



Smoke Signals II

Smoke Signals is a Publication of the Kentucky Firefighters Association

Turning trash into cash: New partnership aims to raise money through recycling.

SmartCart
It pays to recycle.



A new partnership between the Kentucky Firefighters Association (KFA) and SmartCart Recycling in Louisville, KY plans to turn trash into cash through a statewide donation program for used electronics – inkjets, cell phones and fax/copier/laser cartridges. The partnership, which officially launched in June, establishes a simple and cost-free fundraising program for more than 800 fire departments and 22,000 firefighters across the commonwealth.

As part of the KFA agreement, SmartCart is providing each fire department with everything needed to launch, promote and run an effective recycling program at absolutely no cost.

Everyday, more than \$2 million in cost-free community donations in the form of used inkjets, laser cartridges and old cell phones are simply tossed in the trash. The goal of the SmartCart program is to help fire departments profit from these used items before they reach the landfill, by encouraging community members and area businesses to donate their items for recycling. The donated materials are then returned to the SmartCart Recycling Center in Louisville for remanufacture.

KY fire departments receive cash, from \$0.25 to \$25.00 for each item returned for recycling. Monies may be donated to community programs and agencies or designated for internal operations. In addition, SmartCart will make a \$0.05 donation to the KFA for each recycled item collected statewide.

Initially rolled out in the Louisville area to assist local departments raise funds for the WHAS Crusade for Children, an annual charity campaign serving children in need throughout KY and Indiana, the recycling program has received tremendous community support, generating thousands of dollars in donated items.

A statewide partnership will leverage the strength and recognition KFA to create an effective outreach campaign that works while meeting the need for each area department to run its fundraising program independently. Since the program depends solely on the donation of materials that would otherwise be trashed – not cash or in-kind services - KFA officials see it as a win-win for everyone involved.

Said David Jansing, KFA Secretary, Ft. Mitchell Assistant Fire Chief and SmartCart program coordinator, "I am excited about the potential of this fundraiser for our firefighters and our community programs. Not only are we raising thousands in cost-free donations, we are removing tons of waste from KY landfills."

To get started with SmartCart and receive free recycling materials including outreach, collection and shipping supplies, Fire Departments should contact Juliette Grace, SmartCart program director, at 502-968-0990 or toll-free at 888-935-2737.



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"I have no ambition in this world but one, and that is to be a firefighter..." – Chief Edward F. Croker FDNY circa 1910

NFPA: Cardiac Arrest Is Leading Killer

Fires are not the main killer of firefighters. Heart attacks and motor-vehicle crashes cause more on-duty firefighter deaths than smoke, heat, flames or collapsing buildings, according to an analysis of firefighter deaths in 2002 by the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association).

A total of 97 firefighters died on the job in 2002, roughly the same number as in each of the previous nine years, excluding the 340 deaths at the World Trade Center in 2001. But in eight of the last 10 years, fewer than half those deaths occurred within the building or land area where the fire was burning, known as the "fire ground."

The majority of firefighter deaths—51—occurred traveling to or from an emergency, during training activities, during non-emergency duties (such as administration or equipment maintenance) and during non-fire emergencies (such as medical calls or motor-vehicle crashes).

On the fire ground and off, heart attacks are the leading killer of firefighters. In 2002, 37 on-duty firefighters died of heart attacks—13 on the fire ground, eight while traveling to or from a fire or other emergency, seven while engaged in normal administrative activities, six at non-fire emergencies, two during training activities, and one while cleaning up after a tornado. In addi-

tion, two firefighters had strokes during training activities and one suffered an aneurysm at a medical call.

Motor vehicles were another major cause of death, claiming 29 lives. Twenty-two firefighters were killed in crashes and seven were struck by vehicles, all while on duty. In the most catastrophic incident, five firefighters were killed and six injured when a 15-person passenger van overturned on its way to a wildland fire.

"The biggest life threats to firefighters are not what most people may expect," said James M. Shannon, NFPA president. "Two firefighters died from burns last year, while the top killer continues to be heart attacks. What's most troubling is that most firefighters who died of heart failure suffered from known health problems."

"NFPA has long had in place a standard, NFPA 1582, Requirements for Firefighters and Information for Fire Department Physicians, which lists the medical conditions that should preclude someone from working as a firefighter. These recommended precautions should be more widely used," said Shannon.

