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IAFC Board Approves Task Force Recommendations for NIOSH Program Improvements

Fairfax, Va., Sept. 7, 2007... In February 2007, the IAFC Safety, Health and Survival (SHS) Section was directed by IAFC President Harmes to review the NIOSH Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program (FFFIPP) and report its recommendations for program improvement to the IAFC Board of Directors.

At its August 2007 board meeting in Atlanta, GA, the IAFC Board of Directors approved the Section's task force recommendations to improve the FFFIPP program. Below is a summary of the recommendations:

1. In conjunction with the other fire service organizations, develop an advisory board to work directly with NIOSH and the FFFIPP. This advisory board should be involved in representing the fire services interests much more actively than the current stakeholder systems.
2. In conjunction with the other fire service organizations, develop a working group to augment the information provided in the NIOSH reports. There have been concerns that current reports only go "so far" and need to include significantly enhanced command and control as well as tactical recommendations. In addition, the working group should identify the necessary resources to produce the recommended outcomes and performance benchmarks (i.e. investigation team response times, investigation report publication timelines, etc.).
3. In conjunction with the other fire service organizations and NIOSH, identify the need for statutory changes, additional resources (staffing and funding), and enhanced capabilities to facilitate the mission of the FFFIPP. In addition, develop marketing and lobbying strategies to successfully promote implementation of the necessary changes.
4. In conjunction with the other fire service organizations and NIOSH, develop a plan to integrate fire service subject matter experts into the NIOSH-FFFIPP investigative process, in both administrative and onsite response roles.
5. In conjunction with the other fire service organizations, formulate written criteria to identify incidents that require or merit the more in-depth investigations

discussed above.

6. In conjunction with the other fire service organizations, provide a method for these investigations to be conducted and funding for the effort. This may be through an expansion of the USFA significant incident program or through some other effort.
7. In conjunction with the other fire service organizations and NIOSH, implement the expanded investigations program.
8. In conjunction with the other fire service organizations, NIOSH and industry representatives, develop a program to collect, analyze, and disseminate information regarding personal protective clothing and equipment problems and failures. The working group should also identify the most appropriate agency to house this program and look for potential funding sources.
9. In conjunction with the other fire service organizations, NIOSH and industry representatives, promote rapid development of enhanced capabilities with the NIOSH National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL) to conduct technical evaluation and testing of personal protective clothing and equipment involved fire fighter fatalities and other incidents where performance deficiencies or failures are suspected.

The IAFC Board has allocated \$10,000 for the continued work of the task force. These funds will be used to develop an implementation plan, in coordination with NIOSH and other national fire service organizations, which will address each of the report's recommendations.

To download a copy of the SHS Section's FFFIPP Task Force report, please visit www.IAFCSafety.org.

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