



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Not Everyone Goes Home 2-3

Hazardous Materials Week 3

Connecticut Chapter CPU 2009 Donation to the Connecticut Fire Academy 4

Ten Steps to a Great Little Exercise 5-8

Instructor's Dispatch

A Newsletter of the Commission on Fire Prevention & Control

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CFDIA Awards



Chet Haber, Director Hartford County Regional Fire School and Jim Carroll, Program Manager at the CT Fire Academy

Congratulations are in order for Jim Carroll who was the recipient of the Harry H. Kelly Award at the Connecticut Fire Department Instructors Association Annual Dinner Meeting, on October 7, 2009, in Rocky Hill. Jim was recognized for his efforts to expand CFDIA membership through improved educational programs and offerings. Also, Chet Haber, Director of the Hartford County Regional Fire School was selected as the recipient of the Richard "Dick" Sylvia Instructor of the Year Award for his tireless efforts associated with the Regional Fire School improvement plan.

Perpetual plaques recognizing all past CFDIA award recipients have been procured and will be hung here at the Academy in the near future. Congratulations again to Jim and Chet!

Not Everyone Goes Home

Presented by Chief Billy Goldfeder



Chief Billy Goldfeder

*“Good leadership
requires you to
surround yourself
with people of
diverse perspectives
who can disagree
with you without
fear of retaliation”.*

*Doris Kearns
Goodwin*

The Seminar Series *Not Everyone Goes Home* was held Friday October 9, 2009. The seminar was presented by Chief Billy Goldfeder of the Loveland-Symmes, Ohio Fire Department. Chief Goldfeder is the first Seminar Series speaker to return to the CFA for a second engagement which is due to requests from the fire service to have him back.

Chief Billy Goldfeder presented to the attendees, through video, audio and "**WAKE UP**" lecture, an in-depth review of specific timely fireground events and most specifically, the lessons learned so that these incidents (and those involved) don't ever become forgotten. This very personal, high energy, direct and frank class (updated regularly) is professionally and respectfully presented, provided the attendees an excellent opportunity to apply the lessons learned to their own departments...and themselves, when returning home... potentially avoiding "history tragically repeating itself".

Continued on page 3

Not Everyone Goes Home

Presented by Chief Billy Goldfeder

Continued from page 2

The goal of this class is to have participants leave more knowledgeable, educated and informed; but most importantly, thinking hard about their role and their department's responsibility in fire and rescue operations. These lessons learned, and related case studies, can help insure that similar problems are not repeated again at your department.

EVERYONE GOES HOME? Some firefighters do and some don't... (This seminar will help them to understand why). Program disk available in the Bookstore....

Future 2009 Seminar Series

Friday
December 4, 2009
Think Like an
Incident Commander
Deputy Chief
Thomas Dunne

2009 Hazardous Material Week



Cameo/Marplot/ALOHA Class

Picture taken by Program Manager Jim Carroll

The staff of the Connecticut Fire Academy by way of the generosity of the Department of Environmental Protection and State Emergency Response Commission thru use of federal grant funding for Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning were pleased to offer the 2009 Hazardous Materials Week tuition free. Those classes included: HazMat IQ, Hazardous Materials Awareness Operational/WMD Train-the-Trainer, Cameo/Marplot/ALOHA and Advanced HazMat Life Support.

*"If you don't
want to grow
old—you've
got to die
young".*

*By Alan V.
Brunacini*

"If a fire is an emergency to the fire department, who would you call?"

By Alan V. Brunacini

Connecticut Chapter CPCU 2009 Donation to the Connecticut Fire Academy

Presented by Alyce DeAngelo, CPCU, API



Alyce DeAngelo, CPCU, API and Jeff Morrisette, State Fire Administrator

On October 8, 2009, a check for \$1,000 was presented to Jeff Morrisette, State Fire Administrator from Alyce DeAngelo of the Good Works Committee Connecticut Chapter, CPCU to be used to purchase a Wireless Presenter's Mouse for each of the nine (9) classrooms at the Academy. Alyce stated that "We are proud to support the work that you do in training the men and women of this state, who put their lives on the line for us on a daily basis".

The Connecticut Chapter CPCU Good Works Committee is a not-for-profit organization comprised of insurance professionals that has a long, proud tradition of promoting excellence in education, ethics and leadership.

Ten Steps to a Great Little Exercise



If you want to have a successful exercise, and we all do, then it has to be designed, hence the FEMA phrase: “exercise design” course. However, I like the phrase “exercise development” better, for design denotes engineering and engineers are not the most people-friendly folks and exercises are all about people. Exercise development, on the other hand, alludes to a natural growth process and to something we call progress, and those are the keys to having a great little exercise. Great big exercises should be built from and on the foundation of our great little exercises. It ain’t rocket science, but it is logical. So here are the ten steps that I have found to be the most efficient and effective keys to successful and fun exercises.

1. **Never bring in a canned exercise**, one of those designed by some consultant or other outside entity. Remember, it’s not about “design” but about “development.” However, after your team has done a series of self-developed, home-grown exercises, they might want to be “tested” by outsiders with their “canned exercises,” but that’s a much later step in the whole, long exercise process and should never, ever be a first, second, or third step in the process.
2. **Explain these few terms, early on, to all potential players: drill, tabletop exercise, functional exercise, and field/full-scale exercise.** Everyone can come up with on-line official definitions for these, but I have found confusion reigns because of non-technical use of these similarly-sounding terms. I like to simplify things and say, “for our purposes,” we will use these words with these definitions.

Drill: An in-house, agency only, practice of specific skills. These are practice sessions for agency employees performing day-to-day duties. Remember, there’s no use exercising if agency employees can’t perform their jobs well.

