Chief’s Corner
Respect

For quite some time we have been told that respect is something that is earned. We begin to learn this at an early age when we are taught to respect our elders and respect those in authority, like teachers, doctors, and police officers. I agree with the theory that respect is earned and not given; however, I recently read an article where the author, Kristie Rogers, was talking about something that I had not heard of: owed respect. Ms. Rogers describes owed respect as the feeling every employee should have that his or her dignity and worth is a key ingredient to the overall health of their job and the larger organization. Ms. Rogers describes seven steps to ensuring respect, both owed and earned, is shared across an organization and maybe in our line of work also our community.

Step 1 - establish a baseline of respect. We do this by treating people like they are most important to us at that particular moment in time. Do unto others as you would have done unto you. Regardless of the situation, when you address someone understand that the look on your face, your tone of voice, and your other non-verbal components of communication all mean something. If you are an officer, know that these communication elements are vital to showing respect to those in your workgroup; whether they are being praised or not is irrelevant, respect should always be shown.

Step 2 - know how to convey respect in your workplace. We have talked about this step in other articles as this is about shaping your environment. We are creatures of habit and as such we are products of our environment. When we are exposed to negativity in the workplace or on an emergency scene, it is easy to see these cues and make them our own. We need to fight this urge and find what Kristie Rogers calls “social worth.” This worth can be found in behaviors that each of us already gravitate to and should emulate, like active listening, valuing diversity, and encouraging creative out-of-the-box ideas. Take a moment to understand those who you are respecting and put yourself in their shoes; what are their expectations of you as a leader?

Step 3 - recognize that respect has ripple effects. This is something that I think many of us take for granted and it works for both sufficient respect and lack of respect. Think of sufficient respect as hearing a catchy song or jingle, once you hear it you want to sing it and repeat it over and over. Suddenly, others hear you and they are singing as well. When we are nice and respectful, it’s catchy, others want to emulate the same behavior. Conversely, lack of respect is like sharing the common cold or the COVID virus. No one really wants that, they find it offensive and it causes negativity to flourish. The key point here is, when you are respectful with real sincerity, it is catchy and others spread that environment that you have created.

Step 4 - customize the amount of earned respect you convey. As public servants this is an important step because we don’t work as individuals, we always work as a team. Therefore we should always be ready to provide immediate praise and support to those on our team. Many studies show that this type of feedback and respect is profoundly motivational to employees. When we engage in the collaborative work that we do, this necessitates owed respect according to the author.

Step 5 - think of respect as infinite. Respect is not something you think about, it is something that you earn or are owed. Respect should always be given and taken through a constant exchange with no specified end. We can provide this in many ways through direct communication and through documentation on NeoGov.

Step 6 - see respect as a time saver not a time waster. We should always invest in those around us. Rogers states, “respect is largely about how you do what you do and what you are already doing.” Dealing with a lack of respect takes vastly more of our time than does providing respect to begin with. She estimates that Fortune 1000 companies spend seven weeks a year dealing with a lack of respect. The point here is that when we are respectful, we are powerful and efficient as an organization and as a community.

Step 7 - know when efforts to convey respect can backfire. This is all about sincerity and honesty. We want to be respectful in the most sincere way possible and with honesty and integrity. When we fall short of owed or earned respect when we take it for granted or if we are not well intentioned our efforts are seen as more disrespectful and efforts to see a return on our investment fall short. It is not enough to just deliver or earn respect, one really needs to show real authenticity.

In closing, our parents were right, respect is something that you earn. In our line of work and our collegial nature, respect is also something owed. We owe respect to ourselves, each other, and our community. We all matter, we all have challenges, and we all have value. I am thankful for each of you and the dedicated service above self that you provide to each other and our community. Although the last several weeks have been challenging, we have some challenging months ahead. I am convinced that respecting each other and our community will help achieve success.

Remember to be the kind of public safety person you would want showing up at your home.

Chief
City Observes Holiday

Memorial Day

National EMS Week

By: Deput Chief Jonathan Wright

National EMS Week is May 17-23, 2020. Thank you to all of our providers for the incredible and wonderful contributions you make to this community on behalf of the Lynchburg Fire Department.

We are planning several special activities to help recognize our providers for National EMS Week once pandemic restrictions are lifted.

Once again the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT), in partnership with the American College of Emergency Physicians, is also celebrating the many significant community impacts of EMS practitioners through its 2020 theme, “EMS Strong, Ready Today, Preparing for Tomorrow.”

Thank you again for your contributions that significantly add to a high quality of life in Lynchburg, especially during these recent challenging conditions.

