

The All Hands

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

August 2015

Volume 3, Issue 8



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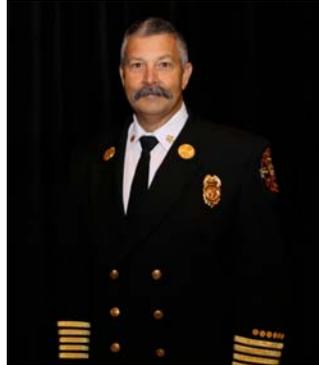
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Special points of interest:

- Latest Street Drug Trends
- Water Rescue Training
- Excerpts from Company Officer 2015

Deputy Chief's Message

By Darrel Donatto



"Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk."

I am certain that all of you have heard the slogan: "Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk." This drunk driving prevention campaign has been extremely successful, as ad campaigns go. Since launching the campaign in 1983, more than 68% of Americans report that they have tried to prevent someone from driving after drinking.

It really makes sense. If you care about someone in any way at all, you will do your best to prevent them from getting arrested and significantly impacting their life and career or even worse, killing someone else and or themselves. It takes some courage to step up and say something – but clearly it is the right thing to do. Likewise, it is the right thing to do, to step up and say something when one of your friends, your "brothers" or "sisters" as we often refer to it in the fire service, is doing the wrong thing.

Recently, there was a situation here in the workplace with an individual that escalated to point that I would consider as out of control. The result was harmful to this person and has resulted in disciplinary action. There was a tremendous amount of time that must be spent on these types of issues when they occur. There is a tremendous amount of discontent when disciplinary action, especially severe disciplinary action, must be administered. The better course of action would be for a supervisor or even a coworker to step in immediately and to have that honest conversation to stop bad behavior and to prevent employees from getting into trouble.

This month's newsletter includes an excerpt from an excellent article written by Steve PrziBOROWSKI and published in the July edition of FireRescue magazine. Chief PrziBOROWSKI does an outstanding job of pointing out that true leaders have the courage it takes to do the right thing when others around them are not doing the right thing.

The fire service prides itself on the close bonds that exist between its members. Firefighters spend a tremendous amount of time with each other, they develop close friendships and they trust and rely upon one another. However, in my opinion, those friendships and relationships are simply shallow and superficial niceties if they don't exist to the level where someone is willing to step in when one of their brothers or sisters are doing something that may result in harm to them.

You may want to debate what is right versus what is wrong – but in the workplace – right is defined by the policies and the procedures of the employer, not your personal desires. It is a good clue that anything you wouldn't do in front of the Fire Chief – you shouldn't do when he is not around.

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Administrative Update

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:

- The department has received a free standing bunker gear dryer. The dryer is housed at Station 3 to be used in conjunction with our washer extractor. The new dryer will allow for the washing and drying of gear on an as needed basis. Gear will not need to be sent out to an outside vendor for cleaning. Funding for the dryer was provided by a grant from the Firemen's Fund Insurance Company.
- Members of the Ocean Rescue division continued their winning ways at the recent USLA national competition in Daytona Beach, with several members winning overall and age group medals. This competition follows the recent regional competition in July where they placed second overall. In both of these events, ocean rescue personnel competed against much larger departments such as Fort Lauderdale and Los Angeles County. Events included swimming rescue, landline, rescue boat and paddleboard rescue. Members are spending much of their free time preparing for these competitions where they continue to excel while facing some of the best Ocean Rescue departments in the region and the country. The Department recognizes their hard work and thanks them for their dedication.
- In an effort to maximize off street parking for town employees, the Town is conducting a parking efficiency study which includes all employee parking areas. Personnel will be notified of any changes in the parking policy once this study has been completed.
- To comply with the Florida Fire Prevention code – new rule 69A-62.024, all fire stations will now be inspected annually at the same level as the inspections completed on other town occupancies. These inspections will enhance the annual fire and safety inspections conducted at each station. The Fire safety inspections will be conducted by members of the fire prevention division. This will help to ensure that all stations comply with current fire and life safety requirements.
- The National Night Out event was held on August 4th at the St. Edwards Parrish Hall. This annual national event helps to highlight Police and Public Safety programs and equipment. The department has participated in this event for several years and has always received a very positive response from the public. This year F/P Palmer was very popular with his canine CPR demonstration. Also representing the department well were: Lt. Bortot, D/E Buttery, F/F Perez, Lt. Matzen and F/P Lucas.



