2017 and 2018 have been monumental years for Army Fire & Emergency Services. New Army policies moved our program from being risk averse to better articulating and managing risk, causing a huge paradigm shift at nearly every Army installation, and there is more to come.

We have a strategic vision for the future: to better align Fire & Emergency Services’ contributions to Army readiness. This vision includes our commitment to quality improvement and is beginning to resonate across the Army.

Since the mid-90s, fire departments, whether DoD or civilian, have been involved in the self-assessment process. After all, if you do not assess yourself against a known standard, how can you tell where you stand? Unless you are willing to take a hard look at how you deliver services, you really don’t know what you don’t know. I’ve had several fire chiefs say that since they conducted their risk assessment using the new policy, they have more clearly determined their demands for service and real risks. With this knowledge, they can better meet demands by shifting resources from a lower risk area to one of greater risk. Risk involves probability of an event and the consequences of that event. By using historical data we can better articulate that risk. Our charge is to supply the commanders with a fact-based risk analysis so they can make needed decisions. While prevention is the first pillar of the National Preparedness Plan, we must also be prepared to deliver response services when all else fails. These risk analysis processes benefit from being codified across the same national fire protection standards we use for other practices in our profession.

Our stakeholders come from all across the Army: our Soldiers, families, and the civilians that live and work on our installations. Our own firefighters are stakeholders. As we work through this paradigm shift, we rely on training and education to help establish its foundation. We need to take this reliance on training and education to a new level. Our future fire service leaders must be better educated and have a broader perspective.

We’ve all seen the shift in the job since the early 80s when the hazardous materials (HAZMAT) response requirement was issued. HAZMAT morphed into chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and...
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Our current firefighter certification system, which first began in early 1993, includes over 186,000 Army professional firefighter certifications in 91 disciplines. We have technically proficient firefighters, but we must develop a better career path for our future fire leaders to prepare them for this multi-disciplinary role we now fill. We need leaders who understand and can discuss the economics of a service, who understand the socioeconomic impacts of an incident, who understand the influence of fire protection engineering on installation resiliency, and who see that a fire department cannot possibly be everything to everyone, yet still find a way to meet that call for service that experience tells us will eventually come. Our fire service leaders need to be prepared to sit at the table with senior Army leaders and speak with a voice our leaders understand. This is a challenge. The fire service is nuanced with complex requirements, from staffing and vehicles to fire safety and prevention engineering. However, much like the pillars of the National Preparedness Plan, each of these areas influence the others. Capability in the fire service is partially based on staffing, but vehicles, training, and qualifications play a huge role as well. Supplying expert prevention, protection, rescue, education, mitigation, and consulting services and enabling our Soldiers, families, and civilians to live, work, and thrive in a safe environment demands professional firefighters and executive-level knowledge and expertise. We cannot expect our senior leaders to understand the nuances of our world, so we must take the discussion to them with a professionalism they understand.

We owe our community the best we can offer. We need to continue our efforts to improve, adapt to an ever-changing environment, and ensure we are Army strong!

Mr. John Staub
Chief, Army Fire & Emergency Services

MESSAGE FROM THE FCR:

STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR ARMY CAREER PROGRAM 12

By Dr. Brenda Miller
Senior Safety Advisor/Career Program 12 Functional Chief Representative

Every day, both at home and deployed, the Army is challenged with a wide array of safety and occupational health (SOH) hazards that threaten our ability to train, fight, and win. Every accident that results in damage to equipment or injury to those who support the Army mission (Soldiers, civilian employees, contractors, and family members) weakens readiness.

The SOH community stands in support of our Army by enhancing “Readiness through Safety.” The Army cannot function without an SOH workforce in the right places at the right times with the right skills to prevent, identify, and correct hazards before they lead to loss. For that reason, the CP-12 has just published its Strategic Plan 2019–2023. The plan provides a framework that includes all facets of our mission, priorities, and vision for the future. This plan will guide our efforts and provide the basis for assessing our progress over the next five years.

Looking to the future, CP-12 will consider seven major objectives:

1. Shape the workforce and strategically plan human capital
2. Improve the SOH workforce proficiency to meet the needs of Army 2025
3. Develop talent management program
4. Determine focus areas for training development and delivery
5. Administer and broaden accredited programs and credentialing
6. Broaden publication of resources and tools
7. Reset and execute an intern program.

Achievement of this strategy will require persistence and collaboration by all CP-12 program participants. Proper execution of this strategic plan will ensure the Army has talented, agile, and engaged SOH professionals able to support and sustain our Army team.

The CP-12 Strategic Plan 2019–2023 is available in electronic media at usarmy.rucker.hqda-secarmy.mbx.safe-cp12cert@mail.mil.
HOT TOPICS:

MAKE YOUR HOLIDAY HAPPY AND SAFE!

By Gerald Adams
Chief, IMCOM Fire & Emergency Services

Emotions go crazy during the holidays. It’s exciting and exasperating; it’s fun and a hassle; and despite all that, it’s still full of wonder. The real beauty lies in children getting to feel all the joy and wonder—minus the traffic, crowds, and costs that drive their parents nuts. Yet, within the wonder lies hazard. Children are drawn to the glittering electric lights and the glow of candles—both of which can cause injury. Every year, 1,300 people are treated for injuries related to holiday lights, and 6,200 people for injuries related to holiday decorations and Christmas trees.

If the national statistics hold true this year, there will be at least 170 fires involving Christmas trees. As a result, 4 people will die, 15 will be hurt, and more than $12 million in property will be lost. Even when excluding trees, holiday decorations lead to 800 fires, 34 injuries, and $11 million in direct property damage. By taking action before the holidays, you help keep your family safe. This article provides some simple safety guidelines for avoiding holiday hazards.

