



From the desk of the U.S. Fire Administrator:

"I often discuss emerging issues facing today's fire and emergency medical services with firefighter health and wellness being the lens through which I view most issues. Mental health disorders including post-traumatic stress disorder and suicides, are on the rise. The cumulative stress for firefighters and EMTs when responding to emergencies already being faced on a daily basis is now compounded with civil unrest and the growing number of COVID-19 infection cases. This should cause us to have serious concerns for the men and women of the profession related to their mental and emotional health.

These are tough, uncertain and anxious times for all of us. It is incumbent upon us to pay attention to our coworkers and encourage open and honest communication. Do not hesitate to offer professional help and guidance if you are concerned. Do not be afraid to let someone know you care. Stress and severe depression may lead to tragic results. It's a matter of being kind, caring and looking out for one another."

G. Keith Bryant, U.S. Fire Administrator

Behavioral health: Behavioral health in the emergency response community has been an area of concern prior to COVID-19. The pandemic has amplified the stressors related to job performance. The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and Office of Emergency Medical Service (OEMS) through the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) EMS Working Group are currently collaborating on ways to address this worsening concern. Through the [Share the Load™](#) program, the [National Volunteer Fire Council](#) (NVFC) works to provide resources and tools to help responders struggling with behavioral health issues and to enable departments to support the mental well-being of their members. The NVFC, in partnership with the Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance (FBHA) and the American Psychological Association (APA), released the [Directory of Behavioral Health Professionals](#) to provide local options for responders seeking assistance so they can get the help they need.

Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP): USFA has created a fillable [CWPP](#) with information describing the key components, how a CWPP can benefit a community at risk from wildfire, and how to create a plan for your community. Community wildfire protection planning is one of the most important components of a wildfire safety strategy in your community. According to the U.S. Forest Service, less than 10% of communities at risk from wildfire have developed a CWPP. Sometimes a [community's grant application can be given more priority](#) depending upon whether or not they have a CWPP in place. There already have been a number of major fires in Arizona, California, Texas and Florida to name a few. USFA also discourages the use of fireworks and outside burning. Wildfires are very dangerous and spread quickly and the work demands and threatened safety of all firefighters is increased during the wildfire season. Do your part to reduce wildfires. For additional information: https://www.usfa.fema.gov/training/coffee_break/060319.html.

Firefighter grant supplemental awards: The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) released the first awards from the [Fiscal Year 2020 Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program – COVID-19 Supplemental](#) (AFG-S) funding. The initial seven awards were made to organizations from five states and total more than \$4.7 million. The grant funding process for this program is designed to swiftly move awarded funds into the hands of recipients that are actively engaged in the response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. AFG-S funds can be used to reimburse for the acquisition of eligible personal protective equipment (PPE) after Jan. 1, 2020. FEMA will continue to release awards on a rolling basis throughout this summer.

National Fire Academy (NFA): Working on course conversion to virtual delivery and more mediated and online courses. The NFA staff is:

- Working on options and plans to bring students back to campus on Aug. 2. With the recent spike in cases reported, we are looking into setting a minimum case number measure before allowing students from high-risk states.
- Developing a series of mediated and self-study online classes. Four courses are completed and ready for launch.
- Converting from Desire2Learn learning management system (LMS) to BlackBoard LMS. This project involves standing up a new system, converting existing courses, additional training of staff and instructors and validating courses prior to release. The no option deadline is Sept. 1, 2020.
- Hosting our first Zoom class, “Fire Investigation: First Responders,” to the field using this new technology. This subject area is in high demand, so NFA staff developed and hosted a very successful class online with over 30 individuals. The NFA staff is awaiting evaluation results to measure the quality and success of the delivery.
- Adding new information to the fire investigation course, based on recommendations from a national review of curriculum during the course rewrite.
- Researching potential conflicts for State Weekend delivery due to limited class space and housing.

National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) special study

Date range	Jan. 1 - June 28, 2020
COVID-19 special study responses	765,882
Participating fire departments	5,971
Participating states (including the U.S. Department of Defense)	48
Increase in responses from last week’s report (June 21)	55,450
Response to fire calls	5%
Response to EMS calls	62%
Response to other calls	33%
For confirmed or suspected responses only	
Total confirmed responses (year-to-date)	7,664
Change in confirmed responses last week’s report (June 21)	367
Total suspected responses (year-to-date)	43,740
Change in suspected responses last week’s report (June 21)	2,261
Total fire service personnel responded to confirmed or suspected incidents (year-to-date)	188,038
Total fire service apparatus responded to confirmed or suspected incidents (year-to-date)	78,346