Congratulations

- Congratulations to Firefighter Hunter Gull for achieving Nationally Registered Paramedic.
- Congratulations to Firefighter Julie Bailey for achieving Advanced EMT certification.

City Observes Holiday

All City offices will be closed on Monday, May 25, 2020 in observance of Memorial Day.

Retiree Social

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Retiree Social that was scheduled to take place in June has been postponed. Once we are able to determine a date for the event it will be announced. The event will be held at a new location this year...Old Fire Station #4!!!

Training Division Develops YouTube Channel

By: Battalion Chief Danny Williams

The Training Division has developed a YouTube Channel which can be accessed by following the link listed in this article or through the hyperlink created within Target Solutions. As many of you may know, the department once had a YouTube channel; however, changes within the organization outside of our control prevented access and uploading to this site. This led the Training Division to recreate a pathway to share knowledge, skills and abilities to the organization.

The purpose of recreating this learning tool is to provide another avenue of training that will illustrate techniques, procedures and skills to assist with the delivery of company/daily education. As this tool evolves, the ultimate goal will be to develop a library of videos that will assist and supplement training involving our own equipment, procedures and SOG’s.

If at any time there is beneficial information to share with the organization through the use of this channel, please contact the Training Division. As we progress, the Training Division may contact you to assist with the production of this material. If at any time you are interested in assisting with this, please contact the Training Division.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPpec2PeQbEwnU38SCKsi1Q?view_as=subscriber

Members Receive Certificates of Valor

On April 13, 2020, firefighters responded to an apartment fire at James Crossing where two girls were trapped inside. On April 28, 2020, City Council presented Certificates of Valor to Lynchburg firefighters (listed below) recognizing their selfless act of bravery that saved the lives of these two girls. Mayor Tweedy commented, “We know who you are, what you do for our community, and we appreciate it. Your courage, your bravery, it’s not everyone that is going to run into a fire. It takes special people, special hearts, and special training... you exemplify the bravery and the professionalism and the commitment to serving our community.”

Battalion Chief Ricky Bomar  Firefighter Toby Bouyea
Master Firefighter Wayne Casto  Firefighter Darryl DuBose
Firefighter Timothy Greenway  Battalion Chief David Jackson
Firefighter Tammy Kelly  Master Firefighter Patrick Madigan
Captain Matt Millner  Master Firefighter Holly Shackelford
Firefighter Christopher Wilmouth

60 Second Safety

UL Fire Safety Academy Courses

By: Captain Jennifer Collins

Underwriter Laboratories (UL) conducted a new training research project entitled “Cardiovascular and Chemical Exposure Risk Considerations During Training Goals.” They introduced this study as on-line training and the three areas that are covered are:

1. Recognizing how thermal and chemical exposures have an impact on our health,
2. Recognizing the impact that training fuel selection has on exposure risk and the fidelity of the training, and
3. Developing ways to reduce exposures using evidence-based techniques and decon methods.

I found there were a few important take-aways in this training. I will review one point in particular and I hope that you will visit the site yourselves to find more interesting data.

We all know that heat stress and fatigue can impair performance and even exacerbate cardiovascular strain, but one thing they found in their research was that the intensity and duration of work while in full PPE has no less effect on the body than performing the same amount of work in extreme ambient conditions. Regardless of whether you’re performing work in a cool environment or fully involved structure, our heavy, insulated turn-out gear adds to the work and interferes with heat dissipation. Therefore, regardless of what type of training you are performing, rest, recovery, and rehab should be based on the intensity and duration of work and have little to do with environmental factors. Our turn out gear should be consistently re-evaluated to insure that we provide the best protection for our firefighters.

The UL Firefighter Safety Research Institute uses science and research to continually improve firefighting procedures and reduce firefighter injuries and deaths. As we evolve into more efficient and effective firefighters, using these types of studies can reinforce the things we are getting right and the things we can stand to change. If you would like to take their on-line training, visit https://training.ulfiresafetysafety.org/
Storm Safety & Preparedness

By: Jennifer Mayberry, Public Education Specialist

Every year the Central Virginia area endures a number of severe storms; some of which produce tornados and/or flooding. Storms can knock out power, take down trees, flood roads, cause damage from lightning or hail, or in worse cases destroy homes and businesses and cause homelessness or death. We can’t prevent these natural phenomenons, but we can be prepared for them.

Electrical/Thunderstorms – When thunder roars, go indoors! If you can hear thunder, then you are close enough to be struck by lightning. So outside is not the place you want to be. Do not stay in/on the water, in open fields (ballfields or farming), under an open pavilion or shed, or standing under trees. You DO want to be in a solid/sturdy building with a roof and walls or in a vehicle with a solid roof and all the windows up. If you are inside, do not be around water because it is still a good conductor of electricity. Don’t use any electronics that have cords or corded telephones. Stay away from windows and doors and make sure they’re closed.