Christmas Trees and Vegetation

Christmas trees and holiday greens are beautiful whether live or artificial. Remember these key safety tips when decorating:

• If you buy a live tree, always make a straight, fresh cut at least 1/2 in. (13 mm) above the bottom end of the trunk.
• Place live trees in a container with water to ensure the needles do not dry out and become a fire hazard (newly cut trees can absorb as much as 6 inches of water per day).
• Check daily that the water level in the tree stand reservoir is maintained above the fresh cut.
• If a live tree becomes dry, immediately remove it from your building or home.
• Artificial vegetation and trees should be labeled or certified by the manufacturer as fire retardant.
• Do not obstruct corridors, exit ways, or other means of egress with vegetation and Christmas trees.
• Use only UL listed electrical lights and wiring on natural or artificial combustible vegetation, natural or artificial Christmas trees, and other similar decorations.
• Do not use electrical lights on metal artificial trees.
• Do not use open flames, such candles, lanterns, and gas-fired heaters, on or near vegetation, Christmas trees, or other similar combustible materials.
• Do not place combustible vegetation and cut Christmas trees near heating vents or other fixed or portable heating devices that could cause them to dry out prematurely or ignite.

Voltage transformers have contributed to several fires over the years. Inspect these units often to ensure that they are not overheating and follow the manufacturer’s recommendations and these tips to avoid electrocution or fire:

• Only plug in appliances that are within the voltage rating as identified on the affixed label; overloading will cause the transformer to overheat and possibly start a fire.
• Do not operate these units near a water source.
• Disconnect these units when you leave your residence.
• Recurring problems with blown fuses or tripped circuit breakers could be signs of an electrical problem—have an experienced electrician check these out as soon as possible.
• If there is a burning smell or unusual odor coming from an appliance or wiring, immediately disconnect the appliance from the power source.

Candle Fire Safety

Be careful with candles. Candles are among the leading causes of fires in the home. If you use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. If you have children or pets, keep the candles high up and out of their reach.

• Never leave a child alone in a room with a lit candle.
• Don’t let teenagers keep candles in their bedrooms.
• Don’t use candles to decorate a Christmas tree.
• Never leave the house with candles burning.
• Keep a flashlight close by when the power goes out, rather than relying on candles for emergency lighting.

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Hazards in the Kitchen
Keep a few simple safety guidelines in mind when preparing holiday meals:

• When cooking, never leave the stove unattended, especially when using grease or anything that produces its own grease.

• Should a grease fire occur, cover the burning pan with a lid, turn off the appliance, and call the fire department (do not use water, flour, salt, or baking soda); do not attempt to move the pan.

• Clean the kitchen’s exhaust fan filter to prevent the accumulation of grease.

• Keep pot handles turned inward on the stove to prevent children from knocking hot grease or water off the stove.

• Keep all flammable items, such as paper towels, oil, grease, and cleaning solvents, away from the stove’s surface.

• Avoid loose clothing while you are cooking—the fabric material around your arm may ignite.

• Maintain adequate clearance in all directions around space heaters; give the heater adequate clearance—a minimum of 3 feet—from walls and combustibles, such as clothes, curtains, beds, or other furniture.

• Do not leave children unsupervised in a room with a space heater and keep young children away from space heaters, particularly when they are wearing nightgowns, which can be drawn into the heater by a draft and ignited.

• Do not cover a heater’s cord with carpeting or furniture. This could cause the cord to overheat and start a fire.

• Avoid using space heaters in the bathroom.

• Never touch a space heater when you are wet.

• Turn off your heater or turn it to low before going to bed.

• Use only safety listed equipment. Space heaters should be labeled with UL or AGA certification.

• Remember, portable gas or liquid fuel space heaters are prohibited in family quarters or where personnel sleep (including tents), unless approved on a case-by-case basis by the garrison commander, with the advice of the installation fire chief or safety officials to mitigate risk, for temporary emergency heating.

Matches and Lighters
Each year, children die in home fires started by children with matches or lighters. Many children who start these fires are merely curious about fire.

• Store matches and lighters up high, out of children’s reach and sight, preferably in a locked cabinet.

• Only use lighters with child-resistant features.

• Teach children to tell an adult if they see matches or lighters.

• School-age children should be taught to bring matches or lighters to an adult, removing them immediately from the reach of younger siblings.

Smoking
Fires can start almost anywhere, but they usually begin in the busiest areas of the home—the kitchen and the living room—and are often caused by carelessness. Smoking and matches are the prime fire starters in homes today.

• Have large, deep, and noncombustible ashtrays on hand.

• Empty your ashtrays before they get full, taking special care to inspect them before going to bed for the night.

• Do not empty ashtrays into wastepaper baskets until you are sure that there are no glowing remnants.

• Do not smoke in bed or even in an easy chair when tired; fire won’t always wake you up.

Space Heaters
Be sure your space heaters are in good working condition. All space heaters need frequent checkups and cleaning. A dirty or neglected heater is a critical fire hazard.