On average, almost one-fifth of deaths have occurred in motor vehicle crashes.

Other noteworthy findings in the new report:

- One of the worst wildland fire seasons in recent years took its toll: Last year, 22 firefighters died while working at or responding to wildland fires or a controlled burn.
- Firefighters older than 50 accounted for two-fifths of all firefighter deaths from 1998 through 2002, although they make up less than one-sixth of all firefighters.
- Nonresidential structures (except for health and educational facilities) are more dangerous to firefighters than homes. The highest death rates occurred in vacant building and buildings under construction.
- In 2002, no career firefighters died while responding to or returning from emergencies.

For this and other NFPA Headlines, please visit <http://www.nfpa.org/>

Treasurer's Notes

Greetings from your Treasurer:

It is time for another conference. Northern Kentucky is looking forward to having everyone visit us. We have planned a good fun working conference.

Just a few words about the treasury. As of today we have 403 paid departments, 14 personal memberships, and 46 Sustaining Members. Thanks to Charlie Shaw for getting these Companies to support the KFA. The KFA should end the year in black ink. All bills have been paid to date, as far as I know.

Some departments still tell mem-

bers of the executive board that they have no idea what the KFA is about. President Robbins has been traveling around the state, selling the KFA. This has generated a few new members who have not paid dues for four years. The Executive Board and Directors need to talk to all departments in their area and sell the ideas of the KFA. This is the only way our great organization can grow. We need to get more departments involved in the working of the KFA.

By the time this is printed the conference will be over and the body will have given the executive board an idea and direction

to go for the next year. There should be some interesting legislative matters to be looked at. Heart and Lung Bills, Hospitalization for retired members, as more departments are hiring paid staff, and incentive pay/state aid to all members.

Until the conference, stay well and come see us in Northern Kentucky.

Terry Keller, Treasurer



"Firemen are going to get killed. When they join the department they face that fact. When a man becomes a fireman his greatest act of bravery has been accomplished. What he does after that is all in the line of work. They were not thinking of getting killed when they went where death lurked. They went there to put the fire out, and got killed. Firefighters do not regard themselves as heroes because they do what the business requires."

— Chief Edward F. Croker, FDNY, speaking upon the death of a deputy chief and four firefighters in February of 1908

Fireman Joe Says: KFA Public Education Committee

FIREMAN JOE SAYS:

Recently I received an interesting report from NFPA (National Fire Protection Assoc) which I would like to share with you.

The number of fires caused by lighted tobacco products – almost always cigarettes – increased by a stunning 19 percent in the most recent year studied, according to research by the NFPA. But laws requiring that cigarettes be designed to stop burning when not actively smoked, such as the one that went into effect in New York State last month, could sharply reduce this destruction. Cigarettes are the leading cause of fatal fires in the United States. Smoking materials (a category that encompasses only lighted tobacco products, not matches and lighters) led to one out of four fire deaths in 1999, more than any other cause of fire. But only the state of New York has moved to protect its citizens from such fires. Starting June 28, cigarettes sold in New York

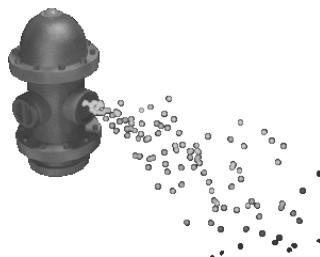
must be self-extinguishing, and all cigarette brands must be tested to make sure they self-extinguish at least 75 percent of the time. NFPA's statistical analysis sheds light on how cigarettes lead to fatal fires. Contrary to the popular image, most victims of smoking-material fires did not fall asleep smoking. Many are not even smokers. Rather, these fires typically started when someone abandoned or improperly disposed of smoking materials. Most victims were in the room where the fire started, and most had some condition that limited their ability to get out. Often they were asleep, but a significant number were impaired by drugs, alcohol, disability or old age. Indeed, people older than 64 are more likely to die in smoking-material fires than younger people, even though they are less likely to smoke. A cigarette touching something combustible can take significant time to produce a fire. Cut down the burning time of cigarettes and you can prevent fires.

