

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
Board of Trustees of Community-Technical Colleges  
**Fire Technology and Administration**  
c/o Naugatuck Valley Community-Technical College  
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**Connecticut Safety Institute**  
*an Administration and Management Initiative*

**Recruiting and Retaining Volunteer Fire  
and EMS Personnel**  
**A Study of Programs and Results**  
**1998 - 1999**

**in cooperation with**

*Town of Avon  
Avon Volunteer Fire Department  
Connecticut Conference of Municipalities  
Council of Small Towns  
National Volunteer Fire Council  
Connecticut Firefighter's Association  
Commission on Fire Prevention and Control*

**An Executive Summary of the results  
of the survey of Volunteer Fire and  
EMS services and Towns of the State  
of Connecticut,  
May, 1998**

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## Survey and Project Background

A number of programs and methods have been used by municipalities and volunteer fire and emergency medical organizations to recruit and retain members. Unfortunately, the results of many of these programs are not well known. A few have been written up in the fire and EMS press, but there has been little overall follow up. The Connecticut Safety Institute of the Community-Technical Colleges of Connecticut was established in 1997 with the express purpose of examining management and administrative issues facing Connecticut's emergency services and developing academic programs and seminars to meet those needs.

Since the Fall of 1997, a small committee has been working to develop a survey to gather information on the methods and programs used to recruit and retain volunteer emergency personnel. This has led to a two-year project that will give a view of the issues involved in this important area and develop a data base that will give a picture of what municipalities, fire, and EMS organizations have or are doing in this area. The committee is a cooperative effort between many entities, including the Town of Avon, Avon Volunteer Fire Department, the Connecticut Safety Institute of the Community-Technical Colleges, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, Council of Small Towns, National Volunteer Fire Council, Connecticut Firefighter's Association, and the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control.

## Study Goals

The goals of this project are an academic-type survey and literature search that will determine what organizations, agencies, and other groups may have already done research in this area; identify and categorize the problems and challenges to recruiting and retaining volunteer personnel in Connecticut; and determine what programs have been implemented and what results have come from the programs. From this groundwork the project will obtain sample program guidelines with the purpose of passing this information on and developing a report on successful programs providing sample guides and contacts. Another purpose of the review process will be to insure that all programs are evaluated in the light of state and federal statutes and regulations that may affect the success or cost of the program. Finally the Connecticut Safety Institute will develop seminars and conduct demonstration projects.

In order to accomplish the first part of this project and collect data on what has been done, is being done, or being considered, a first survey was developed. The forms for this survey were directed at three different audiences. The first was for Town Officials (*actually these should be refereed to as CCM Members as this includes all municipalities that were members of CCM at the time of the survey, so when the word Town is used it refers to "CCM members" which might be towns, cities, boroughs or other governmental entities*) to be filled out by the authority having jurisdiction over fire and EMS services. This was to obtain the input of those who control the budgets and govern the emergency services. The second questionnaire was entitled Fire/EMS Department Questionnaire and was designed to get information from the emergency service's viewpoint. The final questionnaire, entitled General Public Questionnaire, was developed to gain the view of local citizens and was designed for use at fairs, meetings, and other public gatherings. While this last questionnaire was for localities, we would like

to get some feedback as the preliminary results are indicating that the community at large is not even aware that their emergency services are in need of volunteers. As hard data is developed, it will be posted on our website [www.comnet.edu/co/academic/SafetyInstitute/Background.htm](http://www.comnet.edu/co/academic/SafetyInstitute/Background.htm). In order to provide as wide a picture as possible of the programs and methods used, the Connecticut Safety Institute welcomed and, continues to welcome, input from both inside and outside Connecticut. The information gathered and the results of the project will be available to municipalities and emergency service providers.

To date we have had 59 Towns (the preliminary results are based on 57 of the responses as one town had no volunteers and a other's form was just received) and 46 Fire Departments participate. Preliminary results have been compiled and we are looking to put out a first look by December. We need the cooperation of as many fire departments and towns as possible to gather a look at the problem of recruiting and retaining volunteers and the programs developed to aid in this effort. To participate in this survey and project, contact the Connecticut Safety Institute, c/o George Munkenbeck, System Coordinator, Fire Education and Training, Connecticut Safety Institute, 750 Chase Parkway, Waterbury, Connecticut, 06708, (203) 596-8707, email - [gmunk@ix.netcom.com](mailto:gmunk@ix.netcom.com). You can also find information at our website at [www.comnet.edu/co/academic/SafetyInstitute/Background.htm](http://www.comnet.edu/co/academic/SafetyInstitute/Background.htm). Included at this website are the three questionnaire forms developed for this project.