• Don’t leave children unattended; UNSUPERVISED CHILDREN can sometimes get their hands on matches and lighters, even if they are well hidden. More than half of all fatal fires started by children involved bedding, mattresses, or upholstered furniture.
Smoke Alarms
Correctly placed and operating smoke alarms save lives. Ensure that all individuals in the household can identify and awaken to the sound of the smoke alarm by following these safety rules:

• Check smoke alarms during the initial inspection of your residence.
• Perform an operational test of the detector periodically; once per month is preferable, but at a minimum follow the manufacturer’s instructions.
• Do not disable smoke alarms for any reason.
• Repair or replace inoperable smoke alarms.
• Do not remove the backup battery, except to replace it with a new one that complies with the manufacturer’s directions.
• Schedule battery replacement for hardwired smoke alarms the same day you change your clocks from daylight to standard time in the fall and again in the spring.
• Where battery-operated smoke alarms are installed, replace the battery every six months.
• Test battery-operated smoke alarms more frequently than hardwired alarms (weekly).
• Follow the manufacturer’s instructions on cleaning your smoke alarms regularly.

Fire Evacuation Plan
Prepare a home fire evacuation plan with primary and alternate routes of escape. Gather everyone in your household and walk through your home to inspect all possible exits and escape routes. Establishing and practicing your escape plan as a family activity could save the lives of your loved ones.

• Choose a place a safe distance from your home, i.e., neighbor’s home, a light post, mailbox, or stop sign, where everyone can meet after they have escaped.
• Make sure to mark the location of the meeting place on your escape plan.
• Practice in-house evacuation plans at least annually.
• Consider informing your local fire department if you have family members with special needs (this information may be entered into the fire department’s pre-incident plan and all responders will be notified during an emergency at your location).

Evacuation
The prime danger from fire is NOT the flame or heat, but rather smoke and toxic gases. As smoke, heat, and toxic gases rise, the danger is concentrated at heights with and above the fire. During a fire, a room fills with smoke from the ceiling to the floor. Therefore, you can find clean air close to the floor.

• Before opening a door in a burning or smoke-filled building, feel the door with the back of your hand. If the door is hot, do not open it.
• Take the next evacuation point, i.e., window. If you find yourself trapped, do not hide in a closet, in the bathtub, etc.—hang something outside your window. This action will alert firefighters that someone is trapped and needs rescue.
• If possible, close doors and windows as you evacuate to prevent the fire and smoke from spreading into uninvolved areas.
• Every second counts—do not waste time collecting valuable items, gathering clothes, etc.
• Stay close to the floor while evacuating your home, because heat from a fire will rise. If you are totally upright, severe burns can occur.
• Remaining low also has the benefit of better visibility in a smoke-filled area as well as better quality breathable air.
• Never re-enter a burning building once you have evacuated the premises.
• Go to your assembly area and wait for fire and emergency services to respond.

Fire Reporting
If a fire occurs in your home or you witness a fire in another unit, notify the fire department by calling the fire reporting number immediately.

• If there is a fire within your residence, immediately evacuate the premises, go to a neighbor’s home, and call the fire reporting number.
RESHAPING ARMY FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES PROGRAMS

By John Staub
Chief, Army Fire & Emergency Services

The Army is reshaping Army Fire & Emergency Services (F&ES) to improve installation resiliency across the Army. U.S. Army installations are America’s power projection platforms, supporting the Army’s mission anywhere in the world. Resilient installations are able to withstand or bounce back more quickly from catastrophic events such as a fire to protect the Army's ability to conduct military operations.

The Army recently experienced a fire in a large training and education facility that was unoccupied at the time of the late night fire. The sprinkler system activated, held the fire in check until the arrival of the firefighters, and enabled critical training to continue undeterred the next day. This is but one example of how enhancing F&ES improves resiliency in direct support to Army readiness. The Army’s F&ES program needed to evolve to incorporate the five pillars of the National Preparedness Plan (NPP).

“This evolution has touched nearly every facet of the fire protection program, from measuring and articulating risk to reshaping and reinvesting in our fire truck fleet to improving fire prevention practices across Army installations,” explained LTG Gwen Bingham, the Army’s Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management (ACSIM) at the Pentagon.

A complex assortment of public laws, national and industry standards, and specific authorities directly influence the fire program. Using these influences, the Army integrated the NPP into its model. Using the NPP, F&ES policy now incorporates the five pillars of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. Notice how prevention is at the top of the list and response is near the base.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1710, Annex B, Community Risk Management Model, defines the elements of a community risk management program in support of the NPP as (in order): 1) fire-safe design and construction, 2) suppression systems, 3) detection systems, 4) occupant fire prevention practices, 5) fire prevention safety inspections, and 6) fire rescue response. Again, response is the last element.

A fire department relies on response when prevention and resiliency efforts fail. However, that doesn’t mean the other pillars can be ignored. Balancing each of these elements across the F&ES portfolio helps maintain a reasonable level of risk for the Army community. This balance of fire-safe design and community risk management practices is further codified in various Unified Facilities Criteria publications that must be followed when programming and designing facility projects.

Multiple scientific and academic studies document that building resiliency into our communities and installation facilities shows a 6:1 dollar-for-dollar return on investment. For every one dollar spent on building resiliency, that investment is typically returned six times over. For example, fire suppression systems are often viewed as an expensive component of certain building occupancies, but time and again they prove their value. A review of more than 50 years of historic fire data shows that fire suppression systems restrict a fire to a room and its contents nearly 94 percent of the time, limiting fire damage.

The Army is looking into a variety of ways to improve resiliency through the F&ES program. Several studies have recognized that response services are not so much a production model, but one that requires surge capability. “Community partnerships, both on and off the installation, help build a true sense of community, reduce operating costs and build surge capability that increases resiliency,” Bingham said. The Army currently shows an approximate 4.5:1 ratio for responses off base compared to incoming mutual aid.

