



**CHIEF'S CORNER**

**Ebola - Let's Check the Facts**

Hello everyone and welcome to the November edition of the Chief's Corner. I hope you are having a great Fall and enjoying the beautiful weather we have had over the last several weeks. I have been out hiking a few times and really enjoyed myself; the leaves are turning and the air has a "little bite" to it. Just what you want for this time of year. Now, on to the subject at hand.

For this month's corner I want to discuss the "Ebola situation" currently occurring in this country and check some of the facts as they relate to Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). There is a great deal of misinformation and hysteria surrounding EVD and it always helps to separate the factual information from the media hype. If you know the facts, then you can deal with the patient in a professional and appropriate manner. Let's start with some facts about Ebola and where it comes from.



This disease was first recognized in Africa in 1976 and was called Ebola hemorrhagic fever. It was discovered along the Ebola River region of the Congo, thus the name "Ebola Virus." There have been several outbreaks of the disease in Africa over the years, but the current outbreak in West Africa is by far the most severe. There have been over 10,000 confirmed cases of EVD in this outbreak with a fatality rate of between 20 percent and 70 percent, depending on the infected population. (The high fatality rate is one of the things that is adding to the concern. The high fatality rate in part is due to the individual health condition of the infected population.) The current outbreak has been mainly centered in three countries in West Africa, namely, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea.

EVD is only transmitted by direct contact with an infected patient or their body fluids. It is not an airborne disease. The virus itself is fragile and can only live outside the body for a short period of time. The virus is also easy to kill and a simple bleach wipe will destroy it. Even when exposed to the virus, the transmission rate is less than two percent. To date, only one person has died from EVD in the entire United States and this individual contracted the disease in Africa then traveled here. (This patient also did not receive the proper medical care until he was critically ill.) Two nurses were infected by this "index patient" while they were providing direct care. They have both since recovered. It should be noted that the people living with this patient did not contract the virus. In order for someone to be infectious, they must have traveled outside the United States (to West Africa) and have symptoms. Remember, this is an "AND" situation. They must have both, traveled to the EVD region of Africa and be symptomatic. The signs and symptoms of EVD are very similar to many other diseases, including the flu, that Fire Department personnel deal with on a daily basis. Fever, headache, nausea, and body aches are some of the more common ones. If you encounter a patient with these symptoms,

remember to take a good history and ask about their recent travel. (If they went to Africa several years ago they are not a potential EVD patient. The travel must be recent, within the last several weeks. The incubation period for EVD is 2 to 21 days.)

Now that you know what to look for and the questions to ask, what happens when you have an individual that is a possible EVD patient? The first thing to do is STOP, and think about the situation. Don't act in haste. Most of these patients will not be critical when you first encounter them and you have time to formulate a plan. Gather the necessary resources and notify EMS 2 and your Captain or Battalion Chief. Don your PPE if further patient contact is necessary and notify the emergency room. Place PPE on the patient to help reduce contact with body fluids, etc. One of the most important things to do is limit patient contact with other providers and "control the area." Don't let unnecessary individuals into the area. If transport is necessary, speak to the emergency room personnel and prepare the medic unit. Seal off the cab area from the patient compartment and remove any unneeded equipment. The LFD Haz-Mat Team will respond and assist with these actions. (These actions will reduce the cleaning necessary later.) Transport the patient to the hospital but do not remove them from the ambulance until instructed to do so by the medical staff. Do not perform any advanced procedures on the patient, including, IVs, airway maneuvers, or aerosol treatments.

Remember, the most important thing is to slow down and think; then make a plan and call for your help and resources. Don't try to handle this situation alone. Acting EMS Battalion Chief Childress is preparing a procedure (in simple diagram form) to help you remember what to do and who to call. It will be provided to all employees within the next few days and will be easy to follow. Use it!

You can help protect yourself from all of the infectious diseases you come in contact with by taking a few precautions. Keep your body healthy and wash your hands after patient contact. Take the flu shot and get plenty of rest when you can. These few simple steps will go a long way towards keeping you well. Also, more valuable information can be found on the following websites: Centers For Disease Control ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)), Virginia Department of Health ([www.vdh.state.va.us](http://www.vdh.state.va.us)).

That's about it for this month. I hope you garnered some valuable information from this and are better prepared in the unlikely event that we must deal with an Ebola patient. Until next month, keep up the great work and be careful out there. However, never forget the most important rule: "Everyone goes home safe at the end of the shift."

