



Professional Development for the Leader in a Department Staffed with Volunteers

IAFC Academy VWS related/created courses:

The IAFC's Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) working with the Volunteer and Combination Officers Section has created a diverse menu of online educational offerings available for administrative members, members focusing on recruitment and retention efforts, the officer, chief officer and chief of fire departments staffed with volunteers.

These courses are free to all. To access the courses, you will need to sign into your account or create a free account. When you click the links in this document it will direct you to that course, but the IAFC Academy requires you to login or create a free account prior to accessing the course. Please note: if you are an IAFC member you can log into the IAFC Academy using your member login, a new login is NOT required.

The Volunteer of the Future Training Series (Created by the VWS National Grant)

[Course 1: A Practical Approach to Diversity and Inclusion](#)

This 1 hour web-based training (WBT) aims to identify current recruitment and retention challenges within the volunteer fire service, explores the value of diversity and inclusion in strengthening the volunteer fire service, and inspires participants to actively work towards building a diverse and inclusive volunteer fire service that more accurately reflects the community they serve.

[Course 2: Barrier to Volunteering: How a Traditional Approach is Limiting your Department](#)

This 1 hour web-based training (WBT) strives to improve the knowledge regarding the mechanisms, attitudes and conditions within the volunteer fire service that prevent membership diversity. This course provides an overview of how to have an increased awareness of the misconceptions that cloud the understanding of under-resourced communities, increase knowledge of the steps to collaborating effectively with these communities, and increase interest within members of these communities in partnering and volunteering with local volunteer fire departments.

[Course 3: Overcoming Cultural Barrier for a More Inclusive Volunteer Workforce](#)

This 1 hour web-based training (WBT) delivers strategies for engaging, recruiting and retaining volunteers from diverse backgrounds and communities. This course assists participants with identifying local challenges, discusses specific strategies for engagement, recruitment and retention of diverse volunteers, and creates a goal, plan and strategy for developing a department that more accurately reflects their community.



Volunteer Courses created by VWS and State Chief Associations

[Chief 101](#) (Created by the CT VWS Grant)

Chief 101 focuses on issues not necessarily on the fire ground that impact your department's performance when it matters most. This course is designed to help chief-level officers in volunteer fire departments effectively execute the roles and responsibilities of a leadership position. Topics include managing your responsibilities, your team, the department, and your budget. The course will take up to two hours to complete with interactive segments such as quizzes and videos. This is a 2 hour course.

[Bridging the Multigenerational Divide in Your Fire Department](#) (Created by the NC VWS Grant)

This one hour online course provides information and resources to aid volunteer and combination fire departments to identify and address multigenerational issues that may exist within their departments. Participants will learn to recognize generational biases, identify how biases impact interpersonal communications, demonstrate communication strategies, and ultimately be a good agent for change.

[Mentoring 1: Re-Energizing Your Department Culture Through Positive Influence](#) (Created by the TN VWS Grant)

This one-hour online course provides information and resources for establishing or enhancing a mentoring program for volunteer or combination fire departments, emphasizing the importance of the program for increased retention. Participants will learn to explain basic concepts related to mentoring; describe how to set mentoring goals, objectives, and performance measures; and identify considerations, components, best practices, and pitfalls to avoid when implementing a mentoring program.

[Mentoring 2: Developing and Retaining Firefighters Through Relationships](#) (Created by the TN VWS Grant)

This one-hour online course provides information and resources for developing mentoring skills that will successfully influence firefighters in a manner that will increase retention, support personal and organizational growth, and meet the mission of the department. Participants will learn to demonstrate effective mentorship communication skills, explain methods for building trust and rapport in a mentor/mentee relationship, and identify strategies for developing the mentee's behavior and performance.

[Volunteer Administrative Leadership \(VALS\)](#) (Created by the VWS National Grant)

[Introduction](#)

Students completing this training series will gain keen insight into managing the different administrative aspects of a volunteer fire department. Engaging volunteers, handling finances effectively, keeping records, and recruiting and retaining the best personnel are dealt with in an interactive manner which allows you to raise the morale of a department struggling with the business of running a department.