- Rescue 4 was damaged in a fire while in the bay at the south station. The rescue has been inspected by an insurance adjuster and a forensic electrical engineer. The department has worked

with the Risk Manager to provide an estimated cost for all items damaged on the rescue truck. We are currently awaiting a decision and final report from the insurance company to determine the outcome of the insurance claim.

- Quotes are being obtained to update the AV system in the training/public meeting room at the south station. The existing system dates from the construction of the station and is in need of replacement. The existing system will be updated to the newest technology and equipment which will result in a more efficient and user friendly system for both department training use and use by the public.



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EMS Division

By Jimmy Duane

Division Chief

Preparing for what we may encounter each shift is something we work hard at everyday here in Palm Beach Fire Rescue. From the rookie Firefighter up to the Administrative Staff, it is a high priority that we prepare ourselves for all types of incidents of every nature. The past month was an example of a wide variety of incident types. We had several EMS calls, some of which we see daily; chest pain, falls, stroke, shortness of breath, while others were not so typical; multiple patients resulting from a bicycle vs. a vehicle, a surf rescue, a severe laceration to the face and head from a gas powered K12 saw, a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head and two trauma alerts. In addition to the EMS calls the variety remained the same on the fire side. Again we ran our normal false alarm activations, many of which were caused by construction, we had two calls that were structure fires and one that was an outside generator fire in addition to persons stuck in elevators, power lines down and smoke calls caused from a variety of sources. This is an example of a typical month of calls that we experience and train on often. As expected, the crews performed phenomenal each and every time because of our training.

An important aspect of training is knowing your crew, their strengths and weaknesses and level of experience. Each station is equipped with a Laerdal mannequin and stretcher. This life like mannequin can be utilized for skills such as; intubation, cricothyrotomy, and IV therapy. Our most important call which requires great proficiency and an organized approach is patients suffering sudden cardiac arrest. Getting there quickly isn't enough; we have to work fast and efficiently to provide perfusion to the brain and heart muscle. This efficiency is best accomplished by being proficient at the pit crew method. This method affords us to perform multiple treatment modalities rapidly and competently. Defining the roles of each crew member will result in high performance CPR manually and continuously while the Autopulse is applied with minimal delay. The key to the pit crew approach is preparation prior to the call so that when you arrive, the assignments are clear and members performing their tasks are ready with their tools in hand. Many of our calls we are able to arrive on scene with an open mind so that we may assess the patient to determine the proper treatment needed, however this not the case with cardiac arrest where every second counts and every second will make a difference in the outcome of their survival. Each shift we meet during our morning meeting to discuss the many happenings of the day. During this discussion daily assignments should be given so that each person knows their place before we get to the patient. Defining our roles ahead of time makes the resuscitation go much smoother. Each member of the team slides into his or her position without being told and each step of the resuscitation is completed automatically. Knowing your role is important, having the space to perform that role is equally important. As soon as it is determined that a patient is in cardiac arrest, quickly move them to a position that affords you the room to properly perform your tasks. Discussing this approach followed up by a short training session everyday will increase proficiency, knowledge, and the efficiency of the crew all with the end goal of improving patient survivability and quality of life.



Over the past several months we have not had any adverse effects due to drug shortages. Unfortunately the newest drug affected is a very common medication to us, Epinephrine 1:10,000. The supplies are predicted to be out until mid-September, however possibly earlier. We are currently on a waiting list and actively trying to acquire this every day. Because of this shortage, extra supplies will not be carried in the stations and if the need arises, there is a bare minimum in the supply closet.

The new stretcher order is on track and set to deliver in mid-September. We will continue to use the loaner stretcher we received from Stryker, which is on Rescue 99 for as long as possible. One of the older stretchers is currently being mounted in the Humvee in the event a patient requires movement from an area inaccessible by our Rescues such as extreme flooding or storm debris. Lieutenant Reyes is updating procedure 324, Stryker Stretchers to reflect the changes with the new stretchers. This procedure will be distributed prior to the delivery of the new units.