## **Connecticut Safety Institute - Background and Program Location**

The Connecticut Community-Technical College Board of Trustees on March 17, 1997, approved the establishment of a Connecticut Safety Institute that includes programs to be offered on a systemwide basis. Students may begin their studies at any of the twelve colleges in the system (Asnuntuck, Capital, Gateway, Housatonic, Manchester, Middlesex, Naugatuck Valley, Northwestern CT, Norwalk, Quinebaug Valley, Three Rivers, and Tunxis Community-Technical Colleges), and then pursue specialized courses at the following locations:

### **Fire Technology and Administration, A.S. degree:**

- Capital Community-Technical College
- Gateway Community-Technical College
- Naugatuck Valley Community-Technical College
- Norwalk Community-Technical College
- Three Rivers Community-Technical College

### **EMT/Paramedic, A.S. degree**

- Capital Community-Technical College, Paramedic Studies

### **Criminal Justice, A.S. degree**

- Naugatuck Valley Community-Technical College
- Northwestern Connecticut Community-Technical College
- Tunxis Community-Technical College

The proposal to establish a Safety Institute comes in direct response to requests from the Connecticut Fire Academy, possible continued restructuring at the Department of Public Health, and requests from law enforcement. The fire, emergency medical services, and police personnel are required, under law, to work together in responding to emergency and disaster situations. Thus, the alliance of these disciplines within the structure of the Institute allows for greater collaboration in designing programs to meet safety needs.

Fire Academy officials have indicated the need for restructuring the Fire Technology program in the Community-Technical Colleges. The current Fire Technology program, implemented in 1960, was designed to prepare individuals for the captain's level. In 1997, the program does not meet that goal, but instead gives firefighters training at a lower level, and the Fire Academy has requested that our system address the need for an Advanced Fire Technology series of courses. The establishment of the Safety Institute will address the need for restructuring the Fire Technology and Administration program, making it a systemwide cooperative program with specialized courses leading to the associate in science degree at Capital, Gateway, Naugatuck Valley, Norwalk, and Three Rivers Community-Technical Colleges.

Meanwhile, the state Department of Public Health has reorganized and has suggested the need for providing greater access to the Paramedic Studies degree program. The Safety Institute will incorporate the existing Paramedic Studies associate degree program now offered at Capital Community-Technical College, as well as certificate programs offered at Naugatuck Valley,

Norwalk, and Three Rivers Community-Technical Colleges. All of the colleges within the system can feed into Capital Community-Technical College's Paramedic Studies degree program as a result of the systemwide structure of the Institute.

At the same time, the Connecticut Commissioner of Corrections has expressed interest in possible expansion of certificate programs. Similarly, in 1996, a Legislative Oversight Committee supported the utilization of Community-Technical Colleges in providing the Police Academy with educational and training support. And the University of New Haven has asked for articulation with our colleges into that institution's forensics training program, with which Dr. Henry Lee will work following his retirement from his current position. Existing criminal justice associate degree programs offered at Naugatuck Valley, Northwestern and Tunxis Community-Technical Colleges are incorporated into the Safety Institute, and other colleges in the system can feed into those degree programs.

The Connecticut Safety Institute will serve as a mechanism to make the Fire Technology Administration, EMT/Paramedic, and Criminal Justice programs available systemwide without duplicating current degree programs. In addition, the Institute structure should foster increased faculty collaboration in the design of new certificates that address important overlap areas within these programs, and in response to the need for more advanced programmatic offerings. The creation of a Safety Institute will enable the Community-Technical Colleges to increase as well as aggregate enrollments in existing programs by establishing other colleges in the system as feeders. At the same time, the Institute's systemwide structure allows for aggregation of degrees. The creation of a Safety Institute will also allow colleges that do not now have Fire Technology Administration or Paramedic or Criminal Justice programs to design and offer certificates in any of these program areas, thereby extending the service regions to provide needed training to a larger portion of the state.

Coordination of the Connecticut Safety Institute will be accomplished through the collaborative efforts of the current program coordinators.

A special feature of the Connecticut Safety Institute will be a student guarantee that program graduates have the job skills necessary to the positions for which the programs are designed.

### **Committee Members**

Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Town Manager, Town of Avon  
James DiPace, Fire Marshal, Town of Avon and Chief of Department, Avon Volunteer Fire Department  
George J. Munkenbeck, Jr., Connecticut Safety Institute Fire Technology and Administration Programs  
Robert "Red" McKeon, National Volunteers Fireman's Council  
K. Wosczyzna-Birch, Connecticut Safety Institute

### **Preliminary Result Summary**

A number of questions were asked to determine contact persons with the towns and the departments for the follow up which is the second phase of this project. The follow up will commence on October 15, 1998, and its main purpose will be to clarify some answers (as noted in this summary) and to obtain details on programs that departments have successfully used to recruit and retain volunteers. As part of this effort, a survey out of state of programs and the success of these programs versus their cost will also be made.

