

Instructor's Dispatch

A Newsletter of the Commission on Fire Prevention & Control

2010 Seminar Series: Fireground Safety for the Company Officer



Battalion Chief Forest F. Reeder, Jr.

For 2010 the very popular Connecticut Fire Academy Seminar Series continues to bring nationally known fire service speakers to Connecticut. Again this year the scheduled presenters will engage and inform their audiences with relevant and thought provoking deliveries.

The next Seminar Series' program is titled *Fireground Safety for the Company Officer* and is scheduled for Friday, February 26, 2010. The seminar will be presented by Battalion Chief Forest F. Reeder Jr. Chief Reeder will discuss how the company officer has key responsibilities in ensuring operational safety during fireground operations.

Chief Reeder began his fire service career in 1979. He currently serves as Battalion Chief /Director of Training & Safety with the Pleasantview, IL Fire Protection District and is the Director of Training for Southwest United Fire Districts.

You and ISO Seminar

The IAFC Volunteer and Combination Officers Section and Insurance Services Office are presenting a one day seminar *You and ISO: What every fire department should know and understand about ISO in your community* at the Connecticut Fire Academy in Windsor Locks, CT on January 30, 2010.

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Commission on Fire
Prevention & Control



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"The hardest thing in the world to open is a closed mind".

A Fresh Look at Good Chemical Preparedness

I am as guilty as anyone of being tired of planning, preparing, and training. After all, we've all been doing this for decades. Right? Some of us had lost our edge, then—**POOF!** Along comes an eye opener: an incident; a newspaper article; a TV segment; or perhaps, like it was for me, just something someone says in class. Oh yeah, this stuff is important, critical. It's about safety and health. It's about moms and dads, kids and grandparents. It's about life. Life safety. It really, really, is important. For me my rebirth took place in a small class in a small town.

A mining town. Now it could have been a paper mill town, a grain elevator town, a tanning factory town, a refinery town, or any other kind of one-or-two-or-three-industry town, this just happened to be a mining town. The next town over was a mining town too. And up the way, more mines, more towns. Down the road, more industries, more industry towns.

The economic reality of such a town is that the average miner wage is high for jobs out west; let's just say \$50,000 per year for ease of computation. If the mine has one hundred employees, that's five million in gross salaries, great for a small town. Then add on all the other benefits of taxes for schools, etc., and it is really, really great for a small town. So, all things considered, few people rock that quite substantial economic boat. Sure, there are chemicals, but that's spelled **M-O-N-E-Y!**

So when I asked "What do you have up there besides diesel?" there was some hesitation, a pregnant pause as it was, and then someone mentioned sodium hydrosulfide. I thought he said sodium isosufide and tried to write out the formula but was stumped, so I hesitated. When I asked what it was used for the answer was something like "processing copper ore." Not a lot of discussion. Till break. Then the group of mine workers huddled and talked turkey. It came out that another mine or two had spills—maybe a hose broke or a connection disconnected—and the employees were sprayed, the pressure knocked off eye protection, and employees went blind. Now, that's scary enough for me. Obviously the standard practice and protection wasn't enough, obviously. But I found it hard to get a lot more discussion going. Bosses, liability, company policy, good paying jobs, and all.

Not wanting to let this pass—for it is we trainers who must push the safety buttons—I have thought about what I had learned over decades and what I had learned recently after talking to miners, health and safety officers, responders, and chemists about the above issue. I have a few things to say that might make things a bit safer out there, so here they are.

- 1) Each town has a community response team to use to keep their community safer. For example, by "community response team" in a mining town I mean: the mine safety, health, and rescue folks; the fire fighters who will respond; the EMTs will respond; the law enforcement officers who might respond; the emergency room/clinic personnel who will receive the patients; and anyone else who might be involved in an incident—PIOs, pharmacists, Red Cross volunteers, etc.
- 2) Each town has its list of baseline, normal, hometown chemicals found in almost all towns: gasoline, diesel, LPG, pesticides, anhydrous ammonia, etc. These should be the base chemicals used in training and planning for an appropriate hazmat response—for the entire community response team. The standard is the orange guide, the **USDOT ERG**, the hazard classes, the numbered response guides.