Earlier this year, US Rep. Peter King (R-NY) and US Rep Edward Markey (D-Mass) introduced the Cigarette Fire Safety Act of 2004 (HR 4155) which would require the CPSC to promulgate a standard for fire-safe cigarettes around the country. The bill is now before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. James M. Shannon, President and CEO of the NFPA, quotes, "Will we continue to allow cigarette fires to kill hundreds of people every year, smokers and non-smokers, adults and children?" Shannon asked? "Or will we act on what we know-and require that cigarette be made fire-safe?" Is it time we investigate the possibility of this type of legislation in Kentucky?

Joseph "Fireman Joe" Stambush, Public Educator

REGIONAL EMBERS

LAKE CUMBERLAND AREA FIREFIGHTERS



The last meeting of the Lake Cumberland Area Firefighter Association was held at the Pulaski County Park at the Regional Olympics which was hosted by the 2003 State Champions Nancy Volunteer Fire Department. The results of our regional competition on July 10th, 2004 were: 1st place to the Nancy Volunteer Fire Dept., 2nd place Somerset Fire/EMS, and 3rd place Faubush Tri-County Vol. Fire Dept. In the explorer division were: 1st place Faubush Tri-County Vol. Fire Dept., 2nd place Somerset Fire/EMS, 3rd place Parker's Mill Vol. Fire Dept.

The Somerset Fire/EMS will host our next scheduled meeting on September 9, 2004.

We are asking all departments in Kentucky to help

support the Kentucky Federation of Fire Chaplain as they prepare for the National Conference to be held in Louisville this October.

This conference will help your local chaplains, who can attend; to be better prepared to help your department in the time of need. This is a time for group of individuals to come together to learn from others, how to help their departments accept what can come on the very next call. We are looked upon by many as to be the people to call when in the time of need but who is there when we are in need. This is where you can better plan for your department members to have the support they need.

In your chaplain corner you will find encouraging

words that help guide us along. The load at times seems to be heavy but when the loads are shared the journey will get easier. This is where your chaplain can come in and help. Think of it as a tool that has no limit. When a tool is used wrong it will not truly serve its full purpose. This conference can strengthen your chaplain to try to help fix what might be broken within your department. If it is a tool you use, why not make it as strong as possible.

SECRETARY-DIRECTOR

RICKY HAYNES

Joseph Stambush, President

*When fire is cried and
danger is neigh,
'God and the firemen' is
the people's cry;
But when 'tis out, and
all things righted,
God is forgotten and
the firemen slighted.
-- printed in "The
Fireman's Journal"
October 18, 1879.*

Jefferson County Firefighter's Association

Due you want it to rain? Just ask the Jefferson County Fire Fighter's

Association to have their next meeting at your place. For the past two

meetings, the guest speaker was STAT Care, unfortunately due to the severe

storms we've had this summer, they were unable to come out. So we are going

to try one more time on Friday, September 10, 2004 at 7:00 pm, STAT Care

will be scheduled to land at Lake

Dreamland, hopefully it will not rain.

JCFFA has been trying to generate higher attendance at our meetings and in

doing so; we have given out door prizes at every meeting as well as T-shirts

and Polo shirts for making 3 or 6 meetings in a row. For those who bring a

guest your name gets put in the hat for a drawing for a brand new Fire

Helmet. The Fire Helmets are given out in the middle of the year and end of

the year. The winner for the July Fire Helmet giveaway was Robert Clark

from Worthington Fire Department. We had four people who brought a guest(s)

to the meetings. Thanks for your support!

Rhonda McDonald

Rhonda@4-help.org

REGIONAL EMBERS

Pike County FF Association

Good day to everyone. It's been a real busy time here in Eastern, Ky. We have just finished up the 15 Annual Pikeville / Pike County Regional Fire & Rescue school. We have declared it a good success and had 365 students, instructors and administration personnel working very hard to put this fine school together. We had a couple of first classes this year. One that will become a tradition is the paramedic in-service training sponsored by the local air medical services, Medflight of East KY. Lifenet air medical took care of our 1st Responders & EMT in service training. Both of these classes were a big success and will help us grow even more in the future. We also took on the "Juniors" this year for the first time. A local fire chief want to teach them and it turned out very good. VFIS insurance services sent us Mr. Dave Love whom some of you might have met at Officers School in Owensboro this year. Dave is a great instructor and very knowledgeable about his work. He taught us Highway Safety for Emergency Services and Emergency Vehicle Response Safety