Training and Safety Division

By Dave Burke

Division Chief

The two week indoctrination training for the six newly hired Fire Rescue employees was a success. Day one was filled with the necessities of Human Resource orientation; however the rest of the week saw more action as the probationers were outfitted with gear and instructions for personal protection. A climb of the 75 foot ladder aboard L97 started the day of truck, engine and TRT equipment familiarization. Another day was well spent learning and practicing vehicle and machinery extrication. Cutting up cars without anyone really being injured is always fun! The first week ended with SCBA confidence course and rapid intervention crew lecture and practice.



The second week of indoctrination started with driving and maneuvering emergency vehicles, radios communication and mayday training. The probationers were led through high rise firefighting and hose management, bailout training, and ended the week with emergency medical training with an emphasis on PBFM protocols with specifics of what is expected by our Medical Director, Dr. Kenneth Schepke. Special thanks to all of the instructors who shared their knowledge and established a quality standard for our new employees to follow: BC Dudley, Lt. Marx, Lt. Matzen, Lt. Mustelier, Lt. Bassford, Lt. Sekula, and Lt. Bonfante.

The last week of July and first week of August brought water rescue & survival training. Driver/Engine Paramedic Frank Mavigliano has taken this on as his project and couldn't have done a finer job. He developed an incredible video series that starts with the basics and navigates the students through local knowledge and history. The series ends with the student gaining confidence and mariner savvy. Frank led the hands-on portion of the training with help from Ocean Rescue's Craig Pollack. The Palm Beach Bath & Tennis' generosity made the perfect venue for this type of training. Local involvement helps to ensure the safety and survival of others and is always appreciated. Again, thank you to Frank for his engaging attitude toward water rescue & survival training.

In the month of August, shift personnel will get back to the basics with NFPA 1410 drill, evolution #1. This drill is scheduled for August 17-22, and is designed as the most basic of fire attack drills. Fire officers are encouraged to practice this drill several times. Live by the motto, "Don't practice until you get it right, practice until you can't do it wrong".

Ocean Rescue

By Craig Pollock

Lifeguard Supervisor

Long hot Summer days in July continued to be the norm at both Phipps Park and Mid-Town Municipal Beach throughout the month. Attendance has stayed busy as beach goers' flock to the water to get some relief from the South Florida heat. The large amounts of seaweed that we had in the month of June have finally cleared up making for ideal swimming conditions. The Town of Palm Beach competition team had an outstanding month in July, first the team competed in The Ft. Lauderdale Relays in which they won beating out several local lifesaving agencies. In mid-July the team went to Flagler Beach Florida and competed in The United States Lifesaving Associations Southeast Regional Championships, where they placed second amongst 22 other lifeguard agencies throughout Florida.



Battalion Update - Power Saw

By Sean Baker

Battalion Chief

The power saw is a critical piece of power equipment that we must maintain properly so that it will work as designed when needed. It is one of those tools that can make or break an incident. It can make the difference by allowing firefighters to control the building by facilitating interior operations; however, it can also break an incident by causing an unnecessary injury or failing to start. Saws go well beyond fire ventilation. Power saws have a place in forcible entry and rapid intervention team operations to "soften the building." A power saw and a skilled team tasked with softening the building can take proactive measures to remove boarded and barred windows before firefighters find themselves trapped. Waiting until a member becomes trapped to start operating may be too late.

The proper use, care and maintenance of our power saws are critical to the success of safe forcible entry operations. Power saws are our "go to" tools in many operations on the fire ground. They are rapid and efficient and have the ability to cut through various different types of materials at once. They also afford firefighters the energy saved by not having to manually smash or cut through a building's exterior or interior finishes.

There are several key dangers relating to their use:

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Deputy Chief's Message (con't)

From page 1

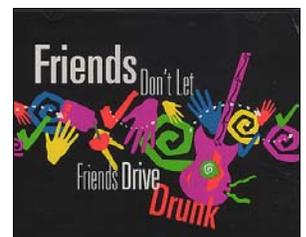
So why is it so hard to step in when others are doing the wrong thing? Well – partly because people are more concerned with being "liked" than they are with taking care of those they supposedly care about – those they call their brothers and sisters. Other times, it is because people lack courage – the courage to do the right thing even if it isn't popular. If you want to be a great leader – you must have the courage to lead, to be the lone voice when others shrink from adversity, to do the right thing when others around you are not doing the right thing.