Chief

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## NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to the following members who celebrate anniversaries with the department in November.

### 30 Years

Jack Williams

### 27 Years

Keith Johnson  
Chuck Taylor

### 26 Years

Gitau Muhoro

### 23 Years

Fletcher Wimbush

### 17 Years

Rob Turner

### 2 Years

Charles Schrader  
Philip Thomas

## CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to John & Brandy Cruise on the birth of their daughter, Lacie. She was born October 9<sup>th</sup> and weighed 8 lbs., 6 oz.

## CERTIFICATIONS

### Incident Safety Officer

Tom McCrickard

### Trench Rescue Level I

Adam Wagner

### Structural Collapse Technician

Charles Shealy

## 60 SECOND SAFETY

By: Battalion Chief Ricky Bomar  
This month's "60 Second Safety" message will be a bit different. This segment involves the firefighter's attitude verses his/her actions.

How we act and treat our customers is key to our success. Chief Ferguson often comments that throughout his many years service with the department, few complaints have occurred relating to the firefighters' skill levels. Almost all complaints involved the perceived attitude of the firefighter.

Retired Battalion Chief Paul Kilgore often taught, "Just because it's your 15<sup>th</sup> call for the shift, it is the caller's first." My thoughts are that you should treat others as if they were your own family. In any case, you will rarely be wrong if you.... BE NICE.

## CHANGE YOUR CLOCK, CHANGE YOUR BATTERY!

Daylight Savings Time ends on Sunday, November 2, 2014! Don't forget to "fall back" and set your clocks back one hour. Please also remind residents to make another change that could save their lives — changing the batteries in their smoke alarms.



Changing smoke alarm batteries at least once a year is one of the simplest, most effective ways to reduce these tragic deaths and injuries. In fact, working smoke alarms nearly cut in half the risk of dying in a home fire. Additionally, smoke alarms should be replaced every ten years. The peak time for home fire fatalities is between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. when most families are sleeping. Families can use the "extra" hour to test smoke alarms and plan and practice fire escape routes.

## SALVATION ARMY'S RED KETTLE CAMPAIGN



Once again department members are asked to volunteer their time to help "ring the bell" for the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign. Donations collected during the Christmas season are used to provide meals, clothing, and toys for the needy. Our location will once again be Sam's Club.

You can sign up by going to citynotes and clicking on "Departments/Fire Department/Salvation Army." The dates are December 1-4, and 6. Please consider volunteering your time to help provide for those who are less fortunate this holiday season.

## ROBERT E. WHITE SCHOLARSHIP

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation awards an annual scholarship for continuing education. The scholarship was established in 2002 in memory of Robert E White, a citizen of the Commonwealth of Virginia who donated his money towards the betterment of the Fire Service throughout the state.

The scholarship assists individuals desiring to further their academic education through a variety of opportunities such as college classes, National Fire Academy classes, VFCA events, and other Fire and EMS classes or conferences. Individual scholarship awards range from \$250 to \$1,000 and can be utilized for any direct expenses such as registration, tuition, books, meals, lodging, or transportation.

Applications for the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation Robert E. White Memorial Scholarship are currently being accepted. The deadline to apply is December 1, 2014. For more information, visit [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us)

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

### Exchange Club Pancake Jamboree

Date: November 7, 2014  
Time: 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
Place: City Armory  
Tickets: Advance tickets - \$7 (At-the-door - \$8)  
You can purchase tickets from Battalion Chief Jason Campbell at Station 1 (C Shift).

### Communications Meeting

Date: November 6, 2014  
Time: 8:30 a.m.  
Place: Fire Administration Training Room

### Deadline Christmas Ornament Orders

The deadline to order your 2014 Fire Department Christmas Ornament is November 24, 2014. This year, the ornament depicts the Fireman's Fountain. Order forms are available at [www.firefoundation434.com](http://www.firefoundation434.com)



### City Holiday Observance

City offices will be closed November 27-28 in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

2015 Communications Meeting Schedule	
January	January 8, 2015
February	February 5, 2015
March	NO MEETING
April	April 2, 2015
May	May 7, 2015
June	June 4, 2015
July	NO MEETING
August	August 6, 2015
September	September 3, 2015
October	NO MEETING
November	November 5, 2015
December	NO MEETING

