



Policy Statement

The IAFC Supports Fire Service Coordination with Other Agencies Prior to and During Response to an Act of Terrorism

The fire service is often called into action to address mission-related emergency issues such as fire, hazardous materials management and medical emergencies during the time of dangerous criminal activity or during acts of terrorism. The IAFC supports the establishment of organizational partnerships to support preparing for and responding to terrorism.

In recent times, the fire service has taken a leadership role in the planning for, and response to, acts of terrorism and for dealing with mass casualty issues involving shooting or terrorizing of innocent groups of people. Because of the widespread fire service involvement in EMS, community leaders and the public have continued to look to the fire service when new hazards threaten a community's quality of life. The fire service's entry into the control and mitigation of hazardous materials incidents has made way for its ever-increasing role in the War on Terrorism. The new label, "America's Domestic First Responders," is one that insists on a strong national direction.

Planning and risk management remain the primary tools when dealing with terrorism. Effective planning will require a thorough knowledge of the issues. Gaining such knowledge can only be accomplished through coordination with other agencies such as local, state and federal law and emergency management agencies. The preventative measures taken will reduce risk of the challenges faced by fire personnel and will reduce the impact of the terrorist act on the communities the fire service protects.

Today, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has assumed a lead role in the War on Terrorism. The IAFC continues to have a working partnership with FEMA and those agencies reporting to FEMA, such as the National Fire Academy (NFA). The IAFC continues to have representation and involvement in the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards-making process requiring and advocating that additional competencies be added regarding preparation for acts of terrorism.

Partnerships with law enforcement are needed in order to truly carry out the role of the fire service in the War on Terrorism. As such, the IAFC must take a strong

national role in developing these partnerships by example (at the federal level) and through the development of guidelines and procedures, which can be used by the local fire service. The fire service must recognize the need for thorough background checks of personnel to accomplish this partnership in many cases.

Category: Terrorism

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