



## Chief's Corner

### Dealing With Unexpected Change

Hello everyone and welcome to the October edition of the Chief's Corner. I hope this finds you well and enjoying this beautiful fall weather. The warm days and cool nights are perfect for enjoying activities with family and friends.

This month I want to talk about some recent changes that happened at the Fire Department and how we as a department deal with it. So without any further delay, let's get started.

Change is a funny thing. It's the one thing that is constant and that we all have to learn how to deal with. Some people like and embrace change and others do not like it at all and struggle to adapt. When change is slow and measured it is easier to accept; however, when change happens quickly and you are unprepared for it, it can be difficult to handle.

Recently, there has been a number of significant changes in the Fire Department that were unexpected. These changes happened and we were not "ready" for them and the unknown that they can bring. Change, in and of itself, is neither good or bad, it just is. However, the circumstances surrounding the change could be completely different and may impact how you react to the change. Let me give you an example of what I am talking about to help explain the difference.



Let's say that you have an older car that you are happy with and it is giving you great service. However, you are thinking about getting a new vehicle. You go to the dealer and work out a deal to trade in your present car and get a brand new ride. You make the deal and pay the difference after your trade-in. Pretty soon you are cruising around in your new car and happy as a clam. That's scenario number one.

Let's look at scenario number two: You are very happy with your old vehicle and have decided to hold on to it for a couple more years. One day you are driving down Lakeside Drive and some "kid" in a big four-wheel drive runs a stop sign and t-bones you, totaling your vehicle. You collect the insurance money (after you hassle with them) and go to the dealer to make a deal for a new car. After some back and forth, you finally make a deal and pay the difference between what the insurance company gave you and the price of the new car. Pretty soon you are driving around in your new car, but this time you are not quite so happy.

In both of these situations the change is the same...you get a new car. However, the circumstances that prompted the change are very different. In situation number two, you were not expecting the change that occurred but you had to deal with it anyway. How we choose to deal with the change is the important aspect of this example. We can get mad about it and gripe and complain, or we can accept the change and look on the bright side. This is true of any change. We should always be open and search for the positive side of any change. We cannot always control the change, but we can always control how we react to it. When you choose to embrace the change and be positive you will be more successful in dealing with it (the change) and discovering new possibilities.

The lesson here is simple. When change occurs, look for the positives and possibilities. Think about how the change can open up new roads ahead and don't waste time and energy fretting over it. Remain positive and keep going on. If you are able to do this, you will be a much happier person and have a more positive attitude towards the job and life as well. Remember, you cannot control change, but you can control how you react to it.

Before I close for this month, I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped and participated in the visitation and funeral for Captain Darrell Hamlett. Special thanks to those who spoke during the service of Captain Hamlett. I am sure the family was touched by the words and memories that were shared.

The entire event went very well and was handled with grace and dignity. Captain Hamlett's family has expressed their sincere gratitude and appreciation on many occasions and were thankful for the support given to them during this difficult time. The turnout of members and compassion displayed from the LFD family was evident throughout. It certainly makes you proud to be a member of such a great organization. Please keep Darrell's family in your thoughts and prayers as they struggle to go on without him.

Until next time, take care and be safe. Get outside and enjoy the beautiful fall weather with family and friends. It's a great time of the year and Old Man Winter is just around the corner. Keep up the good work and never forget the most important rule: "Everyone goes home safe at the end of the shift."

Chief

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## Overcrowding

By: Fire Marshal Thomas Goode

Overcrowding is a condition that exists when either there are more people in a building, structure or portion thereof than have been authorized or posted by the fire code official, or when the fire code official determines that a threat exists to the safety of the occupants due to persons sitting and/or standing in locations that may obstruct or impede use of aisles, passages, corridors, stairways, exits or other components of the means of egress.