### **Response to Survey**

58 out of 169 municipalities that are members of CCM responded (Actually there were 59 but as Bridgeport responded, and there are no volunteers in this jurisdiction this was not included in the total. In addition one response was received as this report was being finished and will be included in the next edition, so it too is not counted in the results.) and 46 fire/EMS services responded to the survey. This represents **34 percent of the members of CCM** and approximately **16 per cent of the fire/EMS services**. The percentage CCM members includes a number of services and CCM members that are served by career departments and contract personnel exclusively, so the percentage of CCM participation is actually a bit higher. In addition, a base number of 300 volunteer or combination fire departments was chosen for this survey. An exact number is difficult to determine for a number of reasons. According to the Fire Marshal's office there are 268 reporting entities, but these include a number of municipalities who report as a unit. Other estimates range anywhere from 268 to over 400. Since the most often agreed upon number range is from 310 to 330 fire departments, a compromise number of 300 (accounting for the career departments) was chosen.

## The Volunteer Service

A number of questions were asked to obtain a picture of a "typical" (average) volunteer fire/EMS service provider. On the Fire/EMS form these were Department Organization, Number of Active Fire suppression personnel, Number of Active EMS personnel, Number of active non fire suppression/EMS personnel in department, primary response area, description of response area and the number of calls responded to. On the town questionnaire a description of the response area was also requested. The results from these questions put in a descriptive form is as follows:

If one were to describe a "typical" survey responding volunteer emergency service department in Connecticut the description would be as follows:

It would be a tax funded, private, not for profit corporation with 45 fire suppression personnel, 21 EMS personnel with 18 active non suppression/EMS personnel. It would serve a rural and town area responding to 252 fire alarms, 317 R1 First Responder alarms and 601 R2 EMS alarms. Some departments added a category for Motor Vehicle Accidents (MVA). Those departments reporting responses to "MVA's" averaged 190 responses. The average response area is 21 square miles. The majority of departments require a six month probation period for new members and a certain level of responses for members and probationary members. For fire personnel, Firefighter I is a common requirement while for persons in EMS EMT is required. The average town that responded to the survey was described almost equally as suburban, rural and town.

It is recognized that this is a highly "simplistic" view of a complicated structure, but it does that for the most part a small number of personnel have a large number of response demands placed on them. For example 45 fire suppression personnel are, by the results of this survey, called upon to answer an alarm once every two days, which is not overwhelming until one realizes the range of responses was from 10 to 1000, or from approximately one alarm every month to approximately 3 a day. The work load on EMS responders is heavier. The range for R2 EMS alarms was from 30 to 2200 with an average of 601, which means a range of one alarm every 12 days to six alarms per day, with an average response of approximately two a day. The range for R1 First Responder EMS alarms was from 50 to 1200 with an average of 317, which means a range of one alarm every week to three alarms per day, with an average response of approximately one a day.

## Alarm Response Levels

Both town and service questionnaires requested an answer to whether or not the present level of emergency calls could be staffed. The percentage of towns responding in the negative were as follows:

**Question: At the present level of emergency calls does the department(s) serving your jurisdiction have sufficient personnel to carry out its duties?**

|        | Town Response                          |
|--------|--|
|        | <b>NO</b>                              |
| Fire:  | 15% - Level of manning not sufficient  |
| R1 EMS | 22% - Level of manning not sufficient  |
| R2 EMS | 25 % - Level of manning not sufficient |

The emergency services were asked a question in the positive - Is the present staffing level of your department adequate for the responses detailed in 10a? - and their answers were markedly different from the responding towns. Part of this could be explained by the fact that only 15 of the towns had responses from both town and emergency services, but the difference in the answers may show a perception problem.

|                    | Fire Response |
|--------------------|---------------|
| One shift          | 10% Adequate  |
| Day                | 12% Adequate  |
| Night              | 43% Adequate  |
| Both Day and Night | 32% Adequate  |
| Weekends           | 43% Adequate  |
| Weekdays           | 20% Adequate  |

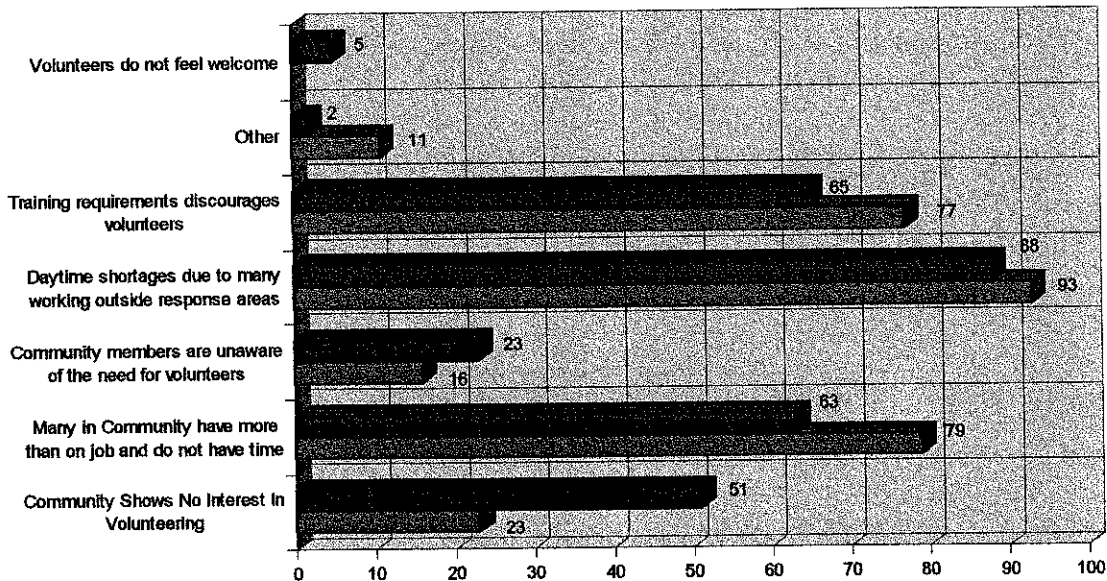
One of the concerns here is the large number of services reporting personnel shortages during night and weekends. Granted, this question needs to be revisited and better worded and will be part of the follow up, but only 43 per cent of the services stated that their coverage was adequate at nights and on weekends.