two great classes I would recommend them for any of your schools. This is our 3rd year of having the Tank Truck Emergency Response Workshop class. If you never had this class it is so awesome. Visit their web site at <http://www.sttstanktruck.com>. Dave and Michael are a great pair and keep this normally boring class very interesting. Again, all the classes we had were good and needed in this area. The instructors were from all over and if I start naming them I'll leave someone out and they will kill me. We have had a new addition to our fire family here in Pike County. Shelby Valley Volunteer Fire Dept picked up a new tanker with 2003 fire grant money if at anytime you would need to contact please feel free to e-mail at pikecoffas-soc@yahoo.com or you can check out our web page at www.angelfire.com/ky2/loufire. At our opening ceremonies we opened with a word of prayer from Larry Vanover, then a welcome to Pike County from the Pike County Judge Ex Bill Deskins and a big howdy and little speech from Senator Ray Jones II. Then we had Ronnie Day with

the fire commission office give us an update. We heard from the New State Fire Marshal Mr. Al Mitchell and he presented the former and now retired Fire Marshal Mr. Dave "Cornbread" Manley with a retirement gift from that office. Also in attendance with us was Mr. Carvon Hudson a long time friend and good supporter of the fire service. The Pike County Firefighters Association then presented Cornbread with a Plaque for his 15 years of dedicated service and perfect attendance to this school and the Pike County Firefighters. Also, he received a blanket from the Pikeville Fire dept with their history on it and to help keep the misses warm. All I can say is if you didn't come to this school you missed one great school. Remember, it's always the 3rd weekend in July so plan on checking us out next year! See you later Randy Courtney.



*Photo Submitted by
Steve Dryer -*

*07/19/2004 Kenner
St.. Ludlow, KY.*

4 houses on fire

Eighth Round FEMA Grants in KY

<u>Department</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>Federal Share</u>
Washington County Fire Dept.	Springfield	KY	Operations and Fire-fighter Safety	\$60,872.00
Thelma Volunteer Fire Department	Thelma	KY	Operations and Fire-fighter Safety	\$86,112.00
Crossroads Fire Department	East Bernstadt	KY	Operations and Fire-fighter Safety	\$34,155.00
Oak Grove Fire & Emergency Services	Oak Grove	KY	Operations and Fire-fighter Safety	\$70,065.00
West Knox Volunteer Fire Department	Corbin	KY	Firefighting Vehicle	\$202,500.00
Bloomington Moun-taineer Vol Fire Dept	Salyersville	KY	Firefighting Vehicle	\$162,000.00
Fisty Dwarf Volunteer Fire & Rescue Inc.	Fisty	KY	Firefighting Vehicle	\$175,500.00
Salvisa Fire Department	Salvisa	KY	Operations and Fire-fighter Safety	\$38,332.00
Red Bush Volunteer	Flat Gap	KY	Operations and Fire-	\$59,238.00
E.N.O. FIRE DE-	symsonia	KY	Operations and Fire-	\$30,177.00
Linwood V.F.D.	Magnolia	KY	Operations and Fire-	\$48,663.00
Fulton Fire Depart-	Fulton	KY	Firefighting Vehicle	\$180,000.00
Rockport Volunteer	Rockport	KY	Firefighting Vehicle	\$125,550.00
Payneville Volunteer	Payneville	KY	Firefighting Vehicle	\$174,150.00
Bonnieville Vol. Fire	Bonnieville	KY	Operations and Fire-	\$18,900.00
Wilder Volunteer Fire	Wilder	KY	Operations and Fire-	\$48,760.00
Benton Fire Depart-	Benton	KY	Fire Prevention	\$3,330.00
Estill County Fire	Irvine	KY	Firefighting Vehicle	\$144,000.00
Simpson County Fire	Franklin	KY	Operations and Fire-	\$66,551.00
City of Owingsville	Owingsville	KY	Operations and Fire-	\$85,050.00
Watts Volunteer Fire	Lost Creek	KY	Operations and Fire-	\$53,550.00

Promoting Risk Watch In the Community: A Word From Fireman Joe

Your chances of long-term success will be greatly improved as awareness of the need for, and the benefits from, Risk Watch reach the target audiences and the community in general. The primary goal of promoting Risk Watch or any promotion strategy or effort is to increase the awareness of the target audience about Risk Watch, the need for the program, the benefits, the cost of providing the program, resources needed, etc.