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A Fresh Look at Good Chemical Preparedness

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- 3) Each town has a list of industry-specific chemicals related to their hometown industries and businesses. For example, those used by paper mills, electroplating shops, etc. In our case, the local mine. More specifically, NaHS, sodium hydrosulfide, used in the flotation process at a copper mine. Perhaps, NaCN, the basis of most gold mine cyanide leaching operations. Perhaps, HF, the hydrofluoric acid used in refineries and glass etching industries. Remember, you have the SARA Title III/EPCRA "community right to know," or right to find out if you don't know.
- 4) Simple logic demands site-specific and chemical-specific planning in relation to things like NaHS, NaCN, and HF. EAPs, if you will, Emergency Action Plans. The first two are not "just bases" and the third is not "just an acid." If the processes using NaHS and NaCN are not kept basic enough, say over pH of 12, or if acids are accidentally introduced—even in the waste system—then things can go south, and any localized H⁺ ions can turn those bases into gaseous H₂S and HCN, which are both killers. (That doesn't mean the corrosiveness of these chemicals is to be ignored; for eyesight has been lost, it just means there is both corrosiveness and other problems). And HF is not just an acid, nor not even just what class participants call a "bone eater." No, it will bond with the calcium ions which keep your heart pumping and, oops, you're dead!
- 5) These are important things to know. Specific things. About specific chemicals. At specific sites. Not just for the employees. Not just for the industry safety, health and rescue folks. But for the entire community response team and for the general public. Not to scare. Not to incite animosity. But just for common sense safety sake.

As emergency managers, ones who emphasize the hazmat perspective, we see things that need fixing'. The problem is, we are not specialists; we are not experts; and our job is not to fix anything ourselves. So, what can we do? We can do what Rowdy Yates (Clint Eastwood in the TV show *Rawhide* to the younger crowd) would do, bring the herd in. Have all the interested parties (from the mine folks, to the firefighters and EMTs, to the cops and Red Cross volunteers, to the ER and clinic medical personnel) all look at the MSDSs and the printouts from online sources such as the 2004 CSB (Chemical Safety Board) paper on NaHS, sodium hydrosulfide, and discuss the entire incident scenario, from the chemical process and hose break at the mine to the release of the patient from the medical facility. What can be done better with relation to prevention, non-contamination, de-contamination, rumor control, panic mediation, etc? At each link in the chain, someone knows something that people at other links need to know. ER personnel might know a whole lot more about toxins, while industry personnel might know considerably more about site plans and piping systems. Simply stated, we need to act more like teams, and less like a series of sequentialized-body-handlers. Now that I've said that, I can sleep better. I hope you will be able too!

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"Don't ever trust smoke—it can hide what's really going on, spread the fire, burn, blow up, go the wrong direction, and really ruin (even end) your life, sometimes all at once".

By Alan V. Brunacini



Reduction in GSA Mileage Reimbursement Rate

I. GSA MILEAGE RATE REDUCED TO 50 CENTS PER MILE

According to the Federal Register dated January 6, 2010, the General Services Administration (GSA) of the Federal Government is reducing the reimbursement rate from 55 cents to 50 cents per mile for use of privately owned automobiles when authorized as advantageous to the Government.

II. IMPACT ON STATE MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATES

The GSA rate is used as the mileage reimbursement rate for many State of Connecticut collective bargaining units. The "mileage reimbursement rate" under many State collective bargaining unit agreements is subject to adjustment within 30 days of revision to the Federal GSA rate.

In accordance with General Notice 2010-02 from the Office of Labor Relations, the mileage reimbursement rate reduction is effective for travel on or after January 29, 2010 for employees using personally owned vehicles for official State business.

The decreased rate applies to non-represented employees and the following collective bargaining units: NP-2, NP-3, NP-4, NP-5, NP-6, NP-8, P-1, P-2, P-3A, P-3B, P-4 and P-5.

The above provisions also apply to Managerial and Confidential employees and all other executive branch employees who are exempt from the classified service or not included in any prevailing bargaining unit contract, except unclassified of any board of trustees of the constituent units of higher education.

Managerial employees governed by the Boards of Higher Education are notified by their respective boards.

The excess of an employee's mileage payment reimbursed at a rate higher than the standard mileage rate of 50 cents per mile is reportable. Refer to Comptroller's Memorandum 2010-01.