On many Army installations, there are Soldiers or civilians with specific F&ES knowledge and training that could be leveraged into required capability. Someone with training in a specific hazardous material might be able to support the installation hazardous materials response team. There are Soldiers trained in urban search and rescue that might be integrated into installation response profiles. Soldiers trained and certified to participate in specific elements of wildland firefighting may be available to answer the call when necessary.

Use of mutual aid agreements with civilian communities outside the gates of the installation helps build surge capability while providing a reasonable level of first response intervention. The national wildland fire model is a stellar example of cascading mutual aid processes. Much like the Incident Management System, cascading mutual aid agreements provide an expandable, reliable network of professional resources.

The Congressional Fire Services Institute’s 2017 White Paper, “Understanding the Roles, Challenges & Needs of Our Nation’s Fire and Emergency Services,” recognized the many challenges associated with maintaining safe, effective F&ES programs. Adopting a community approach to providing F&ES critical services provides opportunity to capitalize on the partnerships both on and off our installations.

These are but a few aspects of building resiliency through Army F&ES programs. Through the consistent application of fact-based risk analysis, research, and integration of these new processes, Army firefighters will deliver more consistent services across the Army. By firmly integrating the five essential principles of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery, F&ES support to our Soldiers, families, and civilians will continue to improve. These efforts will reduce the vulnerability of Army installations to the damaging and disruptive effects of fires on Army’s readiness to deploy, fight, and win the nation’s wars.

Mr. John Staub, MPA, CFO, EFO, is the Chief, Army Fire & Emergency Services. As part of the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management staff, he’s the Army representative to the Federal Fire Working Group, and the DoD Fire Emergency Services Working Group. His responsibilities include policy development, MDEF (budget) management and program execution oversight for Fire & Emergency Services programs across the Army.
CAREERIST SPOTLIGHT:

CP-12 SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SETS THE BAR FOR EXCELLENCE IN SAFETY

Richard E. Hearron
Fort Riley Safety Director

Mr. Richard E. Hearron, U.S. Army Garrison (USAG) Fort Riley Safety Director, is the 2018 United States Army Installation Management Command (IMCOM) Stalwart Award Winner for his achievements and leadership in safety and occupational health. Mr. Hearron’s leadership, initiatives, resourcefulness, innovation, and sheer expertise in Soldier, Department of the Army (DA) civilian, and family member support demonstrates his unparalleled commitment to Soldiers and their families.

As the USAG Fort Riley safety director, Mr. Hearron was recognized with the Army Chief of Staff Exceptional Organization Award in Safety for FY14. He was also selected for the IMCOM Excellence in Safety–Civilian Employee category for FY15. Also in FY15, the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff–Army awarded Mr. Hearron with Excellence in Safety Award–Civilian Employee category.

Under his leadership, the Secretary of the Army selected USAG Fort Riley for the Exceptional Organization Safety Award (Garrison) for FY14, FY16, and FY17 for contributions in safety and excellent application of risk management that resulted in reductions in accidents and incidents at Fort Riley’s military installation. In addition, though Mr. Hearron’s exceptional leadership example, his employees have also been recognized for prestigious honors. Mr. Rodrigo V. Cruz, occupational health and safety specialist (0018) is featured in Safety + Health Magazine and was named Instructor of the Year and the Army Defensive Driver Course Instructor of the Year. In addition, three others under Mr. Hearron’s employ all received the Department of the Army Risk Management Award. Mr. Hearron’s commitment to developing his employees by providing them with the resources and guidance to excel in their positions is evident from his willingness to recognize their hard work and dedication.

In FY17, the USAG Fort Riley Safety Office, in partnership with the Kansas Traffic Resource Office (KTRSO) and the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), selected a Soldier from the 1st Combat Aviation Brigade to participate in a public service announcement (PSA) for the Kansas Seatbelts Are for Everyone (SAFE) program. The SAFE program promotes the use of seatbelts as a means to prevent critical injuries in motor vehicle accidents. The SAFE program’s target audience is primarily teen drivers, but through partnership with Fort Riley, the KTRSO/KDOT agreed to expand the promotional message to include Soldiers, DA civilians, and family members in a separate PSA at no cost to the government. The PSA is currently featured at the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center.

After the USAG Fort Riley Safety Office participated in operational excellence training, Mr. Hearron challenged his team to come up with an innovative way to connect with USAG Fort Riley Safety Office customers (Soldiers, DA civilians, family member, retirees, and contractors), resulting in one of Mr. Hearron’s employees producing the USAG SafetyGO app. The USAG SafetyGO app is a public-access app available in both the Android and iOS app stores, supplying information to improve customer service for the USAG Fort Riley Safety Office. Customers can enroll in safety courses, view the safety office’s public access calendar, submit 5Ws for near-miss reporting, connect with the USAG Fort Riley Safety Office on Facebook, and much more. Mr. Hearron’s vision for innovation through technology resulted in a Fort Riley first and a best practice.

In coordination with the Directorate of Family, Morale and Recreation, Mr. Hearron was able to secure two grants from Yamaha Corporation (for $7,000 and $10,000) to make improvements to the installation all-terrain vehicle training area. The funds were used to build ramps, cut trails, clear hazards, and improve the overall riding experience for customers who enjoy an off-highway experience.

Mr. Hearron’s vision and leadership has made the USAG Fort Riley Safety Office one of the best in the Army, and his innovative ways of improving the safety process have resulted in an exceptional and award-winning safety culture.

