring or wireless broadcast technology. Interconnected smoke alarms provide early warning of fires that are still far away or are located on the other side of a door or wall that may block sound.

Develop and practice an escape plan that everyone in the home or in their place of business knows what to do if the fire alarm sounds. That includes planning a second way out from every location (if applicable), that will increase their chances of evacuating from an unsafe environment.

In closing, discuss with residents and employees on how they can reduce false fire alarms activations in their homes or places of business by providing them a false fire alarm checklist. Also, you may advise them to contact their fire alarm company to set up occupant verification for their property. Occupant verification is similar to burglar/police alarm notification that allows the fire alarm companies the ability to verify whether or not a response by the fire rescue is required by first contacting the home or business owner. If any residents or business owners needs further assistance, please direct them to the Fire Prevention Division. 🔥

Ocean Rescue

By **CRAIG POLLOCK**

Division Chief

In the month of March beach attendance really picked up as Spring Break and warm weather were good reasons to hit the beach. The swim conditions for the majority of the month had Yellow condition flags (medium hazard) flying at Mid-Town Beach to advise swimmers of possible Rip Currents and Shore break waves. Mid-Town Beach was closed to swimming on four occasions due to sharks close to shore. The annual spring shark migration is passing the coast of South Florida as thousands of Spinner and Blacktip Sharks make their way North.

On Monday March 24th veteran lifeguard Dennis Wytrykush was given the Palm Beach Civic Association's 2014 Raymond J. Kunkel Award for his exceptional service to the Town of Palm Beach. The Raymond J. Kunkel Award is given each year to individuals who render heroic or meritorious service to the Palm Beach community. Dennis was given the award for his efforts in going above and beyond the call of duty in finding the prosthetic leg of Army sergeant Justin Callahan which was lost in the ocean on August 2, 2013. Congratulations Dennis. 🇺🇸

Retiree Locator

By **ROY B. BOWE**

Retiree

Employed 1991-2008

I began my career with PBFR rescue on January 28, 1991 as a Firefighter/EMT. I was assigned to Lt. Roy Griffin and I think Bruce Petterson, Allen Albritton or Ray Daly was his driver. Can't remember exactly, but I remember it being a great crew. Everybody was great to work with and we had tons fun and did a lot of fire drill training, and we enjoyed some favorable meals together. I left PBFR briefly in October 1994 with then Chief Vincent Elmore's (deceased) blessing to work for St. Lucie County Fire District in Fort Pierce, my hometown. Chief Elmore told me at the time that he had two openings at the time of my leaving and that he was going to fill only one of them. The other position he was going to keep open for at least a year and if things did not work out in St. Lucie County I could have my old job back. I thought that was very generous of him and I will be eternally grateful to him for it. Well, I realized that after 30 days that I made a mistake in leaving PBFR, and after 5 months notified Chief Elmore of such and asked if I come back to work in Palm Beach, and simply asked "When would you like to start". And I said in two weeks! I returned to PBFR May 5, 1994 and continued until I accepted the early retirement option offered by the town to eligible employees in May of 2008. I officially retired October 30, 2008.

I held the positions of; Firefighter/EMT, Firefighter/Paramedic, Lieutenant Paramedic, Fire Prevention Officer, Asst. Fire Marshall.

My most memorable experience:

There were many of those too many to choose just one I think. However there was one that was and still is the most profound. It was my first structure fire in October 1991. It was at 218 Kenlyn Road. When we arrived on scene it was fully involved and a portion of the roof had already vented. All three stations responded. Engine 1 was staffed by Lt. Griffin, D/O Petterson, and I, the rookie firefighter riding backwards in the jump seat. Engine 2 was the first to arrive and Lt. Mel Smith assumed command. Standard fire ground tactics were underway and it was decided that Lt. Griffin and Firefighter Kevin Spina from engine 2 would make an interior attack while I fed hose to them at the doorway. After a few minutes there was a huge explosion! Suddenly I find myself being hurled through the air and landing on my back sliding down the driveway. I immediately rolled over look back at the doorway to see if Lt. Griffin and Kevin Spina were alright or at the very least coming out of the house. A mayday alert was sounded by the truck company to take an accountability assessment and it was at time that I saw them emerge from the house. Thank goodness everybody was accounted for and unharmed. It was a massive explosion that blew whole sections of the exterior walls out and lifted the foundation two feet in some areas. After the explosion the fire intensified and the roof fully vented. It was decided at that point to do an exterior attack to put the fire out. It was only by the grace and mercy of God that no one was injured or killed on that fire. That's one memorable experience that I will never forget!

My favorite food, that's a tough one. But, for those that know me, and know me well, they know what I can do to a chicken! Just ask Dave Burke or Danny Dunham. I'm sure they can tell you a story or two. When I'm done with a piece of chicken, a hungry dog won't even want the bones; because there isn't anything left on them! I have lots of favorite foods however; I think a lot of folks seemed to love my collard greens and corn bread.

