



PRESS RELEASE

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Fire Chief Responds to National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Final Investigation Report

Fire Department's Training Policies, Procedures and Protocols Improved

(Baltimore, Maryland) - On December 8, 2008, NIOSH issued their final report on the tragic line of duty death of Firefighter Paramedic Apprentice Rachel Wilson. It is the responsibility of every member of the Baltimore City Fire Department to read this report and understand what happened that day with the goal in mind of never experiencing the death of another one of our members.

The report details ten specific recommendations for the leadership and membership of the Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD) to consider as we continue the work of making our fire department a safer and healthier place for our members.

In light of the events of that day, the Baltimore City Fire Department has undertaken a complete review of emergency operations protocols, policies and procedures. The following is a review of each of the NIOSH recommendations along with what has been accomplished to date toward implementation of those recommendations within the department.

1. **Conduct live fire training exercises in accordance with NFPA 1403, Standard on Live-Fire Training Evolutions.** All live fire training is now done in accordance with NFPA 1403. The BCFD no longer conducts live fire training in acquired structures.
2. **Conduct all training and education under the direct supervision of qualified instructors who meet the requirements of NFPA 1041.** All BCFD instructors conducting live fire training now meet the requirements of NFPA 1041.
3. **Provide the Training Academy and Safety Division with adequate resources, personnel, and equipment to accomplish their training mission safely.** Chief Officers of the BCFD have been trained as Fire Department Health and Safety Officers. There is a trained Safety Officer present at all live fire training exercises.

4. **Screen Recruits to ensure they meet physical performance requirements.** The BCFD will use the Candidate Physical Ability Test Program (CPAT) for all future recruit testing.
5. **Maintain a comprehensive respiratory protection program.** All firefighter applicants and recruits will be screened for the ability to operate a self contained breathing apparatus under conditions of sensory deprivation.
6. **Ensure all recruits meet the requirements of NFPA 1582 prior to entering the training program.** All recruits are given and must pass a physical examination in accordance with NFPA 1582 prior to starting employment with the BCFD.
7. **Ensure that all protective ensembles meet the requirements of NFPA 1851.** All protective equipment issued to recruit firefighters now meets NFPA 1851.
8. **Ensure coordinated communication between the Instructor in Charge and the live-fire training participants.** All instructors involved in live fire training exercises are now issued a portable radio.
9. **Utilize the Incident Command System and a personnel accountability system that meets the requirements of NFPA 1561.** The incident command system, including the accountability system, is now used at all live fire training.
10. **Create a training atmosphere that is free from intimidation and conducive to learning.** All recruit training is conducted for the purpose of teaching and learning the skills necessary to become a successful emergency responder. Intimidation and hazing is no longer tolerated at the Fire Academy.

The BCFD takes seriously our obligation to provide the safest possible training environment for new recruits. This is a dangerous profession. I hold all fire officers involved in any training evolution responsible for the safety of our members, and I expect each of them to take immediate and forceful action when an unsafe act is observed. It is only through the concerted effort of all supervisors that we can achieve our goal of everyone going home in the same physical condition as they reported for work.

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