QUESTIONS

Please direct questions or requests for assistance to Ed Bycenski in the Business Office at 860-627-6363 ext. 257 or email ed.bycenski@po.state.ct.us .



"The fire never agreed to the Geneva Convention rules, it simply doesn't have to (and probably won't) ...fight fair".

By Alan V. Brunacini



Executive Skills Series: Influencing



"Beware of 'FUD': Fear, Uncertainty, Doubt".

By Alan V. Brunacini

The Connecticut Fire Academy will be presenting three companion *Executive Skills Series Courses* through the National Fire Academy's off campus deliveries program this year. The first *Executive Skills Series Course* scheduled for February 27th and 28th, 2010 is *Influencing*.

Influencing is considered a critical leadership skill, particularly at the executive level. This 2-day course will examine how leaders successfully influence others to accomplish common goals. Formally planning to influence others will be a primary discussion area within the course. Case studies of executives influencing others will be analyzed to illustrate the challenges and opportunities associated with complex situations in the public sector. This course is for senior officers of both career and volunteer fire/emergency services organizations.

You and ISO Seminar

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Some of the topics covered:

- ISO's Public Protection Classification program and the value it brings to you
- Myths and misunderstandings about ISO
- Meeting the challenges of your PPC rating
- ISO's review and update of the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule
- Q&A





2010 Connecticut Fire Officer's Weekend

Save the date.....Applications are now available for the 2010 Connecticut Fire Officer's Weekend at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland March 26, 27 & 28, 2010. You can download the brochure and application from our website at www.ct.gov/cfpc. The Connecticut Fire Officer's Weekend is a chance for numerous Connecticut fire service personnel to experience the superior level of fire related education available at the National Fire Academy. Applicants have a choice of one of six classes including three which include fire marshal credit. Applicants are requested to prioritize their class choices from 1-6, final class assignments are determined by officer rank and years in rank. Students are responsible to provide their own transportation to and from the National Fire Academy. The Weekend Application must be completely filled out, signed by your department chief, and returned to the Connecticut Fire Academy registrar by Tuesday February 16, 2010 (February 15th is a holiday).

The Connecticut Fire Officer's Weekend agenda includes a memorial service on Friday evening at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial, followed by an orientation and a social gathering in the Student Center. Saturday is a full day of classes with a barbecue in the evening. Classes run through mid-afternoon on Sunday. The Connecticut Fire Officer's Weekend is not only a tremendous learning opportunity but also a great way to network with other fire personnel and instructors.

"Remember, always think ahead—it is difficult to change your mind in midair.

By Alan V. Brunacini

2010 Introduction to the Fire Service



Connecticut Fire Academy announces the 2010 Introduction to the Fire Service. The application can now be download from our website at www.ct.gov/cfpc. This exciting program will focus on introducing youth ages 14-17 to the Fire Service. There will be two individual sessions offered June 21-26, 2010 for ages 16 and 17 and July 12-17, 2010 for ages 14 and 15. This program is held in a "camp" type atmosphere. Each student will reside at the Connecticut Fire Academy in Windsor locks for the duration of the course. Meals and lodging

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2010 Introduction to the Fire Service

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are included in the tuition. All applicants must be affiliated with a Municipal Fire Department and the department Chief and applicant's parent must sign the application. Firefighter protective clothing is required for the program which includes a helmet, bunker coat, firefighter gloves, bunker pants with boots, safety glasses and work gloves. Applications must be returned by April 15, 2010.

New England Regional Disaster Training Center

The New England Regional Disaster Training Center (NEDTC) is a collaborative effort to build a modern training center to meet the needs of various emergency response organizations. The organizations that are combining their talents to get this facility built and running are the Connecticut Military Department, Connecticut Department of Public Health, Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, and the Connecticut Fire Academy.

Located at Camp Hartell, in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, the NEDTC will offer disaster medical response training, utilizing a mobile field hospital, and search and rescue training, utilizing a rubble pile, trench and train cars. The NEDTC focuses its training efforts on integrating civilian and military responders into a coordinated emergency response to biological, natural, and manmade disasters.