[Finance](#)

Whether you are the treasurer, financial secretary, a board director, or a department member who wishes to improve your organization's finances, this training will provide you best practices and tools to practice your financial responsibilities. Students will learn about:

- Tracking income
- Handling fundraised money
- Following up on donations



- Safeguarding funds
- The IRS Form 990
- How to spot fraud and embezzlement

Trust in the community does not just include emergency response considerations. By being fiscally responsible and keeping a close eye on funds, your department can keep the community on your side and protect their trust in your department.

[Leading Through Engagement](#)

The Leading through Engagement track focuses on specific leadership and management skills including implementing strategic initiatives, driving a common vision, and creating an organizational structure that supports success. It also concentrates on engaging volunteers to achieve the mission of your department.

The course is broken into these key areas:

- Leadership & Management – What do these terms mean and how do they complement each other?
- Leading Through Engagement- Discover various types of social interactions and how to leverage group dynamics to promote engagement within your department.
- How to Create a Motivating Workplace –Motivation is intrinsic and personal. In order to have your organization thrive, you'll need to build an environment that meets the members' needs and the department's mission.
- How to Align the Organization for Success – Does your department have strong management structures and processes that follow your strategic goals?
- How to Make Your Job Easier – Productive meetings and committees are part of having things run smoothly but understanding politics and public advocacy will allow your agency to soar.
- How to Stay Out of Trouble- Learn about the organizational mechanics that are necessary to keep your department running effectively and consistently.

[Records Management](#)

The Records Management track helps your department's administrative functions by focusing on:

- Roles of the secretary
- Attributes of an effective secretary
- Drafting agendas
- Drafting minutes
- Effective meeting notices
- Signing official documents
- Maintaining membership rolls
- Proper tracking and storage of documents

Whether you are the department secretary or a member interested in improving your organization's record keeping, this course will provide you the knowledge and tools to effectively establish and maintain important records.

[Recruitment and Retention](#)

The Volunteer Administrative Leadership Series (VALS)-Recruitment and Retention course provides the student the foundational knowledge to grow their department by recruiting and retaining quality members. Areas covered in this course include:

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- Conducting a needs assessment
- Understanding marketing
- Applications, background checks and interviews
- The onboarding process
- Benefits and incentives
- The role of leadership in recruitment and retention

National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) Virtual Classroom Offerings

The NVFC has a diverse menu of online educational offerings available for the officer, chief officer and chief of fire departments staffed with volunteers.

These courses are free for NVFC members and range between \$12.95 and \$17.95 for individuals who are not members. To access the Virtual Classroom, members will sign into their account, copy the access code (available under the Member Resources tab, "Membership Benefits") and click on the Virtual Classroom link. Individuals who are not members will need to create an account to take courses and can do so here: <https://nvfc.digitalchalk.com/>.

Becoming a Company Officer

This eight-module course provides key considerations and information for new company officers. Topics covered include: leadership, communication, ethics, training evolutions, preparing to be first due, incident scene management, health and wellness, and management/administrative duties.

Fire Chief Authority Under NFPA Standards

A Fire Chief possesses unique and specialized authority to adopt and amend NFPA standards to meet community needs. Topics discussed include Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), amendments, community risk assessment, and best practices.

Fire Department Sustainability

The fire service is experiencing an increase in the average age of the firefighter. With the aging of the fire service comes the need to prepare the younger generation and plan for succession within the department. This two-hour course will show how to plan for succession and prepare the younger generation to lead the department.

Fire Service Ethics

The fire service is a respected institution that has earned a positive reputation and the public's trust. Maintaining that status requires an understanding of ethics and a willingness to adopt ethical standards. This webinar examines ethical practices and poses thought-provoking questions to help define the role of ethics within a department.