Early planning and occupant awareness during holidays, special events and/or gatherings, would help limit the crowds that occupy these events. Fortunately laws, regulations and/or guidelines are established to eliminate overcrowding in all types of structures ranging from assembly use groups to miscellaneous use groups. The occupant load is identified on the Certificate of Occupancy, which is designated by the building officials. This helps ensure that everyone involved can enjoy themselves with a reasonable expectation of safety by avoiding overcrowding.

A formula is used to determine how many people should occupy a location: width x length, divided by a preset number. This preset number is established by the Virginia Board of Housing and Community Development and is based upon criteria such as seating, furniture, etc.

Remember, overcrowding is considered a Class 1 Misdemeanor and, if convicted, carries a fine of up to \$2,500 and/or confinement of up to 12 months in jail.

## 60 Second Safety

### Low Air Alarm

By: Nathan Chapman, Health & Safety Officer

Buddy breathing is a skill drill that is used during the recruit academy, but is often overlooked and undertrained from that point forward.

It is very important to take time training with your SCBA so you fully understand it and its operations. Determine how you would get air to a firefighter facing a low-air/SCBA failure emergency, and work through all of the options that you may face. These simple drills will ensure that if an emergency occurs on the fire ground that you are trained and proficient in how to handle it.

Remember, we fight as we train, and when a situation such as low air alarm or SCBA failure occurs it is a matter of life or death.



The Lynchburg Fire Department Pipes and Drums participating in the National Fallen Firefighter Memorial weekend (October 15-16) in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

## Getting Out In Your First Due: Stretchin'

By: Firefighter Andrew White

In the late 1940s the creation of the mattydale (crosslays) found their way onto American Fire engines. Prior to this period, fire engines had a dead lay of hose on the rear of the engine and it was up to the firefighters to determine how much hose was needed to make the seat of the fire. A second firefighter would then connect that hose to a discharge and the chauffer would charge the line. With the invention of the crosslays, firefighters had a quick way of stretching and attacking the fire.

Through the years, crosslay lengths have continued to grow from 150 feet to upwards of 350 feet. While these preconnects have been helpful, they have also hurt the basic ability of firefighters estimating the stretch. The last place a firefighter should have to test their ability to estimate a stretch is at a working incident. The addition of the "apartment bundle," and a growing city that requires stretches of hose longer than our preconnect, requires the need to be able to make the correct stretch. This all comes with practice, but some of the following techniques could assist in making the right call.

The following methods were originally designed by the Marine Corp Combat Development Command to help judge how far a target is. These techniques can be used when having to stretch through a courtyard or other situations where a preconnect cannot be utilized.

### Appearance of Object Method

This method requires the firefighter to have a good idea of lengths. For instance, Engine 3 is roughly 30 feet long. With that general idea of length, a firefighter can look at a distance and estimate how many Engine 3's it would take to reach the "target." A simple calculation (30 ft x how many engines = estimated distance) will net you a rough estimate of how much hose is needed.

### Bracketing Method

This method has the firefighter estimate the longest and shortest possible distance and take the median of the two as the distance. So, if the stretch appears to be at the max 400 feet, but the shortest it could be is 200 feet, the firefighter would then find the average of the two numbers (300 feet) and that would become the distance of hose to stretch.

### Halving Method

This method is when the firefighter estimates the distance to the halfway point and then doubles that number to figure out the total distance.

All of these methods require practice and SHOULD NOT be utilized for the first time during a working incident. Figure out what works for you, and even combine methods to assist in estimating the stretch. While this technique isn't utilized very often, it's a tool that can be utilized on that allows the quick proficient extinguishment of fire. Stay safe and keep training!

Reference: Kiel Samsing, Newport News Fire Department RANGE ESTIMATION, CMC-30, COMBAT MARKSMANSHIP COACHES COURSE. USMC

## Certifications

### VDFP Chief Officer 101

Ronnie Coleman                      Thomas Goode  
Mike Reeves                          Lewis Thomas

### EMT Intermediate

Robert Barkley