I absolutely hate when one of our own gets into a situation where they do something that is so egregious it ultimately causes them harm. Seldom is it the case that that harmful situation was the first time they crossed the line. More likely it is the case that their behaviors started small and over time escalated to the point of crossing the line; and I would bet that lots of brothers and sisters watched, or maybe even joined in, as they slowly moved closer and closer to harm. On the fireground – we would never sit idly by and knowingly watch one of our coworkers get themselves into a situation that could harm them. Likewise, we should never do the same while in the station.

As Prziborowski points out in his article: "In most situations that rise to the level of progressive discipline, it is not uncommon to find out that the company officer was keenly aware of the inappropriate behavior that was going on and either chose to look the other way or possibly even participated in the behavior." We have great Lieutenants and Battalion Chiefs, but as I think back on the serious disciplinary cases over the past three years – there have been one or two of these cases here, where the company officer could have intervened early and the situation would have turned out entirely different.

I would hope that every member of this organization would act with courage. That they would step in and stop the people they care about from getting into trouble. Our slogan should be "Firefighters Don't Let Firefighters Get Into Trouble."

I am so very thankful that I had a great company officer [Captain Dempsey Hamilton] in my early career. His leadership was invaluable to my career. He cared about me more than he care about being liked by me – and because he cared about me, he never let me do anything that would jeopardize or harm my career. I encourage you to do the right thing by your coworkers and to show them that you really care by stepping in right away and not letting them get in trouble – that is being a true friend.



Latest Street Drug Trends: FLAKKA and Heroin laced with Fentanyl

By **Kenneth A Scheppke, MD, FAAEM**

Medical Director

A growing trend is occurring in Florida with regard to illegal street drug use. The first is the use of a drug called FLAKKA. This is the latest derivative of a class of chemicals known on the street as "Bath Salts". These drugs are all generally related to drug synthesized in the lab called MDPV whose full name is methylenedioxypyrovalerone. MDPV was developed in the 1960s by pharmaceutical giant Boehringer Ingelheim. This drug and a related drug called mephedrinone whose full name is 4methylmethcathinone, are part of a group of synthetic psychoactive drugs having effects similar to amphetamines and cocaine with some hallucinatory properties. These drugs are known as norepinephrine and dopamine re-uptake inhibitors. Both norepinephrine and dopamine are excitatory neurotransmitters that lead patients to experience a variety of symptoms depending on whether the dose of the drug is low or high.

In low dose, these drugs can produce increased stimulation and alertness, heightened senses, euphoria and increased concentration with elevated motor tone. In larger doses patients may experience muscle spasms, twitching, seizures, elevated body temperature, delusions, paranoia, muscle breakdown (rhabdomyolysis) and ultimately Excited Delirium Syndrome (ExDS) and death. The parent compounds have been outlawed by the DEA but what the drug dealers have been steadily doing is making small chemical modifications to these parent drugs to create new compounds that are at least temporarily not illegal until the DEA catches on and adds the new chemical compound to the list of illegal substances. The latest result is the drug with the street name FLAKKA. It is just as dangerous as its predecessors and can be a major cause of ExDS.

As with all street drugs, concentration, dose, purity and what the drug is laced with are all completely variable so the user has no idea how much or even what they are taking. It is a form of Russian Roulette and they may inadvertently take too high a dose and end up with a life threatening condition.

Another trend locally and nationally is the resurgence of injectable narcotic use. Traditionally heroin is what has been injected and some parts of Florida have seen a 400% increase in heroin usage. Possibly related to the successful crackdown on the illegal pill mills, heroin resurgence has been accompanied by a new and disturbing trend of lacing the heroin with Fentanyl. Fentanyl is 100 times more potent than the commonly used morphine and when mixed with heroin can produce a very dangerous life threatening respiratory depression.

The new mixtures of narcotics seen locally and statewide have had a disturbing trend where the usual dose of Narcan is not enough to reverse the overdose. One EMS agency reported at the last State EMS Meeting that up to 8 mg of Narcan is sometimes needed to reverse this new mix of street narcotics. It is also well known that for some overdoses Narcan will wear off prior to the injectable street drug and respiratory depression will recur. Repeated doses of Narcan over the course of many hours may be required.