Laws that Matter - Avoiding High Risk Legal Events

This course presents many of the legal risks faced by firefighters and fire service leaders. John K. Murphy JD discusses high risk legal events and how they can be avoided. Topics include free speech and social media, incident documentation, discrimination, hazing, and traffic violations.



[Leadership for the Fire and Emergency Services](#)

Quality leadership is essential for the fire service to face current and future challenges. This webinar will examine leadership styles, qualities, and practices to help your department function at a high level by avoiding fire service leadership pitfalls.

[Leadership for Volunteer Emergency Medical Services and Rescue Providers](#)

Quality leadership is essential for the emergency medical services and rescue providers to face current and future challenges. This webinar will examine leadership styles, qualities, and practices to help your department function at a high level by avoiding EMS/Rescue service leadership pitfalls.

[Managing Change: From Volunteer to Combination and Department Mergers](#)

This course discusses the challenges of department mergers and transitioning from a volunteer to a combination department. Many departments across the nation are dealing with the transition process. This course will help departments navigate personnel issues, leadership, and best practices. Topics covered include merging departments, personnel conflicts, adjusting to the presence of paid staff, managing growth and increased call volume, and recruitment and retention.

Emergency Responder Safety Institute

The Emergency Responder Safety Institute of the Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association provides the Responder Safety Learning Network as part of its mission to improve the safety of the nation's emergency responders by:

- Engaging in and promoting activities that include developing educational material to support responder safety training
- Promoting the National Unified Goal (NUG) for Traffic Incident Management (TIM) including responder safety; safe, quick clearance; and interoperable communications
- Encouraging the development of TIM Teams
- Promoting collaboration, communication and cooperation among the nation's emergency responders
- Keeping emergency responders up to date on national rules, regulations and trends related to safe roadway incident operations.

The content on the Responder Safety Learning Network is developed in cooperation with and vetted by recognized consulting experts in the many aspects of traffic incident management. The consultants for each training module are listed under the "Consultants" tab of the module's navigation bar.

[Training Programs](#)

- List of [available programs](#).
- [Advance Warning](#)
This module discusses the concept of advance warning, its benefits, and how to implement a range of advance warning devices. The module also provides guidance in determining what advance warning devices to deploy and where to deploy them. The module concludes with key points to discuss when including advance warning in your agency's standard operating guideline or procedure.
- [Autonomous Vehicles](#)
Autonomous vehicle technology is moving to market very quickly and test vehicles may already be on the roads in your jurisdiction. Are you ready for them? Most agencies are not. In this program, you will learn the basics of autonomous vehicle technology, the challenges and opportunities it presents to emergency responders, the current state of



technology development, and how to begin to prepare for the presence of these vehicles on the roadways you serve.