## Recruiting Problems Experience

76 per cent of the towns and 73 per cent of the departments report problems in recruiting volunteers. A number of choices for the reasons people were not volunteering were given to the departments and towns that reported having difficulties in recruiting volunteers. The categories and responses are as follows (Responders could mark more than one category):

| Question response (base 43 FD, 44 Towns)                      | Town      | FD/EMS |
|---|-----------|--------|
| Community shows no interest in volunteering                   | 23%       | 51%    |
| Many in community have more than one job and do not have time | 79%       | 63%    |
| Community members are unaware of the need for volunteers.     | 16%       | 23%    |
| Daytime shortages due to many working outside response areas. | 93%       | 88%    |
| Training requirements discourages volunteers.                 | 77%       | 65%    |
| Other - Please detail in remarks.                             | 11%       | 02%    |
| Volunteers do not feel welcome                                | Not asked | 05%    |

**Responses to Recruiting problem questions by percentage -  
Towns shown in light and FD/EMS in dark bar**



The responses show that both towns and the services are in close agreement as to the reasons people do not join as volunteers. The answer to the statement "The Community Shows No Interest In Volunteering" is the only exception to the otherwise close answers. On this one question twice as many departments as towns gave this as a problem. This could indicate that there is a perception problem between the fire service and the community. Is this unwillingness caused by the community's attitude or is there a problem in the relationship of the FD/EMS services and the community? This will be covered in the resurvey and follow-up.

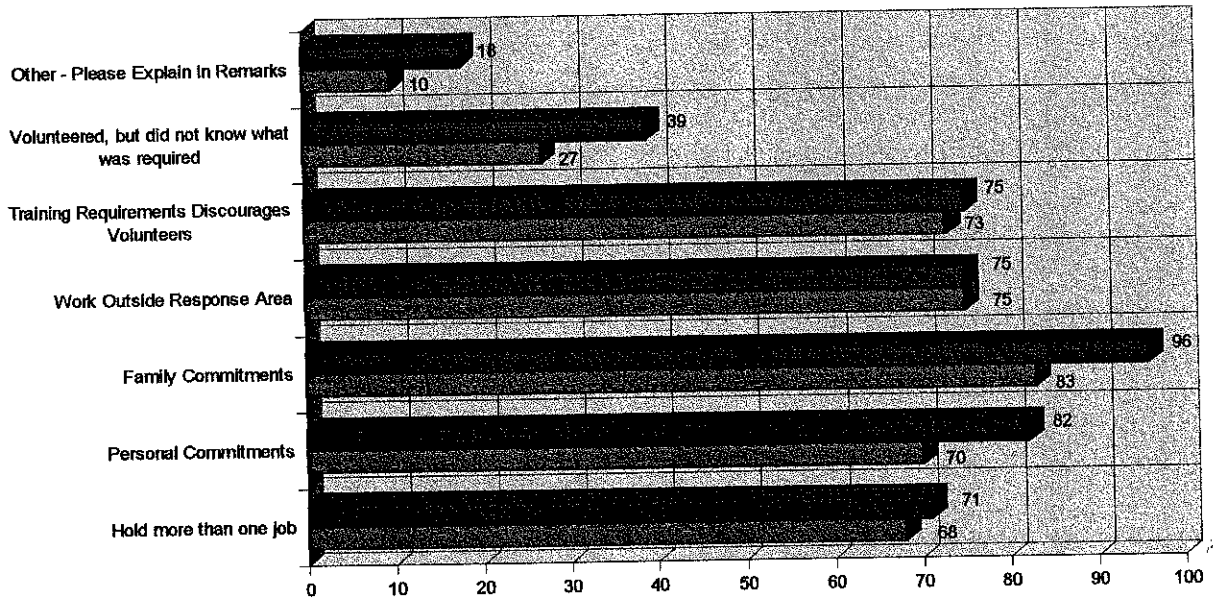


## Retention Problems Experience

71 per cent of the towns and 57 per cent of the departments report problems in retaining volunteers. A number of choices for the reasons people were leaving. Some of the comments made on this question were Affordable housing non-existent, No low income housing for young people, type of community is not conducive to working collar blue collar, and volunteers were being hired by career departments. This last is a problem in that for the most part the unions (and some municipalities) do not allow career firefighters to serve as volunteers. The categories and responses are as follows (Responders could mark more than one category):