This awareness may be necessary to:

Gain support for implementing Risk Watch in your local school system. Get the resources required to begin or maintain the program. Gain the support of internal decision makers, participants in the program, or community leaders. And heighten the community's under-

standing of the scope of the childhood injury problem.

Develop a promotion plan or strategy. Take some time to consider who it is you want to reach, the message you want to give them, and the best way to get the message to them.

Ask these questions:

Who are the influential people within my organization that should know about Risk Watch?

Who are the people that will be providing actual support for the program?

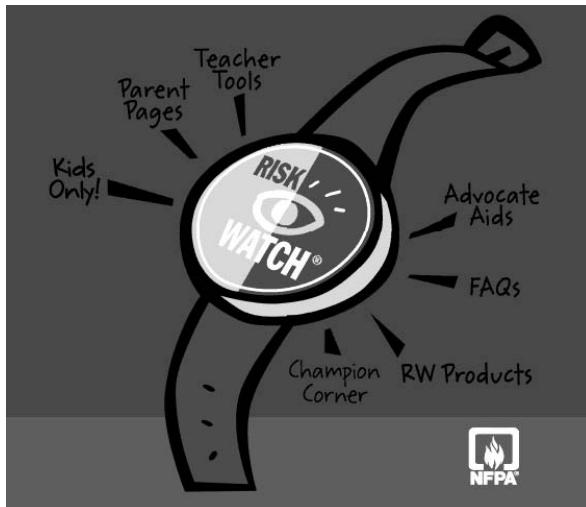
Who are the people that may resist change from the status quo?

Lastly, Why is Risk Watch necessary?

The message must make it very clear that childhood injuries are a problem in your community. Risk Watch is one solution to the problem, and your organization's involvement in the Risk Watch initiative is essential for success. Remember, Risk Watch is more than a program, it is a CAUSE! Recruit internal advocates and change agents.

Risk Watch is a solution to the problem. Make Risk Watch Your Community Cause.

Joseph Stambush



Contact Us—Submit Your Story

If you have a story, article or other information that you would like to see published in the Smoke Signals then please send it to the editor. You may reach Melanie at mhiliard@kyfa.org or snail mail at:

Melanie Hilliard
287 Frontage Road
Campbellsville, KY 40011
502-532-7279

I look forward to hearing from you.

If you have concerns about an article that has appeared in Smoke Signals then please contact me also. I would rather talk to my fellow firefighters any day.

Thanks for this opportunity.
Melanie Hilliard

PRESIDENT - BILL ROBBINS
Cell: 606-269-2926
E-Mail: brobbins@kyfa.org

Visit us online at <http://www.kyfa.org/> for a complete directory list.

The advertisement features a collage of images related to fire and rescue equipment. At the top left is a BW Technologies gas detector with the slogan "INNOVATORS IN GAS DETECTION". Next to it is a circular logo for "KERN/HARSH". To the right is a "Quality" logo. Below these are images of a chainsaw, a fire truck, a fire hose nozzle, another fire truck, a power generator, a pen-like device, and a handheld electronic device. In the center, the text reads "Your Connection to State of the art Fire & Rescue Equipment" in a large, bold, serif font. Below this is the website address "http://hightechrescue.com/".

Homeland Security Helps Train Citizens for Emergencies With \$19 Million for Community Emergency Response Teams



OLATHE, KAN. Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response, announced today the availability of \$19 million in grant money to train citizens to be better prepared to respond to emergency situations in their communities through local Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT). Brown made the announcement at a meeting with CERT members from the city of Olathe, Kan., who assisted first responders after tornadoes devastated areas of Kansas earlier this month.

Homeland Security has provided more than \$4 billion to state and local governments this year to support the efforts of first responders and help us secure the homeland, said Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge. These CERT grants are a great example of the use of funding to better prepare Americas communities.

Each CERT member completes

20 hours of training on disaster preparedness, basic disaster medical operations, fire safety, light search and rescue, and other essential topics. The training also includes a disaster simulation in which participants practice skills they learned throughout the course. In the event of an emergency, CERT members can provide immediate assistance to victims, assist in organizing spontaneous volunteers at a disaster site and provide critical support to first responders.