How we deal with these two new trends is already covered in our protocols. Any suspected FLAKKA overdose will be handled using our excited delirium/violent patient protocol. And, for the narcotic overdose, we will continue to use Narcan. Be aware that Narcan may fail to fully reverse the respiratory depression caused by the street drug. Additional doses of Narcan and/or ventilatory support with BVM/Combitube/King Tube etc. or ETT may become necessary with this new more potent street mix.

A push to allow police and family members of substance abusers to carry and administer Narcan has been going on nationwide. Florida is the latest state to approve and sign a law allowing physicians to prescribe Narcan to family members, police and other first responders to be used in suspected overdose situations. The Emergency Treatment for Opioid Overdose is a new law just signed by Governor Scott on June 10, 2015. It is designed to provide significant Good Samaritan legal protection to all involved in the program, but it is too new to fully assess its impact on this latest epidemic of drug usage.

You may in the near future see patients who have been treated by family, friends and/or police with Narcan. The patient may be awake and refusing to go to the hospital when only moments before they were near death from overdose. Please remember that drug intoxication makes a patient incapacitated as far as ability to refuse transport. Also, Narcan may wear off prior to the street drug and the life threat will return. All of these patients must go to the closest full service emergency department for further care and monitoring.

Water Rescue Training—Back to the Basics

By Frank Mavigliano

Driver Engineer

This summer the annual water rescue training for Palm Beach Fire Rescue was conducted July 27th through August 7th at The Bath and Tennis Club in Palm Beach. First and foremost thank you to Gene Paul, General Manager of the Bath & Tennis Club, for his generosity in allowing PBFR to utilize the facilities of the club for the water rescue training. The crews felt very welcomed by the staff.

With the assistance of Craig Pollock from Ocean Rescue and his staff, we were able to complete training for 85% of the department in basic water rescue skills. 2 ½ to 3 hours of hands on water training coupled with a 3 hour water rescue training DVD to supplement additional skills and information were used for training this year.

The “Back To The Basics” water rescue started with a swim skills assessment. The assessment is the same test used by Palm Beach Police during their recruitment test after the agility course. It consists of a 30 seconds holding breath underwater, 100 meter swim, 5 minutes of treading water, retrieval of a 10 lb. weight from 10 feet of water, and a 45 foot underwater swim. 82 % of personnel successfully completed every portion of the swim assessment to an acceptable level.

After completion of the swim assessment, personnel don bunker gear with an SCBA and simulated falling off a boat dock by entering into the pool. Basic survival skills were discussed both wearing and SCBA with bunker gear and just bunker gear if time allowed. Many of the fire academy standards course no longer teaches this skill in their course due to new standards in the Florida firefighting curriculum.

The final skills consisted of rescue tube and rescue board passive and active rescues skills with evolutions at the beach. Some crews were fortunate to have some choppy water which made the training a bit more realistic to water conditions that would occur for a water rescue.

Overall the water rescue training was very basic and simplified to accommodate our new personnel and refresh seasoned personnel. Many expressed their desire to improve upon their deficiencies



Firefighter Chris Lucas tests the buoyance of bunker gear



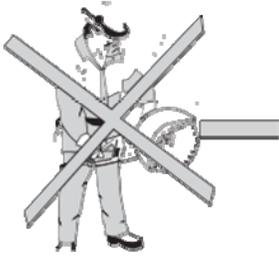
Surf Rescue training with paddleboard and rescue tube.

Water
Rescue
Training
Makes A Big
Splash This
Summer

Battalion Update (con't)

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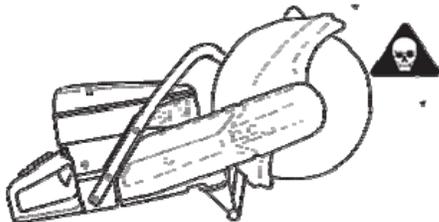
- Move the blade slowly forwards and backwards to achieve a small contact area between the blade and the material to be cut. This reduces the temperature of the blade and ensures effective cutting.
- Feed down the machine in line with the blade. Pressure from the side can damage the blade and is very dangerous.



WARNING! Kickback can happen very suddenly and violently; kicking the power cutter and cutting blade back at the user. If this happens when the cutting blade is moving it can cause very serious, even fatal injuries. It is vital you understand what causes kickback and that you can avoid it by taking care and using the right working technique

What is kickback?

