



## 2010 Fire/EMS Safety, Health & Survival Week FAQs

The International Association of Fire Chiefs and the International Association of Fire Fighters are pleased to sponsor the 2010 Fire/EMS Safety, Health & Survival Week (Safety Week).

This year's event will be held June 20-26, scheduled to give maximum flexibility and support to all types of departments—career, combination and volunteer—and both fire and EMS personnel.

The theme this year is "Fit for Duty," which encourages all fire/EMS personnel to focus on health and wellness issues.

With more than 50 percent of fire fighter line-of-duty deaths caused by health and fitness-related issues, both organizations believe it's imperative that there be a concentrated effort in implementing wellness and fitness programs.

Safety Week's *Fit for Duty* theme will cover a variety of topics that are extremely important to all fire fighters and EMS personnel. The program will assist fire departments with implementing their own programs to prepare fire fighters and EMS personnel with healthy habits that reduce the risk of many chronic diseases, such as heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and certain cancers, thereby increasing the chance for a longer and healthier life.

While departments are encouraged to identify activities tailored to their specific community, recommended areas of concentration include:

- General Health and Wellness
- Food and Nutrition
- Fitness
- Stress Management
- Smoking and Smokeless-Tobacco Cessation
- Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Infectious Diseases
- Suicide Prevention

During the week, departments are also encouraged to support comprehensive fitness assessments, medical screenings and educational programs that build and maintain medically and physically fit personnel and help in reducing health and fitness-related deaths or injuries.

## **Who is doing this?**

Safety Week is sponsored by:

- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- International Association of Fire Fighters

and supported by the following partners:

- Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs
- Canadian Fallen Firefighters Foundation
- Congressional Fire Services Institute
- Fire and Emergency Manufacturers and Services Association
- Fire Apparatus Manufacturers' Association
- Fire Department Safety Officers Association
- International Association of Arson Investigators
- International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters
- International Association of Women in Fire & Emergency Services
- International Code Council
- National Association of State Fire Marshals
- National Association of State Foresters
- National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
- National Fire Protection Association
- National Volunteer Fire Council
- National Wildfire Coordinating Group
- NIOSH Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program
- North American Fire Training Directors
- United States Fire Administration

Safety Week activities, resources and sample daily schedules are coordinated by:

- IAFC Safety, Health and Survival Section
- IAFF Division of Occupational Health, Safety and Medicine

## **We have a lot we do during the day. How are we supposed to do this too?**

Easy—don't do your normal operations outside of responding to emergency calls. The point of Safety Week is to stop normal operations and focus on the issue of health and wellness. The focus of the day should be health and safety related activities, responding to emergency calls and nothing else.

## **Is this intended only for career fire fighters?**

No, this is intended for all fire fighters and EMTs. This includes career and volunteer, airports, wildland, EMS, federal and military and industrial, to name a few.

## **We have four platoons. Should we do this for all 4 or just pick one day?**

Repeat the Safety Week activities on each shift or duty crew. Even if your drill night is not during Safety Week, still perform the activities on your regular drill night in June. It is understood that not everyone works on any given day or has a training drill during this week; find a time for department activities and take part in a Safety Week activity or two. Use the same schedule for each platoon until everyone has taken part. You don't need to move your drill night, even if it's earlier or later than the week of June 20 – take part on a schedule that makes sense for your department. And remember the most important lesson of all – health and wellness

should not be focused on for just one day or just one week. Health and wellness should be a focus every day!

**But the suggested schedule is for an all-day shift, and we don't work shifts.**

The suggested schedule is merely a guideline to give some ideas of activities that can be accomplished in a structure of a complete work day, but there are parts that apply to everyone. In the case of EMS, wildland and airport operations, some of the standards, requirements and equipment may be very different than the ones suggested for a structural department.

For volunteers, focus on one of the "Fit for Duty" drills that would fit nicely in a two- or three-hour monthly drill. Just because you don't go to the gym as a company doesn't mean you can't go over healthy eating and exercise information with your members. For your drill night, host a heart healthy meal before the drill. There are lots of ways to make the maximum impact within the scope of your normal operations.

Also don't forget the suggested schedule and topics are just that, a suggestion. There may be something that has come up in your department or a neighboring department that you feel is more important to review than one of the suggestions, and that is what you should focus on.

**OK, I'm sold; now where do I find information to help plan the day?**

All of the Safety Week resources are located at [www.iafc.org/safetyweek](http://www.iafc.org/safetyweek). From that page you can sign up that you're taking part, obtain a recommended schedule of activities and find examples of various resources and examples from fire departments around the country. They include accident reports, near-miss reports, standard operating procedures, drills and articles for you to use as you prepare for the day's activities.