Mr. Hearron entered civilian service as an intern in Career Program 12 as a safety and occupational health specialist. He currently serves as the USAG Fort Riley Safety Director under the leadership of Colonel Steven Shrade, USAG commander.
RESOURCES FOR SUCCESS:

THE LEADER’S GUIDE TO THE U.S. ARMY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL

In November 2018, Army Career Program 12 published The Leader’s Guide to the U.S. Army Emergency Management Professional. The guide furnishes an overview of emergency management (EM) personnel roles and responsibilities, training and educational opportunities, and career development paths for the disaster program manager, emergency manager, and emergency management specialist. This publication also informs commanders of their role in emergency management and what they should expect from EM professionals.

The Army EM program offers integrated and comprehensive EM services necessary to protect our community and mission capabilities from all hazards in a cost-effective, implementable, and sustainable manner. The program furnishes EM capabilities when and where they are needed to protect the Army community and mission capability through the following activities:

• Preparing Army installations for multiagency, multi-jurisdictional emergencies.

• Supplying comprehensive protection for all personnel against natural, technological, and human caused hazards, including terrorism threats or incidents.

• Sustaining critical operations during an emergency.

• Maintaining or restoring essential operations and essential services post-incident.

EM professionals implement the mission, strategic goals, objectives, and framework of the Army emergency management program. These professionals are dedicated to saving lives and protecting property through prevention, protection, response, and recovery from disasters and emergencies.


THE NEW FACE OF ARMY FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES RISK ANALYSIS

By John Staub

Army Fire & Emergency Services has been redefining its risk management processes over the last three years. This evolution has touched nearly every area involved in providing fire protection services by measuring, articulating and documenting risk with the goal of better resiliency across Army garrisons.

Risk in fire and emergency services has been difficult to define and is often an emotionally charged topic. However, solid research and application of pertinent facts is changing the face of Army Fire and Emergency Services risk analysis and management.

The first step in evaluating fire risk is asking “what defines risk as it pertains to fire?” Through years of professional experience and research, Chief Ronnie Coleman of the Fire Services Training Institute best defined the answer as “risk of fire = (probability of a fire starting) × (probability of a fire spreading) × (probability of injury to occupants or damage to facilities).”

The challenge that remained was how to measure and clearly articulate the three pieces of the equation. This challenge warranted a review of the applicable laws, national and industry standards, and DoD policy that drive the Fire and Emergency Services program.

Enter the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) and the Commission for Fire Accreditation International. Since the early 1990s, the Department of Defense has encouraged DoD fire agencies to become CPSE-accredited agencies.

Taking this approach seemed a logical step for F&ES as hospitals, colleges, and universities are accredited to obtain a non-biased measurement against a national standard. Many of the communities surrounding Army installations are CPSE-accredited as are many fire departments in the DoD sister services. Within the CPSE accreditation process is the requirement to develop a Community Risk Assessment (CRA) and a Standards of Cover (SOC).

A key step in the CRA process is a review of historical fire and fire response data within a community. The requirement is to review responses covering a minimum of three years, measuring not only historical responses, but also the types of responses that occurred, including the time of day and day of week of the responses. Through a fact-based assessment of a department’s response posture, input for the first part of the equation can be accurately measured (probability of a fire starting). This analysis will also provide a geographical picture of demand for services, which will help measure whether F&ES resources are properly distributed across the garrison.

Another step in the CRA process is the opportunity to assess facility risk based
The sprinkler system activated, held the fire facility that was unoccupied at the time. night fire in a large training and education engineering criteria into facility projects. Criteria and infusing required fire protection be reduced by following Unified Facilities The probability of injury and damage can be influenced by the first part of the equation (probability of a fire starting). The OVAP assessment plays right into the senior commander’s plan when making decisions regarding life, health, and safety of the garrison community. An OVAP analysis also assists in reviewing life, health, and safety considerations for construction and renovation projects. One example might be inclusion of fire suppression systems in sleeping facilities.

By reviewing required codes, standards, and the facility OVAP score, a commander can make an informed decision in developing the required scope of a facility project. However, the OVAP score and process is only one element in the CRA.

With the first two steps of the process analyzed, a department can step back and make a determination on the third step of the CRA process—probability of occupant injuries/facility damage. This step is critically important in that it can help senior leaders make decisions on mission risk from a series of fact-based studies across garrisons.

The probability of injury and damage can be reduced by following Unified Facilities Criteria and infusing required fire protection engineering criteria into facility projects. The Army recently experienced a late night fire in a large training and education facility that was unoccupied at the time. The sprinkler system activated, held the fire in check until the arrival of the firefighters and enabled critical training to continue undeterred the next day.

While a completed CRA will assist the department, the analysis shouldn’t stop at the CRA. Another important aspect is to measure historical responses against the Army service delivery performance standards. This will help analyze current delivery of these services across a garrison.

Only upon completing the total risk analysis process can the installation fire chief publish a Standards of Cover, which is essentially a health report on the department at each Army installation. Should the garrison staff find themselves in need of additional resources, it must be documented through the CRA/SOC process, which is submitted as part of the concept plan in the Total Army Analysis.

A well-written SOC contains all of the CPSE required elements. This ensures each department approaches issues through similar, yet flexible, processes. This includes measuring risk not only for structure fires through the OVAP and historical data analysis processes, but also measuring risk for all services provided. Included are technical rescue, hazardous materials response, aircraft rescue firefighting, and other garrison-specific response categories.

Similar to measuring structure fire risk, each of these other fire department-provided services should also be measured using a fact-based matrix. The matrix includes all three components of physical, theoretical, and historical risk measurement. Leaving out just one of these three components will result in a meager and inaccurate measure that is steeped in emotion.