- [Blocking Procedures at Roadway Incidents](#)
This module discusses the concept of blocking, safe parking and/or safe positioning at traffic incidents. The module explains why it is important, how to determine whether linear positioning or block positioning is appropriate at any given incident, and the major elements of executing both linear and block positioning in a variety of different situations.
- [Connected Vehicles](#)
Connected technologies already in the market and becoming more prevalent very quickly. Are you ready for them? Most agencies are not. In this program, you will learn the basics of connected vehicle technologies, the challenges and opportunities they present to emergency responders, the current state of technology development, and how to begin to prepare for the inevitable pervasiveness of connected vehicles on the roadways you serve.
- [Fire Service Collaboration with Towing & Recovery Operations](#)
At incident scenes, the responding fire department(s) and towing and recovery operator(s) must often collaborate to clear the roadway safely. This collaboration should begin prior to the call for a tow truck and continue through the termination phase of the incident. Some fire departments have found value in joint vehicle rescue training with tow operators on extrication tools and techniques, new vehicle technology (i.e. hybrid, electric and compressed gas) and large vehicle rescue scenarios. The fire service can help ensure that towing and recovery has sufficient information to determine what type of equipment to send to an incident scene. The fire service can provide blocking and/or advance warning to protect incident scenes and the tow operators on scene. The fire service can provide important incident and hazardous materials information so the tow operator can determine how to proceed safely with vehicle removal. And the tow operator can lend his/her expertise to the cleanup underway by the fire department. Both organizations can either set up or revise the traffic control in collaboration with law enforcement and transportation management resources so motorists are safely routed around the incident. This self-paced program discusses how the fire service and towing personnel can communicate and collaborate effectively to safely and efficiently handle roadway incidents. The program also provides important information that can be used when tow operators are a single unit response.
- [High Visibility Innovations](#)
It is widely known that the visibility of responders is a key factor in safe emergency operation on the roadways. Beginning with the foundation of the applicable standards, this module will expose the audience to innovative high visibility products and practices appropriate to all roadway responder groups — fire, police, EMS, DOT, and towing and recovery.
- [Intro to Fire Service Traffic Control Professional](#)
This module introduces current and prospective fire service traffic control professionals to the responsibilities of the position, its professional qualifications (NFPA 1091), and its role in the incident command system. The module provides an understanding of the difficulties, dangers, and rewards of the job. It also equips the fire service traffic control professional to assess whether he/she is physically, mentally, and emotionally suited for the position. Finally, the module provides guidance intended to improve the professionalism and preparedness of traffic control officers in terms of uniform, non-uniform clothing, and equipment.
- [Law Enforcement and High Visibility PPE](#)
This program summarizes the federal regulations with regard to high visibility safety



apparel, examines the objections of law enforcement officers to wearing this apparel, presents facts that address these objections, and details a set of solutions to address officers' objections and improve compliance with federal regulations, state regulations, and local policies.

- [The First 15 Minutes at Roadway Incidents](#)
The first 15 minutes of a roadway incident response are critical. What the first responding units do, and do not do, will impact the response in many ways, including safety, traffic control, secondary incidents, and clearance time. This program captures what the first arriving emergency response personnel should be thinking about related to traffic incident management (TIM) as they are enroute, approaching the scene, sizing up initial conditions, and implementing those first crucial actions in response to the incident.

UL Firefighter Safety Research Institute

UL Firefighter Safety Research Institute is dedicated to increasing firefighter knowledge to reduce injuries and deaths in the fire service and in the communities they serve.

- [All Research Projects](#)
- [Suppression Projects](#)
- [Building Construction Projects](#)
- [Health Projects](#)
- [New Technology Projects](#)
- [Fire Dynamics Projects](#)
- [Training Projects](#)
- [Fire Investigation Projects](#)
- [Data Projects](#)
- [Public Safety Projects](#)

International Society of Fire Service Instructors

The ISFSI leads fire and EMS instructors in their efforts to reduce firefighter fatalities and injuries, increase firefighter safety and improve the profession through education and training.

- [Principles of Modern Fire Attack](#)
This class will provide a firsthand look at the UL/NIST Modern Fire Behavior/Dynamics studies and serve to educate students how they can be delivered and instituted in their fire departments.
- [Understanding and Fighting Basement Fires](#)
This course was developed to teach firefighters and officers about the research results that were obtained from the 2016-2017 Basement Fire Tactics Research Panel in partnership with ISFSI, UL FSRI and the Delaware Co. PA Fire Academy. The Basement Fire Tactics Research Panel looked at numerous types of tactics and basement fires for the most effective and efficient attack methods.
- [Law Enforcement Operations on the Fireground](#)
The ISFSI LEO fire ground training curriculum addresses the roles and responsibilities of law enforcement officers responding and controlling the fire scene by tying together UL/NIST/ISFSI modern fire behavior research and the appropriate sequence of actions from arriving law enforcement officers.



Webinars

The IAFC has many webinars valuable to the leader of a volunteer or combination department. You can view upcoming and past webinars at <https://www.iafc.org/about-iafc/sections/vcos/education/elearning>.



For additional resources visit [VCOS.org](https://www.vcos.org)