| Question response (base 28 FD, 41 Towns)         | Town | FD/EMS |
|--|------|--------|
| Hold more than one job                           | 68%  | 71%    |
| Personal commitments                             | 70%  | 82%    |
| Family commitments                               | 83%  | 96%    |
| Work outside response areas.                     | 75%  | 75%    |
| Training requirements discourages volunteers.    | 73%  | 75%    |
| Volunteered, but did not know what was required. | 27%  | 39%    |
| Other - Please detail in remarks.                | 10%  | 18%    |

**Responses to Retention Problem Questions by percentage -  
Towns shown in light and FD/EMS shown in dark bar**



Family commitments is the most common reason given as to why volunteers leave. This could cover a large variety of reasons such as marrying and moving out of the district, pressure from children and it does correspond to the more than one job category. This is an area that bears more study as frequently those that stay are also heavily committed to other community programs in leadership roles. It was clear by many of the comments that it is the area of retention that bears the most study. It takes a large effort and expense to train a volunteer, at least as much effort must be made to keep the volunteer.

## Retention and Recruiting Programs Survey

Towns and Departments were asked to indicate rate the programs that they used to recruit and retain volunteers. The choices were divided into No Program, Membership, Incentives For Members, Family Benefits, and Other Incentives.

| <b>Retention and Recruitment Programs - Ranked by Town Answer Average Rank</b>   |                     |             |                         |             |
|--|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| <i>Note: # indicates the number of Towns and Fire/EMS departments which indicated that they had the program. The average is the rating most to least effective. Some items that were not in place in a town or department were rated anyway and these are included. In addition not all towns or departments rated the effectiveness of programs. In some cases this was done because they did not know.</i> |                     |             |                         |             |
|  | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|  | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| No Program   | 5                   |             | 4                       | 4.5         |
| <b><u>Membership</u></b>   |                     |             |                         |             |
| Members Recruiting From Friends  | 34                  | 3.8         | 38                      | 3.8         |
| New Types of Memberships   | 15                  | 2.4         | 14                      | 2.6         |
| Advertising  | 22                  | 2.1         | 27                      | 2.3         |
| Incentives To Local Employers  | 5                   | 1.9         | 4                       | 1.2         |
| <b><u>Incentives For Membership</u></b>  |                     |             |                         |             |
| Pension  | 18                  | 3.5         | 14                      | 2.8         |
| Mileage  | 8                   | 3.5         | 5                       | 3.5         |
| Improved Access To Training  | 24                  | 3.4         | 23                      | 3.6         |
| Paid On Call   | 5                   | 3.4         | 7                       | 3.1         |
| Length of Service Awards   | 24                  | 3.3         | 22                      | 3.1         |
| Support For Additional Training  | 24                  | 3.0         | 22                      | 3.4         |
| Medical Benefits/Insurance (Above Required)  | 8                   | 3.0         | 17                      | 2.9         |
| Physical Fitness/Health Facility   | 12                  | 2.9         | 9                       | 2.2         |
| Extra Life Insurance   | 21                  | 2.9         | 20                      | 2.4         |
| Lost/Damaged Personal Property   | 16                  | 2.7         | 22                      | 2.7         |
| Employee Release   | 12                  | 2.6         | 10                      | 2.9         |
| Conferences  | 12                  | 2.5         | 11                      | 2.9         |
| Bunk-in  | 5                   | 2.4         | 5                       | 2.4         |
| Meals  | 12                  | 2.4         | 12                      | 3.1         |
| College Tuition Assistance for Members   | 3                   | 2.3         | 5                       | 2.5         |
| Paid Uniforms  | 18                  | 2.2         | 16                      | 3.1         |
| <b><u>Family Benefits</u></b>  |                     |             |                         |             |
| Rental Assistance  | 0                   | 3.2         | 1                       | 1.0         |
| Social Events and Facilities   | 19                  | 2.9         | 20                      | 2.7         |
| Mortgage Assistance  | 0                   | 2.8         | 1                       | 1.0         |
| Relief Fund  | 1                   | 2.8         | 4                       | 2.0         |
| College Tuition Assistance for Families  | 0                   | 2.6         | 2                       | 1.7         |
| Family Medical Benefits/Insurance  | 1                   | 2.6         | 1                       | 3.0         |
| Child Care   | 0                   | 2.4         | 11                      | 1.0         |
| Pay For Spouse's Expenses During Travel  | 1                   | 1.5         | 1                       | 1.0         |
| <b><u>Other Incentives</u></b>   |                     |             |                         |             |
| Other  | 5                   | 4.8         | 3                       | 3.5         |