As commanders move from garrison to higher levels of command, or when moving to new installations, they receive copies of the CRA and SOC. Commanders will see a commonly formatted presentation across the entire Army. Similarly, once complete, a properly documented CRA and SOC provides each land-holding commander an installation-by-installation review of risk and services across their command. These can then be rolled up into a report on the health of the fire program across the command.

By comparing the Army F&ES programs against the National Preparedness Plan, commanders can leverage overarching support to our garrisons around the five essential principles of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.

The new risk analysis process is but one aspect of the reshaping initiative for F&ES. Consistent application of fact-based research, adaptation of nationally recognized processes, and integration of these new processes throughout the F&ES program provide commanders a fact-based analysis from which to make informed decisions. F&ES support to Soldiers, families, and Army civilians will continue to improve by integrating the five essential principles into the Army fire protection program.

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AMMUNITION AND EXPLOSIVE AMNESTY—
THE COMMANDER’S PROGRAM

It is Army policy to provide the maximum possible protection to military and civilian personnel, critical assets, and infrastructure from the potential damaging effects of military ammunition and explosive (A&E) items. The A&E amnesty program intends to minimize A&E items in the hands of the troops and reduce mishaps. Accountability is the first line of defense in ensuring all items are stored appropriately. However, when there is a breakdown of accountability, there is an increased possibility of live A&E remaining in the hands of the troops. Live ammunition in the barracks rooms, duffle bags, desk drawers and trunks of privately owned vehicles is a mishap waiting to happen.

The amnesty program provides an opportunity for individuals to return A&E found, stolen, or misplaced without fear of repercussions. No repercussions is critical to the success of the program and commanders must ensure that amnesty means just that; personnel are willing and comfortable turning in A&E under the program. The program is governed by AR 710-2 and specific guidance to commanders and safety personnel can be found in DA Pam 385-64.

Garrisons, installations, and forward operating bases having elements that use military munitions will establish an A&E Amnesty Program. Most Army installations have organizations using A&E on a daily basis for training. The requirement for this program is the same for ammunition depots, manufacturing plants, and testing facilities as well.

There are three components to a successful program. Installation commanders must provide amnesty containers to collect A&E from Soldiers, civilians, family members, and anyone else needing to properly discard A&E. At a minimum, containers will be located at the installation ammunition supply point (ASP) and must be accessible 24 hours a day. Larger installations are encouraged to provide additional containers throughout the installation to maximize the effectiveness of the program. Collection containers limited to accepting small arms ammunition are perfect for densely populated areas such as dining facilities and motor pools. Both the installation safety officer and the installation chief quality assurance specialist—ammunition surveillance (QASAS) will approve the design, identification, location, and operating instructions of all amnesty containers. Installation safety professionals can order approved containers from the Ammunition Peculiar Equipment (APE) catalog or have containers locally designed and fabricated. While containers are not designed nor expected to contain an explosion, they should, to the maximum extent practicable, prevent the unauthorized removal of the contents, prevent the unauthorized removal of the container itself, provide protection from weather exposure, and prevent A&E from accumulating, dropping or falling in such a way that might cause inadvertent initiation. The collection containers do not require explosive safety site plans; however, a risk assessment is required to ensure the type and location of the container has been carefully considered.

The second component of the commander’s amnesty program is the installation’s annual Amnesty Days. Installation commanders must provide an Amnesty Day at least once per year, but many are held semiannually or even quarterly. All safety personnel, to include installation safety officers, explosive safety professionals, installations QASAS, ammunition Soldiers, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), and fire safety professionals should be present and participating in the event. The event should be scheduled when maximum personnel are available to take advantage of the opportunity to properly discard of A&E. Installation Spring and Fall Cleaning weeks are prime opportunities as personnel are engaged in large-scale police calls, unit-level housekeeping, and range maintenance activities.

The final component of the amnesty program is publicity. The program is ineffective if no one is aware of it. Fortunately, installation safety officers have many methods to inform the community about the program. Locations of collection containers and dates of Amnesty Days can be announced using post-wide newspapers, social media, command television channels, digital bulletin boards, post-wide email distribution lists, safety newsletters, and unit safety officers. In order to keep customer units informed, ASP personnel should always be familiar with the locations of collection containers and dates and locations for upcoming Amnesty Days. Unit commanders and senior enlisted leaders must emphasize the no-questions-asked program and its purpose, and encourage Soldiers to take advantage of the program.

Don’t forget to incorporate the 3Rs—Recognize, Retreat, and Report into the overall program.

A command emphasized and well-publicized program, highly visible collection containers, and an organized and planned Amnesty Days schedule ensures installation commanders are providing safe and regulatory-based measures aimed at getting A&E out of the hands of the troops and properly stored in the ASP. Every munition that is ‘on-the-loose’ around the installation poses unnecessary risk to both military and civilian personnel and to mission essential equipment. How does your Amnesty Program measure up?

• Do you know where amnesty collection containers are located on your installations and who is responsible for checking and maintaining them?

• Do you know who your installation QASAS is and who the ASP accountable officer is?

• Have you developed a standard operating procedure detailing specific functional responsibilities for handling amnesty items?

• When was your last installation Amnesty Day and is the next day already scheduled on the long-range calendar?

• Does the senior commander have a policy letter published regarding unauthorized A&E and proper procedures to be followed? Does this include the 3R program?

• Do you have relationships with personnel at the ASP, QASAS, Explosive Safety, EOD Response, Directorate of Emergency Services (DES), and Fire Safety?