What I'm doing now:

January 16 I began working as a Fire Inspector for Atlanta Fire Rescue Department. I've been temporarily assigned to assist with Fire Life Safety plan reviews in the Bureau of Buildings with the city of Atlanta. What a great opportunity. I am learning so much new information, and I get to see and to have some input of the future development of a great metropolitan city. It is very exciting to witness the rebirth of the building boom in downtown Atlanta and all great things to come. Prior to this job, I worked as a Child Passenger Safety Technician Instructor (CPSTI) for the University of Georgia, GTIPI (Georgia Traffic Injury Prevention Institute), Cooperative Extension, College of Family and Consumer Sciences. Our primary function was vehicle occupant safety, more specifically, child passenger safety. Through a federal grant from the Governor office of Highway Safety and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), we were tasked with reaching out to all 159 counties in Georgia to train Law enforcement officers, Firefighters,

Retiree Locator

nurses and other medical personnel, public health officials and child care providers to become nationally Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians. Georgia law states that all children under the age of 8 must be properly restrained in a child safety seat appropriate for the child's height and weight until the child is 8 years old or 4'9" tall. Georgia has one of the toughest child passenger safety laws in the country. That was very interesting and gratifying work. I felt like I was making a difference in people lives by providing them with that knowledge. You don't realize how many kids are dying on our roadways each year because we adults don't take the time to ensure that our children are properly restrained before we drive down the highway.

My greatest advice for any Palm Beach firefighter today:

Start preparing today, for what you want do 3, 5, 7, 10 years from NOW! Don't wait, because opportunity always comes at the most inopportune time. You almost never ready or expecting it. You got to start preparing now. Don't miss an opportunity to get more training or education. While on your 48 hrs. off take some time to further your education or learn a new trade or skill. There is life after the fire service and you will need to be prepared to continue moving forward. The days of depending on your pension to provide for your needs are pretty much over. While it will probably meet your basic needs it probably won't be enough to maintain your current standard of living like the days gone by. There are some unique opportunities in the private sector for retired professional firefighters with the right skill set. So unless you will be financially independent when you retire, develop them now while you have the time.

My greatest advice for any retiree:

Enjoy life to the fullest, and then do it again. When you open your eyes every morning, take a moment to giggle and give thanks to GOD for all of your Blessings. Live life on your terms, do things on your schedule, not others, and only do what bring you joy. Give something back. Try to do something for somebody every day. Maintain your health because without it nothing else matters.

Where am I now?

I'm living in the Metro-Atlanta area in Lithonia, GA. It's about 30 minutes east of downtown Atlanta. I'm currently sharing a home with my oldest daughter Nakia 34, my grandson Jaylen 12, and youngest daughter Kayla 22, who is student at Clayton State University. My middle daughter Patrice 28 lives in Fort Pierce with her two kids Jaquai 9, and Ivori who will be 2 in August. I still have a home in Florida so I'm not so sure about buying a place here in Georgia I'm still evaluating that decision. Atlanta is a great place to live and work. I like the fact that in 4-5 hours in all 4 directions you can be in any of the major cities in the surrounding states. I'm not so crazy about the winter weather though. There is so much to do all the time. From sport to the arts, live entertainment, street festivals in the spring and summer and the food is to die for. Some of the best restaurants you will find anywhere are here. I have a great social network of friends to hang out with and to travel with. I'm having a ball and enjoying life. I'm still not married but I have met an absolutely wonderful young lady and we have been dating now for four years now. I travel to Florida to visit family and friends as often as time permits. It's always going to be home for me. Just not sure if I will ever move back to live there full time.

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EMS Division—Improve your billing customer service

By **BRIAN FULLER**

Division Chief

Have you ever received a medical bill for a service that you know should have been covered or paid for by your insurance? Do you remember how frustrating and time consuming it was to correct the problem? Most likely it was due to an insurance mismatch, clerical error at the doctor's office, or they didn't get the proper insurance information. Nonetheless to receive an invoice in the mail suggesting you are responsible for the payment is stressful.

It is our duty to provide the best possible care to our victims and to transport them to the most appropriate facility to continue their care. Florida State Statutes require a complete and accurate report. Billing information is part of that report. Moreover, from a customer service standpoint, it is essential we document the correct demographic and insurance information available to us so that the patient can recover without the additional burden of unnecessary medical bills. A recent survey by TransUnion Healthcare found 70-percent of respondents who awarded high ratings for care quality gave similarly high ratings experiences they had with billing and payment for the same care.