## Details on Program Responses from Survey

The following information will give some of the details that were found in the survey responses and some of the areas were more research needs to be done over the coming months.

|            | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|            | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| No Program | 5                   |             | 4                       | 4.5         |



Some towns and emergency services reported that they had no programs to recruit or retain volunteers. These composed only 9% of the towns and services responding. The comments of one town might indicate the reason. *“Benefits - We presently have none town too small, could not financially support any recruitment or retention program”*. One of the departments which indicated this wrote - *“under no program - Employee release - only town employees. Improved access to training - poor; LOA and Pension - Working on a program: Mileage - Chiefs and Chief Engineer; Meals - If on scene”*. As the study continues the cost both in real dollars and administrative costs must be examined and a cost/benefit ration determined to allow organizations a true picture of the worth and benefit of a program to recruiting and retention.

**Membership**

|                                 | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                                 | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>New Types of Memberships</b> | 15                  | 2.4         | 14                      | 2.6         |

The committees intention was to find which towns and services which had looked at the issue of memberships to cover administrative, fire safety education, police functions and other duties without having the member necessarily be responders. These will be followed up to see what programs are in place and to gather more details on their success. One comment on this was *“New types of membership - people don't know about them”*.

|                    | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                    | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Advertising</b> | 22                  | 2.1         | 27                      | 2.3         |

The response to advertising was somewhat a surprise. This is the most commonly seen program ranging from billboards to flyers, but it was ranked much lower than anyone thought. A great deal of effort goes into one of these campaigns, but there seems to be some problem with success. It is not clear whether they were commenting on the success of the advertising or the type of volunteers they got through this effort. One department was very enthusiastic about this in that in their latest membership drive they had gotten ten new members, so some of the responders thought well of this method. One department did note that it sent advertising out with the tax bills. Since most mortgages require that the bills be sent to the mortgage holder, the number of these that reached the hands of candidates of volunteer age were a great deal less than expected. These answers would be followed up to see what methods were successful and what ones were not. There are a number of commercial and organization provided recruiting programs available today.

|  | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|--|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|  | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Members Recruiting From Friends</b> | 34                  | 3.8         | 38                      | 3.8         |

This is probably the most obvious of the programs for recruiting members. Many volunteers are part of a long tradition of volunteer service. In addition, the entry of one member of a group of friends frequently brings other members of the circle. It is no wonder then that this is the highest rated category of any on the matrix. In the past the volunteer service served as an entry into the community circle by those newly arrived. Over the years the fire service especially has in a number of locations withdrawn into itself and has not encouraged new groups or residents to join. Many reasons for people not joining have been cataloged in other response, but we need to expand the circle, thus expanding the pool of recruits. Advertising will not do it without some personal sales. This area will require more study as the emergency services almost have to become evangelizers in order to get the message out through this very successful and highly regarded method. This has already been marked for study by the Connecticut Safety Institute. Very simply put this is very targeted marketing.

|                                      | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                                      | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Incentives To Local Employers</b> | 5                   | 1.9         | 4                       | 1.2         |

The committee was looking for programs that encouraged private employers to encourage their employees to volunteer and compensates them for releasing them for an alarm. Again follow up has to made with those that

reported trying this program to get a clearer picture of why there was such a low rating. From the comments it was not clear whether the programs were not successful due to the structure or whether there were other problems. Again, from the comments it was not clear that there is any clear program that has been successful.

**Incentives For Membership**

This category includes programs meant to retain and benefit members directly.

| <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| 12                  | 2.6         | 10                      | 2.9         |

**Employee Release**

This was placed in the matrix to determine the number of towns and departments that allow town employees to be released. It appears that there was a mixture of answers on both public and private employees in the responses. The number of responses for both areas was less than expected. This is an area that needs to be examined in more detail.

| <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| 5                   | 3.4         | 7                       | 3.1         |

**Paid On Call**

An initial discussion with a number of departments indicated that there were few if any jurisdictions doing this. The survey reveals that there are more than was expected. Some programs seem to be a yearly stipend, others are based on response and some are fees per hour. Each of the responders will be contacted and their programs will be written up for review. This area has been one of controversy here in the northeast, but has long been the norm in many municipalities outside this area.

| <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| 24                  | 3.4         | 23                      | 3.6         |

**Improved Access To Training**

Near half of each of the town and service responses indicated this and both ranked this high. Some complained about requirements for training responders and stated that they had tried some methods to make training more accessible. In the EMS area certification is required, but in fire the certification program is voluntary. Apparently many departments have decided that certification for their members is necessary, but then needed to find a way to make it accessible. Looking at the responses to question on retention problems this is an area which needs work, both in perception and actuality.

| <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| 24                  | 3.0         | 22                      | 3.4         |