Through the CERT program, citizens are better able to respond to an emergency or disaster, said Brown. This is an essential way for citizens to help secure the homeland by supporting the work of our professional first responders.

The grant money represents the FY03 funds made available to expand the CERT program, and is in addition to \$17 million distributed through the FY 02 supplemental appropriation. The

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will distribute the funds for state and local level CERT programs to each state and territory according to the formula developed through the Patriot Act. The CERT grants will allow states to fund new programs and to expand existing teams. FEMA has a goal of training 400,000 citizens through the CERT program during the next two years.

For more information on the CERT program, please visit www.fema.gov.



Taking Care of Our Own: A Fire Chief's Guide to Preparing for a Line-of-Duty Death

A fire department does not know when it will have a line-of-duty death or serious injury. Does it have a plan in place? Are personnel records current? Does the department know how to make timely and proper notification to the survivors? Fire chiefs and survivors tell us that most fire departments are not prepared for a line-of-duty death. The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation is pleased to offer "Taking Care of Our Own" which provides senior fire officers specific information and valuable insights.

In **Module One** participants assess their own views and attitudes on key points that the training will cover. Throughout the training, the participants can compare these with some of the principles and procedures being suggested. The first module concludes with first-hand experiences of a chief and a family member whose stories set the stage for the rest of the day.

Module Two focuses on the importance of pre-incident planning. It covers: 1) putting together a pre-incident plan for line-of-duty deaths and serious injuries; 2) maintaining up-to-date employee emergency contact information; and 3) knowing what benefits are available to survivors, including the Public Safety Officers' Benefits and State and local support. Class participants discuss ways to support the family immediately after the death, during the funeral planning and service, and long term.

Module Three deals with notification of the survivors. It discusses the five basic principles of notification and lets the participants suggest ways to handle difficult situations.

Module Four presents the basic concepts associated with grief and mourning and explores the challenges of dealing with

sudden death. It ends by asking the participants to reframe inappropriate statements commonly made to persons who are grieving.

Module Five examines ways to provide support to members of the department, including the chief. It presents a sequential checklist of actions to take immediately after a line-of-duty death. It explains the Chief-to-Chief Network that offers professional and personal support to senior fire officers through the funeral and afterwards and looks at ways the department can help coworkers of the fallen firefighter. The module ends with suggestions on ways to remember the fallen firefighter.

The training manual appendices contain extensive information including survivor benefits, ways to support the family, examples of line-of-duty death SOP's, funeral protocols, investigations, and other useful resources.

Course Presenters

Deputy Commissioner John McGrath is a 29-year veteran of the Philadelphia Fire Department. He currently is in command of all activities in the Fire Marshal's Office, Fire Prevention Division, and Communications Center. He also has responsibility for three major units-- Hazardous Material Administrative, Apparatus and Equipment Procurement, and Research and Planning. He holds a BS degree in Management and is a graduate of NFA's Executive Fire Officer Program.

A second-generation Philadelphia firefighter, John has worked in every rank as a field commander. In these roles, he has been involved in all phases of the department's response and outreach following line-of-duty deaths.

Cathy Hedrick of Hughesville, Maryland, is the mother of a

fallen firefighter. On January 12, 1992, her son Kenny died of smoke inhalation while performing rescue operations at a house fire. Cathy's husband Les was chief of the department.

Cathy serves on the Foundation's Family Advisory Group and is a member of our Fire Service Survivors Network reaching out to newly-bereaved families. During the annual Memorial Weekend she manages registration for families and co-workers.

Dr. Mark Maggio has provided critical incident stress management services in hundreds of traumatic incidents involving federal, state and local emergency services and law enforcement personnel across the country for the past 15 years.

Mark works full-time for the federal courts in Washington, D.C. and is an adjunct professor in behavior science for the University of Maryland University College. He serves as chairman of the board of directors of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation.

Eligibility

This course is designed for senior fire officers, career or volunteer, chief officers and senior deputies of federal and state government, chaplains, and officials of national and state fire organizations.

To register for the course, contact the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation at 301-447-1365
301-447-1645-fax
P.O. Drawer 498
Emmitsburg, MD 21727
firehero@erols.com

Sustaining Members—Please remember these members when you have purchasing needs.