Tabletop Exercise: Around a real table, maybe with a few props, gather all involved response agency reps to do a walk through of how the exercise should work out. Design flaws, timing sequences, enhancements, etc., should all become evident to these skilled responders.

Functional Exercise: We will work on one ‘function,’ say communication. We might test different radio systems to see if they are compatible. We might check on the digital/analog interface problems. We might see if data is flowing horizontally between agencies, vertically inter-agency, and between levels of government. It is possible to test several critical functions simultaneously.

“Take the process seriously—not yourself”.

By Alan V. Brunacini

Continued on page 6





“Do not think you are communicating just because you are talking...there must be some information exchange “sign” that the message got through”.

By Alan V. Brunacini



Ten Steps to a Great Little Exercise

Continued from page 5

Field or Full-Scale Exercise: Far down the line, much later than one usually finds them, should be our local, full-scale, field exercises. Far too often we see failed exercises (this never should happen!) because our—or some—simple ten-step process wasn’t used and people get discouraged; time, energy and money were wasted; and no one comes to play next time because some previous exercise experience was so, so bad..

3. **This is not a “test.”** Get rid of the old para-military words and concepts that came from the old “civil defense” era when the Department of Defense was the lead “exercise” agency. Tests only work in agencies with chains of command, uniforms, badges, perhaps weapons, and where punishment is a management tool. We who love developing exercises to improve performance in use of a different vocabulary.

Practice: Not a test, but an opportunity to practice those skills needed to succeed during emergency incidents in a controlled, well-developed environment.

Coaches or mentors: Not evaluators but skilled professionals who are there to interact, coach and help us get better at what we do. We should have our best people be coaches, for they need the “practice” the least.

Learning: Not grades from disinterested evaluators, but help, insights and training opportunities facilitated by well-meaning, well-skilled supervisor types.

Fun: Not funny, not giggly fun, just good, clean fun. A feeling of a job well done. Excellence. Personal growth. Pride.

4. **Get the right players on the team.** Hey, this is your town, your hospital, your fire department and your community. You know who the right players are. Official policy may say it has to be position holders, suits, or elected officials. Common sense and experience says it’s STP, the “same ten people.” Agencies have to be represented by people who can get the best participation and response from their agencies. All agencies that will be involved, as “lead” agencies in a real incident absolutely, will have to come to the table. This means getting the right players takes good time management skills, face-to-face meetings, and some politicking. You need to do what it takes to get as close as you can get to an All Star Team.

Continued on page 7

Ten Steps to a Great Little Exercise

Continued from page 6

5. **Use a local problem that really, truly needs solving.** This is the reason canned exercises hardly ever work, for they are designed around someone else's, usually a consultant's, favorite problem. Your development team, with reps of the key lead response agencies and organizations (be it school, co-op, railroad, hospital, etc.), has to find a real, local, serious problem that needs their attention. That way it's an easy sell. Remember, good exercises need to be aggressively marketed to agency personnel and the public.
6. **Give everyone some real work to do.** A key to good management is the realization that everyone comes to work to "work." Boredom may kill more exercises than anything else. You have to keep good agency folks busy: fire, law, EMS, public works and public health personnel don't have time to waste. Neither do personnel from volunteer organizations, private industry, schools, etc. If a particular functional group will have no role to play, either don't bring them to the table, or find some active and necessary "support role" for them to perform. But never, ever, have good hard working responders just sitting around!
7. **Have a short and sweet debrief,** that day or soon thereafter. Have the lead agency go first, then next most involved agency or organization. What went well, what needs improvement? I have found they'll be harder on themselves than any IC would have been. Remember, it's about developing a great team to solve real problems, not about fault finding, grades, punishment, etc.
8. **Have a BBQ!** Seriously, I learned this from a pipeline company that wanted to make sure that all the players left feeling that a good time was had by all. They did it all across the state. They told me it was done through their community relations department and was the best use of money their safety people could think of. Another hour of stress free team development was added to every exercise. I have seen pizza parties work well too. I have seen homemade cookies do wonders at a debrief. Feed them and they will come—and they will stay!
9. **Communicate well, often, and over many media.** Your players, and their people, are all busy folks. After all, you don't want slackers, right? So tell them what's going on, ask them if they want e-mail alerts, text messages, interoffice mail, real mail, phone calls, etc. Or all of the above! Have someone dedicated to exercise-related communications, probably an incident commo type or an office support person who cares. This is a key function and you need a reliable, self-directed person to drive this basic exercise operation.



***"Roofs are really pretty dumb—they shed ladder pipe water just like it was rain."
By Alan V. Brunacini***



Continued on page 8



“The same building features that keep the elements out (walls, windows, roof, etc.), also keep the products of combustion in.”

*By Alan V.
Brunacini*



Ten Steps to a Great Little Exercise

Continued from page 7

10. **Let people know what’s going on.** By people I mean other agencies, people at the state, the feds, the public. Use your ICS PIO types, after all, they should care, they should have the requisite skills, and they will be the ones doing the public relations work and the public information dissemination during the exercise.

Public support for response activities is critical for long term success and will be especially effective if a full-scale field exercise is imminent.

Naturally there are more things you can do, but if you just don’t forget any of these ten simple steps you will be far more successful than if you just wing it or use an exercise design system that does not fit your hometown, local needs.

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We're on the web at: www.ct.gov/cfpc

Agency Mission

To prevent or mitigate the effects of fire and disasters, either natural or manmade, on the citizens of the State of Connecticut. This objective shall be accomplished through the development and delivery of state-of-the-art educational programs designed to meet nationally recognized standards, certification of individuals to such standards and maintenance of up-to-date resources for use by fire service personnel, public educators and other first responders.