Let's face it, an emergency is not always the best time to ask a patient about their insurance information but here are a few tips to improve your data collection skills;

- Ensure name is spelled correctly within the report.
- It is important to be as thorough as possible when describing the patient's illness or injuries. This allows the claim to be more properly processed or coded.
- Ensure patient's home address is correct; obviously it is not always where the emergency has occurred.
- Obtain a copy of their insurance cards (front and back), driver's license etc. Their name may be different than their legal name on their identification. Enter insurance information including the patient's name exactly as it appears on the insurance card or ID.
- Obtain a copy of their SS , Medicare, Medicaid cards
- When the emergency involves (potentially) a Workers Compensation claim, personnel shall ascertain the immediate supervisor's name, phone number, and business name.
- Use the billing form as a way to remind you of the data needed.
- When possible, obtain the hospital Face Sheet and attach it to the EMS Incident report along with the billing form. Any information contained in the Face Sheet documentation does not have to be duplicated on the billing form.
- If a patient is unable to sign the Assignment of Benefits forms, personnel shall explain in detail why this is not possible. If a patient is capable of signing, but refuses to sign, please indicate this as well.
- When the emergency involves a minor, the parent/guardian section of the billing form must be completed.
- Establish a rapport with the receiving facilities and gather information if applicable from them about a patient who may have been to that facility before.

We understand there are difficult situations whereby a patient is unconscious, or refuses to supply you with insurance information however; collecting any information from friends, relatives, or the scene, can greatly assist future information gathering efforts. Your efforts help the receiving facilities continue the great care you provide. The approach you take to collecting and reporting billing information ultimately effects the patients you are called to treat. 📌

Photos and announcements



Congratulations to Juan and Bridgette Reyes

Jayden Henry Reyes

Born on

April 22 , 2014



APRIL DEPARTMENT STATISTICS

Training Hours

A Shift	503
B Shift	500
C Shift	354
Total	1357

Fire Prevention Inspections

150

Ocean Rescue

Visitors	50,334
Town Ordinance Enforcements	375
Preventative Actions	321
Minor First-Aid/Stings	27
Rescues	

FIRE and EMS

FIRE Calls	60
EMS Calls	197
Transports to Hospital	138

APRIL BIRTHDAYS:

Brendon Andrews	4/2	Tim Martin	4.23
Jill Bassford	4/5	Brian Fuller	4/24
James Weber	4/11	Robbie Locy	4/24
Joseph Sekula	4/15	Max Olivier	4/25
Richard Buttery	4/19	Marc Bortot	4/26
Phil Dudley	4/11	Danny Gargiulo	4/27

APRIL ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS:

Belinda Hardy	4/22/1985	29 years
Jose Ruiz	4/20/1993	21 years
Brad Caudell	4/04/1994	20 years
Dave Burke	4/29/1996	18 years
Mark Bradshaw	4/21/1997	17 years
Derryl Bucheck	4/21/1997	17 years
Jill Bassford	4/30/2001	13 years
Damon Patrick	4/30/2001	13 years
Hector Ayala	4/18/2003	11 years
Jody Sronce	4/16/2007	7 years
Billy Layman	4/20/2009	5 years
Mark Hassell	4/02/2001	3 years

COMMENDATIONS:

Danny Dunnam, Christina Weiber, Juan Reyes

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH 2014:

January	Frank Mavigliano	July
February	Michael Marx	August
March	Joe Sekula	September
April		October
May		November
June		December

Employee of the Month— Lt. Joseph Sekula

The Palm Beach Fire Rescue Awards Committee has chosen **Lieutenant Joe Sekula** as Employee of the Month for March 2014.

Lieutenant Sekula has served in the Palm Beach Fire Rescue organization for the past 11 years, promoting to the rank of Lieutenant in 2010. He is currently assigned to the Central Fire Rescue Station on "B" shift, Truck/Rescue

1. Joe is a past recipient of the Employee of the Month for May of 2013, recognized for his consistent above and beyond work performance, as well as conducting SCBA and RIT training for all department members. Joe is well respected by his peers and supervisors for his hard work and enthusiastic attitude.

Besides fulfilling his regular job duties and responsibilities as a Lieutenant, Joe consistently goes above and beyond what is required of him at work, always requesting additional projects and assignments, offering help to his peers and participating in department functions. His passion and positive approach to the job encourages his peers to work and train hard.

Lieutenant Sekula volunteered to assist with the new hire orientation process. Joe has taught several employees EVOC training during their first two weeks, preparing them to drive the Rescues immediately upon starting shift work. In addition, Joe conducts Rapid Intervention Crew, SCBA Confidence training and radio communication training as another step in the orientation process.

Besides the many programs and projects Lieutenant Sekula has undertaken and completed, Joe recently volunteered to coordinate the complete process for bunker gear inspection/cleaning and repair. What used to be handled by 3 people, Joe completed it himself, streamlining the process, which has yielded a significantly quicker turnaround time for getting the gear back.

We highly commend Lieutenant Sekula for his excellent work and commitment to training. Lieutenant Sekula is a great asset to the Town of Palm Beach and the Department's recipient for the March 2014 Employee of the Month Award.