The Connecticut Fire Academy has concentrated on the design of two rescue training props. The first is a trench rescue prop that also includes a confined space. The prop will include sections of trench that are of differing depths and dimensions and that intersect at different angles. The second is a railroad prop that will include passenger rail cars and a chemical rail tank car. Besides the rail bed for the train cars the prop will also include a platform to simulate an incident at a train station as well as a simulated grade crossing.

The train prop is nearly complete as of this time. We have obtained a rail tank car and are still finalizing the arrangements to obtain the passenger rail cars. The base for the trench prop has been completed and they are working on the side walls and the vault that will serve as the confined space.

The funding for this project has come from the federal government. Because the Connecticut Fire Academy is part of the infrastructure of the NEDTC they have funded improvements here as well. The new flat screen monitors in the lobby are a benefit of this project as well as the completion of the "pole-vault" audiovisual equipment installation in the remaining classrooms and the commission room. Also included in the project is the purchase of training aids such as rescue mannequins, training meters, and even a mud sucker pump to be used in the Trench Rescue program.

"The IC must always have a "string" on the troops—be careful of any situation where you can't get the insiders out quickly and account for them".

By Alan V. Brunacini



Poquonnock Bridge Crew Honored for Rescuing Three From Blaze



Timothy Driscoll

*"If you let the fire live,
it may not return the
favor".*

By Alan V. Brunacini

Groton - Fire Capt. Tim Driscoll and his crew were honored Friday at the Poquonnock Bridge Fire Department's Fort Hill Firehouse for doing something he has yet to fully grasp: saving three people's lives.

On Sept. 1, Driscoll was part of a five-firefighter team that contained a fire to Building 7 at 600 Meridian St. Extension. The building is connected to an adjacent one by a breezeway. That configuration, and the prevailing winds, allowed the smoke to hover and accumulate in the passageway rather than dissipate into the open air. Driscoll was the shift supervisor on the crew and one of the first to arrive on scene.

"As he surveyed the location to determine the proper position of the hose line, he heard people yelling for help from the second floor," Poquonnock Bridge Fire Chief Todd Paige said.

The yells were those of a young sailor and two tenants, a woman and her infant child. The sailor was crawling along a wall trying to lead the mother and child to safety when Driscoll came to their rescue.

"Capt. Driscoll ascended the stairs without the protection of a hose line or adequate backup. (He) located the woman and her small child and pulled them to safety," Paige said.

Driscoll went back into the smoke and found the sailor, with whom he tumbled down the stairs, delivering the man to safety.

"These victims surely would have perished or been severely injured if not for the actions of Capt. Driscoll," Paige said, reading from a letter of commendation he had prepared with Deputy Chief Curt Floyd.

For his lifesaving efforts, Driscoll was awarded the Class III Medal of Merit, given when a person performs a meritorious act while putting himself at "unusual personal risk."

Driscoll's entire team was honored with a Unit Citation for their professionalism, teamwork and outstanding efforts. They contained the fire to the single unit and to the lower floors, preventing it from reaching the attic, where it could have spread across the roof line into other units. Driscoll's team included firefighters Scott Lindy, Joe Baril, Mike Lowell and Keith Gomes.

"Your actions ... saved others from injury, death and limited the damage to public property. The department is honored by the efforts these members displayed," Paige said.

Retired Capt. Randy Blais, late firefighter David Lewis, and firefighters Adam Wojtcuk (now the fire inspector), Kale Kiely and John Stanford were also awarded a Unit Citation for their efforts on Aug. 4, 2003, when they responded to a plane crash in the area of Providence Court.

"The first arriving engine company was faced with several residential structures, autos, docks, boats, and the aircraft involved in fire. Because of (their efforts) occupants were

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Poquonnock Bridge Crew Honored for Rescuing Three From Blaze

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quickly accounted for and property damage was limited. If not for these efforts, the fire would have caused significantly more damage and endangered more lives."

Paige and Floyd also presented firefighter Todd Williamson with the Meritorious Service Award for his efforts that have resulted in the department having its most successful public education program ever. The public education team includes, besides Williamson, Fire Marshal Mike Richards and firefighters Bryan Quilter, Tim Devine, Evan DeGaetano and Keith Gomes.

"A confused
fireground situation
cannot be corrected
by a confused IC".

By Alan V. Brunacini

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

State of Connecticut



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.

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