

IAFC Carrying Concealed Weapons (CCW) On Duty Work Group

Report to the IAFC Board of Directors

Delivered for discussion at Board Meetings in Dallas, TX – August 2018

Chair: Chief Mike McEvoy (Saratoga County EMS, NY)

Members: Chief Kristin Chilton (Lexington FD, KY), Deputy Chief Stephen Hrustich (Gwinnett County Fire, GA – FLS Representative), Chief Scott Kerwood (Hutto Fire Rescue, TX – SHS Representative), Chief Sam Pena (City of Houston FD, TX – Metro Chiefs Representative), Chief Ed Richards (Enfield Fire District No. 1, CT – THS Representative), Deputy Chief Bill Walker (Duck FD, NC – VCOS Representative)

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Background and Charge:

During the Spring of 2018, IAFC President Tom Jenkins convened a workgroup to examine the issues involving firefighters and EMS providers carrying concealed weapons (CCW) while on duty. The workgroup consisted of representation from several IAFC Sections as well as individuals with experience in CCW issues. He specifically charged the workgroup to answer three questions of concern to the IAFC Board of Directors:

1. Should the IAFC take a formal position on carrying concealed weapons on duty?
2. If state law and fire/ems departments allow CCW on duty, what are the necessary considerations or best practices?
3. Should IAFC develop a model CCW policy for departments?

Deliberations and Outcomes:

The workgroup held two conference calls, posted calls for information on the IAFC KnowledgeNet platform and finally, electronically contributed to a straw man document, the results of which are contained herein.

With regards to the three questions posed in the workgroup charge, the CCW On Duty workgroup recommends the following to the Board of Directors:

1. Should the IAFC take a formal position on carrying concealed weapons on duty? The unanimous decision of the group was “no.” There are too many variations in law and regulations across the country to adopt any formal position.
2. If state law and fire/ems departments allow CCW on duty, what are the necessary considerations or best practices? The group felt that a listing of considerations and a

compilation of best practices would best serve the membership of the IAFC. Our listing of considerations appears towards the latter part of this report as does a list of identified best practices which the workgroup recommends be posted to an IAFC web site rather than attached herein.

3. Should IAFC develop a model CCW policy for departments? The group does not recommend this, again, owing to wide variations in state and local laws and regulations.

Listing of Considerations:

The IAFC Carrying Concealed Weapons (CCW) On Duty Workgroup recommends that Fire Chiefs interested in, or who may be compelled by local or state laws or regulations with, developing policies, procedures or SOGs regarding CCW by members on duty carefully consider and address each of the concerns noted below. It is important to differentiate between members CCW as a requirement of their job (for example, some arson investigators) versus CCW by members where such is not a part of their job. These considerations apply to the latter (members where CCW is not a job requirement):

- Safety (accidental discharge, workplace violence, securing weapons in vehicles/quarters).
- Change in perception of the fire service role if members are armed.
- Defining circumstances for member use of a firearm.
- Qualifications for members with CCW on duty (including documentation, continued competency, etc).
- Considerations for response to locations prohibiting CCW, i.e. hospitals, airports, etc.

Best Practices:

A search for best practices yielded only two currently existing documents:

1. City of Portland, TX – Personnel Policy Manual – Section 10.05 Weapons Policy
2. Louisville-Jefferson County, TX – February 4, 2015 Memorandum from Chief Gregory Frederick to All Division Fire Members: Possession of Firearms by On-Duty Members

The CCW Workgroup recommends that the IAFC post these documents, or links to them, on the IAFC web site as we expect additional best practices will be developed in the future.