**Support For Additional Training**

Again, high marks for training. In many departments supporting members seeking training opportunities has kept persons in service. There are indications that this goes along with other "care" areas for members.

| <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| 24                  | 3.3         | 22                      | 3.1         |

**Length of Service Awards**

Nationwide this has become a "hot" topic when retention and recruiting has been mentioned. This survey shows the same results. While only half have these in place, many which didn't noted that they are considering a program. This is an area that needs a great deal of research as there are many different programs some dictated by state legislation others dictated by local action. Each program now in existence has unique features and these have to be reviewed. There are commercial programs, some include life insurance and payouts others feature sliding benefit scales. While these programs are gathering momentum it is still unclear what their overall effect will be. Some answered that they did not have monetary awards, but rather presentations at various stages of service.

|                | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Pension</b> | 18                  | 3.5         | 14                      | 2.8         |

This answer was placed for those groups that have traditional pensions as defined by the IRS. There appeared to be some confusion between this and Service Awards. This reflects the confusion among emergency workers and even the federal government. Again, this area and Length of Service Awards needs to be looked at together.

|   | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|---|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|   | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>College Tuition Assistance for Members</b> | 3                   | 2.3         | 5                       | 2.5         |

Most responders mentioned that this was for Fire Science courses apparently reflecting the statutory provisions found in Sec 7-313c. of the General Statutes which reads:

**Sec. 7-313c. Indemnification for educational expenses.** (a) Any town, city or borough subject to the approval of its legislative body, shall indemnify and paid or volunteer member of its fire department who, after October 1, 1969, has commenced and has successfully completed a course or courses in fire technology and administration offered by the state regional community-technical colleges. Such indemnification shall be limited to expenses incurred by such member for tuition and textbook charges.

(b) This section shall not apply to any member of a fire department of a town, city or borough receiving educational benefits from the Veteran's Administration or any Connecticut fire department association. (1969, P.A. 703, S. 1, 2; P. A. 92-126, S. 39 48.)

History: P. A. 89-260 in Subsec. (a) substituted "regional technical colleges" for "state technical colleges"; P. A. 126 changed a reference to technical colleges to community-technical colleges in Subsec. (a).

Cited 196 C. 192, 200.

This is something that is still restrictive in its application and not very widely granted.

|                | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Bunk-in</b> | 5                   | 2.4         | 5                       | 2.4         |

This program has been used in other sections of the country to insure an in house crew. A number of locations have used this for college students and there has been varying reports of success. This will require more research to find some sample regulations and programs and whether this is only used for members of for other persons such as college students. Another program not widely used.

|   | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|---|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|   | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Physical Fitness/Health Facility</b> | 12                  | 2.9         | 9                       | 2.2         |

OSHA regulations and NFPA guidelines contain physical fitness standards. Departments have used various ways to meet these. In addition health clubs are popular today, but often, expensive. This is a "perk" which meets the requirements and fills a need for members.

|                      | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                      | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Paid Uniforms</b> | 18                  | 2.2         | 16                      | 3.1         |

The majority of responders stated that they supplied dress uniforms for the members. Uniforms area way to create an identity and can raise the impact of the department in the public eye.

|                | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Mileage</b> | 8                   | 3.5         | 5                       | 3.5         |

This was not a clear question. Most mileage was a reimbursement for fuel. This will need to be revisited.

|                                       | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                                       | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Lost/Damaged Personal Property</b> | 16                  | 2.7         | 22                      | 2.7         |

Responders reported that this was part of their insurance package, but not often used.

|              | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|--------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|              | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Meals</b> | 12                  | 2.4         | 12                      | 3.1         |

Again not clear. Some took it to be refreshments at an alarm, others more general.

|                    | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                    | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Conferences</b> | 12                  | 2.5         | 11                      | 2.9         |

The fire service has a number of organizations and events that not only display the latest in equipment but also act as a way to network to find new ideas and practices. Often looked upon as junkets that produce little good, these can be, if properly used an incentive for members. While often the social aspects are emphasized, it may allow a member to gain knowledge to be used not only for the department, but also for their own good.

|                             | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                             | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Extra Life Insurance</b> | 21                  | 2.9         | 20                      | 2.4         |

This is life insurance available as a benefit above what might be part of a normal insurance package. The area needs to be revisited.

|  | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|--|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|  | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Medical Benefits/Insurance (Above Required)</b> | 8                   | 3.0         | 17                      | 2.9         |

An idea that is catching on is providing health insurance for volunteers as part of the town's employee benefits program. This is an area that needs to be looked at for legalities and difficulties.

