



Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection

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NEW STUDY PROVIDES ROADMAP FOR FUTURE OF FIRE AND EMS IN CONNECTICUT

MIDDLETOWN – Public safety leaders say [a comprehensive study](#) of Connecticut's fire and EMS system now provides a roadmap for improvements that are critically needed to modernize and improve services across the state.

The recently completed study, which included surveying fire departments in nearly every municipality across the state, examined all aspects of fire protection in Connecticut. The report states that a dramatic drop in volunteer firefighters and the rising costs of modern equipment and specialized training requires new initiatives and collaboration "to ensure the continued safety and well-being of Connecticut's communities."

There are approximately 4,700 paid firefighters and 8,300 volunteer firefighters in Connecticut, according to [a recent survey](#) by the Office of Comptroller Sean Scanlon. The number of volunteers has declined more than 50 percent over the last decade.

"As we face a crisis in the fire service, I am pleased to have this new assessment to help guide us," said **DESPP Commissioner Ronnell A. Higgins**. "We must all work together to develop a long term strategy that addresses the challenges facing our fire departments, from equipment and training to recruitment to the health of our firefighters."

"Connecticut, like all states, is facing a public safety crisis when it comes to firefighter recruitment and retention," said **Comptroller Sean Scanlon**. "I am proud to be working with DESPP, municipal leaders and the fire service to find both short and long-term solutions that will strengthen this incredibly important industry and make our communities and those who serve them safer."

MissionCIT, a Shelton-based consultant, surveyed the more than 300 career, volunteer, and combination fire departments in the state, collecting a representative sample from 107 departments from nearly every municipality in the state.

"The findings validate many of the challenges we've all seen firsthand: declining volunteerism, fragmented governance, funding shortfalls, outdated communications, and the toll that cancer and mental health concerns take on our firefighters," **State Fire Administrator Jeffrey**

Morrisette. “Just as importantly, the study highlights our strengths, the commitment of thousands of personnel, the resilience of our departments, and the deep culture of mutual aid that keeps our communities safe.”

“Connecticut’s firefighters—career and volunteer alike—represent the backbone of our public safety system,” said **state Rep. Patrick Boyd**, who co-chairs the General Assembly’s Public Safety & Security Committee.

“This study provides an honest look at the challenges we face and, more importantly, a path forward. Our goal is to ensure that every community, from our largest cities to our smallest towns, has the resources, coordination, and trained personnel needed to respond when the alarm sounds. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the General Assembly, state agencies, and the fire service community to turn these findings into meaningful action.”

Paul M. Januszewski, chairman of the [Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control](#), said the new study is “the most comprehensive look at Connecticut’s fire service in over half a century.” The commission is one of the six divisions that make up DESPP.

“It brings to light the critical challenges we face, from the steep decline in volunteerism to the financial constraints that threaten the readiness and safety of our responders. Behind every fire engine and ambulance are men and women whose health and safety depend on modern equipment, accessible training, and a culture of wellness,” Januszewski said. “The data in this report underscores an urgent need to invest in their protection, both physically and mentally. This study is not the end; it’s the blueprint for modernization. It calls for standardization, improved communication systems, and a renewed commitment to training and wellness. The Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control stands ready to turn these recommendations into action.”

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