Hailstorms – These are often times accompanied with thunderstorms, so many of the safety tips are the same. If you’re caught outside, get to shelter immediately and cover your head with a solid object while you’re doing so. If you don’t have a solid object, even a shirt or jacket is better than nothing. Hail can fall between 9 MPH to 110 MPH and sizes range between ¼ inch in diameter (pea size), to 4 ½ inches in diameter (grapefruit size), all which can cause injuries. The largest hailstone ever recorded was in South Dakota and measured 8 inches in diameter. When you factor in wind speed, larger hailstones can do severe damage to homes and vehicles, so you must stay away from glass! If you are driving, pull over immediately to the side of the road with your flashers on. Move everyone towards the center of the vehicle and as far away from windows as possible. Cover your head and eyes with anything you have in the car, like blankets, clothing, or jackets, to avoid broken glass getting in your face and eyes. After the storm is over, you can check your home and vehicles for damage, but not during.

Tornados – Most of the time tornados are accompanied by electrical thunderstorms and hail so those safety tips were probably in effect prior to the tornado, but not always. When a tornado warning is issued or a tornado has been spotted, go to the center of the lowest level of your home or the building. If you have a basement or cellar go there; but if not, then a small interior room without windows on the lowest level. Stay away from windows and exterior walls and doors to the building, put as many walls and sturdy furniture between you and the storm. Crouch low under a heavy table or desk, protecting your head and neck with your hands and blankets, pillows, clothes, helmets, or whatever you have on hand.

Flooding – Turn around, don’t drown. Do not walk or drive in flood waters. Only 6 inches of swift water can knock you off your feet, and 12 inches can sweep your vehicle downstream. If there is a chance of flash flooding, move to higher ground immediately. If your vehicle is caught in moving water, do not step into rushing water call 911 immediately with your last known location of where you were driving and what you’re seeing as your vehicle is moving.

In all, be prepared and stay weather aware. Have a NOAA radio on hand to receive watches and warnings along with your emergency preparedness kit. Your kit should include a gallon of water per person per day, non-perishable food, manual can opener, medications, flashlights, first aid kits, extra batteries, paper and plastic products to eat and drink with, trash bags, moist toiletttes and personal hygiene essentials, and supplies and food for babies, children, and pets. Also keep in mind that the elderly may need extra supplies as well. Pack a 3-5 day supply per person and pet.

For more information on safety, preparedness, and kits, go to www.ready.gov. For more information and facts on storms go to www.nssl.noaa.gov.

Three Lefts Don’t Make A Right

Alleys and Whatchamacallits

By: Master Firefighter Zach Foster

When I moved into my current house off of Fort Avenue, I noticed that at the end of our fenced-in backyard the ground was flat, about the width of a car. Upon talking with the neighbors, we found that there had once been an alley that ran through our backyard, the length of the block. However, at some point in history, this alley had disappeared and the owner of our property had fenced in the area as well as built a shed right in the middle of the old alley. Let’s hope we never have to undo this.

Alleys can be found all throughout the City of Lynchburg and can be a firefighter’s best friend or worst nightmare. Sometimes, alleys can offer a secondary and more efficient access way to get to a residence/business. Take, for example, 2129 Campbell Avenue, which has challenging Alpha access, but an alley runs directly behind it and makes for easy access. However, this is a wide alley with clearance for apparatus. Many alleys are not so friendly to our larger apparatus and require preplanning or excellent observation skills and spotters.

Then there are what I like to refer to as “whatchamacallits;” gravel paths that aren’t alleys but also aren’t roads, yet they are the only access for properties. I’m sure there are at least a few of these in each territory within the city. Take a look around your territory on the GIS, or just keep your eyes peeled the next time you are driving around. Look at 2006-2010 Lakeside Drive. These houses do not even come close to facing Lakeside Drive and instead require access from a gravel path that runs in front of them. The same is true of several houses off of Wards Ferry Road (1838 and 1908 Wards Ferry Road among others). If a structure fire is dispatched to one such address and all you are given are cross streets, will you know where you are going?

What’s the point? Well, it would probably behoove all of us to pay attention to gravel paths when we are out and about. Maybe even hop out of your apparatus and take a walk down them to see where they lead, barring any “No Trespassing” signs. Or just pull up the GIS and look around for properties that seem to sit in the middle of nowhere and take a virtual walk down the “how the heck do you get there?” trail. Oh, and if you find out the exact name for these whatchamacallits, let me know.