### Family Benefits

This is meant to include programs that benefit family members and thus indirectly benefit members.

|  | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|--|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|  | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>College Tuition Assistance for Families</b> | 0                   | 2.6         | 2                       | 1.7         |

This is envisioned as direct college tuition benefits, either whole or in part for members of a responders family.

|                            | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                            | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Mortgage Assistance</b> | 0                   | 2.8         | 1                       | 1.0         |

A number of national articles have mentioned that this is being used to assist volunteers in some areas. The success of these programs is unknown, but more effort will be made to look for programs that are in place. It is unknown what the legalities of this would be. Housing especially for young families has been one of the problems noted in the responses.

|                          | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                          | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Rental Assistance</b> | 0                   | 3.2         | 1                       | 1.0         |

This has been tried in a number of locations. Housing was mentioned as one of the problems for recruiting volunteers.

|                                     | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                                     | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Social Events and Facilities</b> | 19                  | 2.9         | 20                      | 2.7         |

Long thought to be one of the main reasons for volunteering, other choices for family recreation has moved the center of social life away from the firehouse. These activities are needed to bind volunteers and their families

to the organization. These events also bind the community to the fire department. The number of people that come from towns with volunteers that have fond memories of the fire house as the center of activity indicates the importance of keeping in touch with the community through social events.

|                    | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                    | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Relief Fund</b> | 1                   | 2.8         | 4                       | 2.0         |

Traditionally, many departments had funds that were provided as burial funds, relief to members in distress or in need of medical assistance. In the modern world insurance has taken its place. There are still groups that have these funds and while they do not provide large sums they do provided a way of caring for members.

|                   | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                   | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Child Care</b> | 0                   | 2.4         | 11                      | 1.0         |

Some departments in the United States have provided daycare or baby-sitting for their members who are on watch. One department in New York provided a day care facility in the ambulance garage for its members. This area needs some investigation in light of regulation changes and requirements for child care. It is not clear from the answers whether the companies were providing care or were in support, but the rating is very low, but only three rated the program.

|  | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|--|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|  | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Pay For Spouse's Expenses During Travel</b> | 1                   | 1.5         | 1                       | 1.0         |

This is related to the conference question. In other localities this has been a benefit to at least the Chief and upper ranks, to encourage them to go to the conferences and the reward them for service.

|  | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|--|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|  | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Family Medical Benefits/Insurance</b> | 1                   | 2.6         | 1                       | 3.0         |

This is related to the question about the provision of medical benefits to volunteers. It was thought that this would be a recruiting draw. Research on this will be undertaken outside the state to see if it is viable. Not much interest was shown in this., but it has the potential of being an important benefit.

**Other Incentives**

|              | <u>Town Answers</u> |             | <u>Fire/EMS Answers</u> |             |
|--------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|              | <u>#</u>            | <u>avg.</u> | <u>#</u>                | <u>avg.</u> |
| <b>Other</b> | 5                   | 4.8         | 3                       | 3.5         |

A number of responses were made indirectly to this question. Among the programs mentioned were real estate tax relief, passes for the town dump, town recreation passes, and pool passes for families.

**The cost of volunteer benefit programs for EMS/Fire Volunteers**

Both towns and services were asked about the cost of the present recruitment and retention programs to the budget per annum per volunteer. Of the 23 towns that reported on this question, 12 reported annual expenditure and 12 reported per capita expenditures. The average annual expenditure is \$32,574.42 (high of \$112,300 and a low of 5,500) and per capita the average is \$728.86 (a high of \$3000.00 and a low of \$83.33) Note, towns who did not report or reported zero expenditures were not included. Of the 32 departments that reported on this, 12 reported per annum expenditures of \$30,550 and 20 reported per capital expenditures of \$594.50 per member.

## Awareness of Department's Needs

85 per cent of the departments reported that they feel that the authority having jurisdiction is aware of their recruiting and retention situation.

## Junior/Cadet Fire Programs

Both agencies and towns were asked about Junior/Cadet programs, which have long been a source of volunteers. 48 towns answered this question, with 63 per cent responding that they had programs and 33 per cent reporting that they did not. Four per cent answered no, but are considering a program. 40 towns answered the question **Do you feel that a youth program makes a positive contribution to recruiting volunteers?** 85 per cent agreed with the statement. There were a number of interesting comments such as *"OSHA prohibits a lot of this due to the eagerness of the cadets. - They get training and then can not wait long enough to participate. - It has some benefits but also creates some problems. - Many Junior Firemen will not join the company when they come of age as a move will be likely for many."*

The departments were asked more detailed questions on their Junior/Cadet programs. 45 departments answered this question and 69 per cent of the departments stated that they sponsored programs for Juniors/Cadets, 22 per cent stated that they did not, 7 per cent answered that they dropped a program and one department, or 2 per cent that they were considering a program. The average minimum age for entry into the programs was 14, with the almost universal full membership age being 18. Most Junior programs are quite small, the average size is 7 members. The organization of the programs was reported as follows:

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Affiliated with Scouting - Explorer Post                              | 5  |
| Department sponsored with a formal separate organization              | 11 |
| Part of a formal probationary member program                          | 10 |
| Program is informal and junior member is guided by experienced member | 7  |
| Other <sup>1</sup>  | 1  |

<sup>1</sup>. Two regular department Lieutenants as liaison.

Junior Cadet Organizations