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Dealing with difficult or traumatic situations, whether they are personal or professional, is hard to do. But dealing with trauma in a profession that has a history of attaching a stigma to it is even more difficult. First responders experience traumatic events on a regular basis. Asking “Are you good?” and getting a response of “Yeah, I am good,” is a quick way to check in with a colleague and, for firefighters, quick and easy is our bread and butter. But as these events compound, they can become overwhelming, tempting responders to consider drugs or alcohol to cope. Too often, we are not paying attention to the signs of a problem: changes in behavior, isolation, and even blatant requests for help. Peer support identifies those signs and puts trained people in immediate contact to navigate the way ahead, relate to the challenges, and break the wall of stigma.

Why Peer Support?

Why not? Every single person has struggles. Leaders need to embrace those struggling and be proactive to return them to fully functioning members of the team. To start, we formed a collaborative effort between management and local labor unions. Training was brought to the department, beginning the process of finding a program for us. We offered training to members of our department, fire chaplains, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and our neighboring federal fire brothers and sisters from the Fort Myer Fire Department. Topics included signs and symptoms of stress and other diagnoses, active listening strategies, non-verbal communications skills, identification of local mental health resources, how to handle a crisis, rapport building and supporting peers on and off the job, an in-depth peer support process, role play, and skills practice.

We created a flowchart for supervisors to refer to when faced with a firefighter in need. The chart has contact numbers for the peer support team, hotlines, and treatment centers. The program has affiliated with the Fire Department of New York Peer Support Program and used them as invaluable educational source of both procedures and practical experience. The Northern Virginia Federal Fire Peer Support Team has achieved other accomplishments as well. Jonathan Lang was selected by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) to speak at the IAFF Redmond Symposium for Emergency Medical Service on peer support.

This effort is not one and done. This is a long-term commitment to continue to train, validate the process, and break down barriers. Peer support is not just a firefighter program nor are the problems exclusive to firefighters. The Army has its fair share of challenges helping veterans identify, cope, and be treated for PTSD and depression. The suicide rate among veterans is staggering; now the same can be said for first responders. While the Army has developed resiliency training that the entire workforce, military and civilian, attend, it is difficult to relate to. The suicide rate for firefighters surpassed the line-of-duty death rate several years ago. This is a problem we must do something to fix. Peer support is the fire service’s version of resiliency training. The same veterans that are struggling to find an outlet are often our brothers and sisters on the job. Life experiences don’t go away; they can actually be triggered by responses on the job. Peer support is about understanding those triggers, quickly identifying changes in behavior, and ensuring there are peers to talk to and an outlet to licensed clinicians or the EAP, if needed. The key is identifying the change in behavior.

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Here are the words of firefighter Jonathan Lang on his journey, how the peer support team came about, and his life experiences.

In 2012, our department endured our first experience with a suicide. One of our own lost his battle with PTSD and depression and took his life. At this time, we had no productive outlets to discuss this situation or learn how to deal with the loss. The subject was swept under the rug and nobody knew how to talk about what happened. We also had no preventative measures or training to understand the signs and symptoms of someone struggling with mental illness or substance use disorder.

I had been struggling with my own demons. I was battling addiction and alcoholism. I was abusing opioids prescribed for injuries sustained on the job. My addiction was getting worse! When I came to work hungover, the guys would tell me to “sleep it off” with the best intentions. They thought they were doing me a favor, but were, in fact, enabling me. I never faced any consequences for my behavior. I entered the fire service as an addict and the stressors of the job only magnified my illness. I lost the trust and respect of my crew and my friends. I thought asking for help would end the career that I worked incredibly hard to get and stigmatize me as weak.

My health and family were suffering from my addictions. I completely diminished my leave balance on binges as well as trips to the hospital for medical detox. One time, I almost lost my life from an overdose of pills and alcohol, but this still was not enough to stop me. It wasn’t until about a year later, when I was lying in bed detoxing on my own, that I knew I had to either gain control or die. I entered rehab on October 1, 2015. This was not an easy process and is one of the reasons I do what I do now. Rehab worked for me, not because of where I went, but because, deep down, I was truly sick and tired of always being sick and tired, of living the same vicious cycle. I was ready for a change.

Recovery has been a blessing. I work on my recovery on a daily basis; however, it has been the best and most rewarding thing that ever happened to me. I truly believe that if I can work at a recovery program and stay sober, anyone else can as well. My life has reached a normacy that I never had before. Dedication to my personal wellness has improved both my personal and professional life and driven me to make a personal commitment to prevent any other firefighter in my department from slipping through the cracks as my friend and I did.
Families are an important part of identifying signs. Spouses are typically the first to notice change but rarely know what to do and how to handle the problem. Fire chiefs and chief officers have experienced the same type of problems and also need an outlet to engage with others that can be supportive. The higher up you go, the fewer peers there are that you can lean on and vent to but the perception is no different; no one wants to be seen as incompetent or weak. There is no greater example than a chief being fully engaged in the process—it only works if the entire organization welcomes the program. Supervisors have the responsibility to take care of their people and there is no greater way than with their mental health!

Northern Virginia Federal Fire Peer Support Team Mission and Guidelines

The mission of Fort Belvoir Fire and Emergency Services (FES) is to provide exceptional fire and emergency services to Fort Belvoir and the surrounding community. In pursuit of this mission and our vision to become the premier fire and emergency services organization in the Department of Defense, Fort Belvoir FES, in conjunction with the Fort Myer Fire Department, recognizes the importance of the mental health of all employees.

The inherent nature of the emergency services profession increases exposure to stress for all employees. FES employees are subjected to such factors as shiftwork, sleep deprivation, inter-personnel conflicts, and critical incident stress, all of which may compound existing stress exerted by the employees’ personal lives. Acute and chronic stress impose negative effects both physically and mentally and may ultimately lead to an employee’s decrease in work performance, decline in health, and change of behavior. An intermediate to support team members and their family members in times of need is beneficial to the welfare of all FES employees.