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BOUNDTREE MEDICAL TIM BROCKMEYER 6106 BAUSCH RD GALLOWAY, OH. 43119 614-878-8581 800-533-0523 http://www.boundtree.com	CAMP SAFETY OF LOUISVILLE DAVID JOELS 3308 BARDSTOWN RD LOUISVILLE, KY 40218 502-479-8005 campsafe@bellsouth.net	CDS ASSOCIATES JACK WILLARD 11120 KENWOOD RD. CINCINNATI, OH 45242-1818 513-791-1700 FAX: 513-791-1936
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The Benefits Of Stretching

Stretch and Strengthen

MIKE STEFANO

Firehouse.Com Contributor

A sensible flexibility, or stretching program will not only enhance physical fitness, it can actually leave you with a more youthful, supple body that protects itself against injury in the gym and on the fire ground. Stretching increases flexibility and range of motion by stimulating the production of chemicals that lubricate connective soft tissue. Firefighters across this country sustain over 80,000 injuries each year, many of which might be prevented with some extra flexibility and increased range of motion.

But besides becoming more limber, your ability to learn physical skills will be improved due to increased dexterity and coordination. Stretching after an intense resistance or cardio workout will also reduce next-day muscle soreness, promote healing of microscopic tears, as well as prevent future injuries to overused, tight muscles.

Stretching also promotes relaxation, both physical and mental. The ability to let go of stress is something everybody can use, especially when dealing with the day-to-day stresses of the average emergency responder. Flexibility training is also a great balance for anyone who engages in intense cardio or strength training (for a great cardio or strength workout, click here).

Types of Flexibility

Flexibility is defined as the absolute range of motion in a joint, or series of joints. We can further subdivide flexibility into the following categories:

1. Dynamic Flexibility: the ability to bring a limb through its full range of motion

2. Static/Active Flexibility: the ability to assume and maintain an extended limb position using only your own muscles

3. Static/Passive Flexibility: the ability to assume and maintain an extended limb position, using body weight, a partner or prop

Connective Tissue

Extended periods of inactivity bring about chemical changes that can limit flexibility. Underused connective tissue loses elasticity as it becomes stiff and dense. The human body goes through a similar pattern as it ages. A properly executed stretch routine can reverse this process.

It's theorized that stretching stimulates the production of lubricants between tissue fibers and promotes hydration and suppleness of all connective tissue. The resulting increased range of motion, especially when coupled with more strength and muscle mass, allows you to bend and move more freely before sustaining serious injury.

Stretch and Strengthen

Both flexibility training and strength training are necessary to achieve overall fitness. As a matter of fact, one of the best times to stretch is right after a resistance exercise. Static, or slow gentle stretching with a brief hold, that's done immediately after a strength exercise that challenges the same muscles and connective tissue, increases the overall effectiveness of that stretch.

Go to related article on strength training: [click here](#).

A fatigued muscle is inhibited from contracting as hard, and thus limits the stretch reflex. This allows an even further elongation of the muscle and surrounding tissue than would have been possible without the muscle being in a state of pre-fatigue.

Immediately stretching a muscle after intense exercise also promotes muscular growth and reduces post workout soreness. Stretching hastens the delivery of oxygen and other nutrients, while speeding up the removal of lactic acid and other waste products.

Static Stretch Guidelines

The flexibility segment of your program should be done when the body is warm, preferably at the end of your

workout.

Once the body is warmed up, stretching exercises can be intermixed with strength moves to save time.

Stretches should be held from 10 to 30 seconds. A sum total of about 30 seconds is recommended to achieve any kind of permanent stretch, regardless of the number of sets performed.

Breathe out when going into the stretch, and inhale when coming out. Use your breath as a way to relax, and go further into the movement.

NEVER stretch to a point of feeling pain, only slight discomfort. There should be no fast motion or bouncing.

Unlike aerobic and strength training, stretching works best when repeated every day, but good results can be achieved with as little as two or three, five to ten minute sessions per week.

Increase the effectiveness and safety of your workouts. Follow these sensible guidelines and make flexibility part of your fitness program today.

FDNY captain, Michael Stefano is the author of the *Firefighter's Workout Book*. Captain Mike also creates custom workouts for both firefighters and civilians alike. To learn more, visit his website at www.firefightersworkout.com



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