- The word kickback is used to describe the sudden reaction that causes the power cutter and cutting blade to be thrown from an object when the upper quadrant of the blade, known as the kickback zone, touches an object.
- Never start to cut with the upper quadrant of the blade as shown in the figure, also known as the kickback zone.



- A boxer stance with your feet 18 to 24 inches apart works best.
- Always cut at maximum speed.
- Stand at a comfortable distance from the work piece.
- Take care when inserting the blade in an existing cut.
- Be alert to movement of the work piece or anything else that can occur, which could cause the cut to close and pinch the blade.
- Do not push a saw beyond the limits of its design or purpose.
- Never use a saw in a flammable atmosphere. The saw's motor or operation may ignite flammable liquids or gases.
- Always operate with full protection and protect your eyes.
- Never carry a power tool, raise, or lower a tool that is running.

Firefighters should be very familiar with these rules and should also seek further training to become proficient with the types of saws we carry on our trucks. We should become proficient with each saw and practice often so that when the need arises you are familiar with the advantages and disadvantages of each tool. The department will be conducting training in the future to highlight the versatility of these saws. Hurricane glass, metal security bars, concrete breaching, and roof vent operations are a few of the options company officers need to consider when performing their pre-fire size ups..



Fire Prevention

By **TIMOTHY POMPOS**

Division Chief

In the month of July, the Fire Prevention and Life Safety Division completed 233 fire prevention activities with the assistance of Fire Operations shift personnel. Fire Prevention would like to thank all Company Officers for completing their assigned fire hydrant testing inspections in a professional and timely manner.

A blocked Fire Department Connection.



This is a simple illustration of why annual fire company inspections are important. A landscaping project that added a decorative hedge inadvertently resulted in blocking of a Fire Department Connection. Due to the fact that it's just a small hedge, no zoning or building permit was required. Therefore, there was no plan review that might have caught the item before the vegetation was planted. A property manager cannot be expected to know everything about fire protection equipment. The landscaper may not have recognized the functions of the FDC and the importance of unobstructed access.

Furthermore, the protective caps normally installed over the threads may be missing, making the threads vulnerable to damage which would not allow proper fire hose connection to the FDC. By conducting annual visits by the Fire Company Officers, firefighters, and fire inspectors it helps the property manager and landscaper find workable solutions to keep the fire protection devices accessible for us.

The Fire Prevention Division would like to remind Company Officers while completing their annual fire company inspections that if they come across any serious fire code violation that needs immediate corrections, they shall report the infractions through their chain of the command promptly. Assistant Fire Marshal Michael Curcio or I will address the occupant's violations until they are corrected. In closing, we like to commend all Company Officers for their excellent work turning in their assigned Company Fire Inspections reports on time.

Photo Ops



Future Firefighter Retired Battalion Chief Pete Codispoti's son



Ladder 97, B shift rescuing someone that was stuck in a tree trimming truck 40' up.



Ladder 97/ Rescue 97, B shift foam training with the CAFS system.

Excerpts from “Company Office 2015– Recognizing the responsibilities and duties that are part of being a company officer”

By Steve Prziborowski
Fire-Rescue Magazine
July 1, 2015

The Designated Adult

Of all the positions or ranks within the fire service, I'll be the first to say that company officer is probably the most challenging. This is primarily because it requires someone to change his mentality. As a firefighter or engineer, it was your job to think at the task level. Now, as a company officer, you're required to think at the tactical level and sometimes at the strategic level depending on what is required of you in your department and what the situation may entail.

You've probably heard the term "buddy to boss," which was the title of a book written by retired Division Chief Chase Sargent. That term, "buddy to boss," is still one of the biggest problems facing today's fire service. Don't believe me? Take a look at any fire service e-mail newsletter; pay attention to social media stories related to firefighters and inappropriate behavior; or do an Internet search on a term such as "firefighter discipline" and you'll find thousands of hits for fire service disciplinary situations related to personnel at the rank of firefighter or engineer who either are or have been in trouble for inappropriate behavior.

In a majority of these disciplinary situations, there is a common theme: a leaderless group, a lack of a supervisor (or boss) actually doing his job, or the lack of the person filling the rank of company officer being able and willing to be the designated adult. Being the designated adult means that the supervisor is the one who actually says the appropriate things when necessary.