The Northern Virginia Federal Fire Peer Support Team is an initiative of department members from both Fort Belvoir Fire and Emergency Services and the Fort Myer Fire Department. The goal of the NOVA Federal Fire Peer Support Team is to support all FES members and their families in times of personal need in matters of behavioral health, substance abuse, and general employee welfare. Fort Belvoir FES leadership and Fort Myers Fire Department leadership, Local F-273, and Local F-253 all fully support this program and understand the benefits of its implementation. Peer support program members offer support services, guidance, and spiritual support through the department chaplain, and serve as a connection to other agencies that can better assist department members. Peer support members are not certified councilors or therapists; they are trained members of the fire service who talk with other peers about behavioral health concerns and connect them with appropriate services.

NOVA Federal Fire Peer Support Team members are dedicated to all FES employees. Members are accountable to ensure confidentiality, respect of individuals, and integrity for the program.

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THE ARMY FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES FIRE TRUCK SERVICE LIFE EXTENSION PROGRAM

By AJ Eversley

In an era of constrained resources and fiscal scrutiny, one Assistant Chief of Staff for installation (OACSIM) program showing considerable potential is the Army Fire and Emergency Services’ (F&ES) Fire Truck Service Life Extension Program, or SLEP. The phrase Service Life Extension Program is a general term for the modification or refurbishment of equipment to extend lifecycles beyond the forecasted projection, resulting in zero time or cycle resets. The extent of the work goes well beyond routine repairs, often resulting in depot-level overhauls, and is guided by a formalized process. SLEP focuses maintenance efforts on both vehicle structure and systems, based on the formalized practices found in National Fire Protective Association’s (NFPA) Standard 1912, Standard for Fire Apparatus Refurbishing; more specifically, Chapter 6, Level II Refurbishing.

With an aging fleet, the Army fire truck strategy discussion has become complex. Many corporations and fire departments wrestle with cost-benefit decisions of refurbishing or replacing capital assets and equipment. In order to optimize budgets and address critical equipment lifecycles, many municipalities leverage similar refurbishment programs to extend the life of their fire trucks while concurrently programming new vehicle procurements. In this respect, we’re not unlike our civilian counterparts.

Establishing effective fire response capability requires balancing the need for fire apparatus with the clear understanding of current and projected threats and vulnerabilities. However, maintaining antiquated fire trucks is a challenge and modern fire trucks are expensive, averaging $450,000 each. Through the Cost Benefit Analysis process, the Army developed financial-based courses of action that satisfy operational demands. The selected SLEP Course of Action, in conjunction with the current fire vehicle investment strategy, reverses a downward trending recapitalization rate.

The Army’s 48-year recapitalization rate far exceeds our 15-year service life cycle standard. Army Fire and Emergency Services requires a sustainable program to refurbish fire trucks. Similar to our civilian counterparts, in cooperation with Army Materiel Command and other land holding commands, the Office of Assistant Chief of Staff for installation (OACSIM) developed the SLEP to refurbish eligible fire trucks. In close coordination with the Army Non-Tactical Fleet management team and the Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM) procurement team, OACSIM has taken an all-Army approach to programming procurement dollars and refurbishing eligible fire trucks. Combined, these concepts as part of the overall Army Fire and Emergency Services’ vehicle strategy will reduce the recapitalization rate to the 15-year standard in approximately eight years with no net increase in the Army budget. In addition, it also allows Army Fire and Emergency Services to utilize an organic capability and leverages the Red River Army Depot to execute the operational component of SLEP.

Operationally, SLEP employs a vehicle-specific prioritization model for repairs and modified maintenance actions. Utilizing NFPA 1912, the SLEP process ultimately provides the method to rebuild engines, transmissions and firefighting systems as needed, address safety systems, provide upgraded seats/seat belt systems, and modernize lighting systems, ultimately extending the service life of vehicles by seven years. These are just the highlights of a comprehensive list of benefits of our SLEP strategy.

Looking at the fleet holistically and differentiating the need for updated components versus replacing an entire vehicle is critical to the success of the program. For example, advances in technology may permit upgrades to meet vehicle-specific mission requirements. This cost-effective approach yields savings that can be reinvested in additional vehicle upgrades or procurements where the capabilities are falling short of the demand. In sum, right-sized and right-timed investments can restore or advance mission readiness across the entire fleet.

SLEP is comprised of four phases:

1. Selection Phase—The Army Fire and Emergency Services Vehicle Fleet is analyzed for possible SLEP candidates.

2. Confirmation Phase—Vehicles are picked up from the losing installation and inspected to confirm SLEP eligibility.

3. Operational Phase—Vehicles begin NFPA 1912, Ch 6, Level II Refurbishment. All required tests are accomplished to ensure compliance.

4. Delivery Phase—Vehicles are delivered to the gaining installations with 1 Year Red River Army Depot (RRAD) Warranty.

The refurbishment of fire trucks is no small undertaking. However, it has become a vital necessity as budgets shrink and costs rise. These economic forces are driving the Army to find internal efficiencies and process improvements in all programs and investments to assure our lethality well into the 21st century. As a critical component of the Army Fire and Emergency Services Vehicle Fleet Strategy, SLEP is an optimal approach to outfit firefighters and extend the life of critical assets. Through reshaping and targeting reinvestment in our vehicle fleet, our fire truck fleet will be more resilient to economic realities. This will allow Army Fire and Emergency Services to continue to provide world class services to Soldiers, families, and civilians.

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