It's relatively easy to think you'll be a

great company officer after you pass the promotional exam. It's not as easy to actually do your job and do it well. Doing the job well means being the one who stops inappropriate, unethical, illegal, unsafe, potentially offensive, wrong, or just plain stupid behavior.

This is where many company officers drop the ball. Don't believe me? Take the time to research some of those situations that have occurred in the fire service, especially the ones on duty at the firehouse, and I bet you'll rarely see that the firefighter or engineer acted on his own or acted in a vacuum. I will also bet that you will rarely see that nobody in the entire firehouse was aware of what was going on, including the company officer. In most situations that rise to the level of progressive discipline, it is not uncommon to find out that the company officer was keenly aware of the inappropriate behavior that was going on and either chose to look the other way or possibly even participated in the behavior.

When a supervisor sees or hears something that may be inappropriate, unethical, illegal, unsafe, potentially offensive, or wrong, he really only has four choices:

- 1. Do nothing.
- 2. Jump in and participate.
- 3. Jump in and participate and take the inappropriate behavior to the next level.
- 4. Stop the inappropriate behavior immediately.

Each of the choices has good and bad consequences. Let's briefly talk about each of the options.

Option 1: Do nothing and you condone the behavior or, as I heard a fire chief say during a recent speech, "What you permit, you promote." If you say or hear something and you do nothing, you demonstrate to those around you that you condone the behavior, whether you agree or disagree. Even worse, you could allow someone else to suffer just because you did not want to say something.

Remember, you have to live with yourself, and nobody said doing the right thing was ever going to be easy. I assume many chose to do nothing when faced with inappropriate behavior for a number of reasons: It could make them look bad as the boss or supervisor for having something like that occur on their watch; it could get their buddy or subordinate in trouble, and maybe even cost them their career or cause havoc on their home life; and it would require a lot of paperwork and discussions with their bosses, who may or may not support them or believe them.

Options 2 and 3: Jump in and participate, or even participate and take it to the next level, and you also condone the behavior. You also put yourself into a situation where, in addition to the firefighter or engineer you are supervising, you could be disciplined. Jumping in and participating is also a common response by company officers or supervisors because they are showing those around them that they are still "one of the guys," they want to be liked, they don't want to rock the boat, they don't want to be the killjoy, and they didn't forget where they came from.

However, choosing option 1, 2, or 3 does not stop that inappropriate behavior; it only condones or permits it. Even worse, it more than likely perpetuates the behavior and will

Excerpts from Company Officer 2015 (con't)

probably take it to the next level in the future because nobody said it was inappropriate. It also puts the fire chief, the department, and the jurisdiction that employs you at risk for liability and lawsuits.

Option 4: Stop the inappropriate behavior and you run the risk of no longer being seen as part of the team or as someone who doesn't like to have fun. However, by stopping the inappropriate behavior, your actions may save not only your career but also the careers of your personnel.

Steve Prziborowski faced a situation where an officer chose Option 3. [Read the situation presented here: <http://www.firefighternation.com/article/command-and-leadership/company-officer-2015>]

With the captain choosing to not be the designated adult, he forced me to have to tell everyone at the table that I didn't want to ever hear that type of talk again and that talk like that was disrespectful and inappropriate and would not be tolerated. I then told the captain that we needed to speak in the office.

At first, the captain wasn't getting it. He was a bit apprehensive and hostile, trying to make me feel like the bad guy for stopping the conversation. He tried to say I had forgotten where I had come from, that I wasn't allowing them to have their free speech, and that I should have just left the room. After letting him vent a bit, I took the time to pull out the department policies that related to the situation, particularly harassment, and tried to correlate the actions I had just witnessed to the policies, as well as to what was expected. My goal was not to hammer him with discipline. I wanted to remind him of what his role and responsibilities were as a supervisor, which include being a mentor, training and educating his personnel, doing the right thing, being a leader, being the boss, setting a positive example, and not tolerating inappropriate behavior. I had to remind him he was no longer the buddy but the boss and, as supervisors, we have a responsibility to provide a harassment- and discrimination-free environment.

I tried to let him know that I wasn't just doing this because I was trying to stick up for the people they were criticizing; I was also speaking up to help him save his career and keep him out of trouble. At that point, I think he was starting to get it. I asked him if his career was worth losing, or at least being tarnished, over some comments at the kitchen table. I wasn't saying that as a threat, and I made that clear. I was trying to mentor and educate him and prompt him for success.

Taking Care of Your Personnel

If a company officer or chief officer were to ask most firefighters or engineers what they wanted from them, I bet one of the top items would be to "take care of us." While the opinion of what that actually means can vary drastically from person to person, the key points should be that you do your best to ensure they go home safely at the end of their shift; try to be flexible with their needs during the shift (within reason); do your best to assist them with their career development; do your best to train, educate, and mentor them; prepare and challenge them to be the best they can be; don't settle for mediocrity or incompetence; treat them fairly and impartially; and treat them with courtesy and respect.

If you truly want to take care of your personnel, this will also require you to be on top of your game and to be the best you can be. As the supervisor, or the parental figure as some may say, you need to be that rock, that solid leader who is consistently doing the right thing and doing what is best for the department, the individuals, and the communities we are fortunate to protect and serve.

As his boss, and a friend, I told him it was also my responsibility to ensure my personnel stayed out of trouble and did the right things. I shared some stories I had read or heard about from around the United States where supervisors had been terminated, suspended, or demoted for allowing similar types of inappropriate behavior to occur while they did nothing to stop the behavior. I also shared stories that resulted in very negative public relations for the departments and personnel involved.

After about the third case study, he seemed to get it and realize I wasn't trying to throw him under the bus but I was trying to prevent the bus from getting anywhere near him in the first place.

JULY DEPARTMENT STATISTICS

Training Hours	
A Shift	581
B Shift	588
C Shift	621
Total	1790
Fire Prevention Inspections	233
Ocean Rescue Visitors	19,775
Town Ordinance Enforcements	101
Preventative Actions	76
Beach Closure due to lightning	7
FIRE and EMS	
FIRE Calls	83
EMS Calls	124
Transports to Hospital	71

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS:

Christopher Seay	8/02
Kyle Vander Plaats	8/02
Chase Davis	8/10

AUGUST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS:

Dennis Wytrykush	8/85	30 years
Danny Dunnam	8/96	19 years
Caesar Mustelier	8/08	7 years
Timothy Martin	8/13	2 years
Juan Reyes	8/13	2 years

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH 2015:

January	Oscar Geerken	July	Mark Myhre
February	Mark Bradshaw	August	
March	Don Taylor	September	
April	Tim Pompos	October	
May	Brian Matzen	November	
June	Danny Garguilo	December	

Employee of the Month—Mark Myhre



Lifeguard Myhre has proudly served as part of the Palm Beach Ocean Rescue organization for just three months, but has been in the business for over thirty-five years. Mark brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to our organization from Lake Worth Ocean Rescue where he retired as Chief Lifeguard after twenty-two years.

Well respected by his supervisor and peers, Mark is described as, “A mentor to the whole unit”. Mark’s supervisor states, “Since Mark’s arrival, he has single-handedly improved morale through inspiration, work ethic and positive attitude”. Myhre has been credited with rallying the Ocean Rescue department and coaching a competition team of lifeguards. They compete in rigorous rescue games at local, regional and national lifesaving competitions against other municipalities. During recent months, the team has been building achievements and Mark is credited as the driving force of their success.

Mark was selected as Captain of the Ocean Rescue competition team due to his dedication and commitment to teammates. In July, at the United States Lifesaving Regional Tournament in Flagler Beach, Florida, the team competed against much larger lifeguard squads. Our team astonished competitors and spectators alike by finishing 2nd against 22 other agencies across the state!

Advancing to the National Lifesaving Championships in Daytona Beach, Florida, at 61 years young, Mark amazed others by winning individual medals at the national level. He earned three gold, one silver and two bronze. Myhre also coached our squad to a 3rd place finish in the Nation when they competed in the Team Line Pull event. These team and individual achievements are truly remarkable, especially noting the short time since the team was formed.

Reporting early to set up the beach each morning, Mark organizes team training and inspires others through motivational actions and attitude. He happily helps to improve their skills and conditioning. Mark makes others around him feel important and valued.

Lifeguard Myhre is commended for his passion in helping others and his dedication to the safety and survival of Town residents and their visitors. His incredible talent to lead and inspire others makes him a great asset to the Town of Palm Beach and the deserving recipient for the July 2015 Employee of the Month Award.

