
2023

Florida Fire Chiefs' Association

Legislative Policy Statement



Serving Florida's Fire Service Since 1958

OVERVIEW

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association (FFCA) is the voice of the fire service in Florida. The FFCA serves as an advocate for the 2,000+ Fire Chiefs, Fire Marshal, and fire service professionals who make up its membership. The FFCA is governed and lead by a Board of Directors who are elected by the membership.

The Board is guided by a Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan focuses on 5 key strategic priorities:

Advocacy

Education

Leadership

Membership/Resource Base

Technology

The FFCA maintains a Government Relations standing committee that serves the Association year-round as the Association's proactive voice for legislative and regulatory issues. This Government Relations Committee is supported by the FFCA Sections, other Committees, regional leaders, and experts in the field. The Government Relations Committee takes the lead in communicating legislative and regulatory matters to FFCA members and enlisting their support and involvement, as necessary.

The Government Relations Committee is guided by Board direction and the Association's Legislative Policy Statement. This Legislative Policy Statement reflects the Association's strategic priorities, the Board's directions, and the memberships concerns.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY STRATEGIC GOALS

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association strives to be cognizant of any legislative issue or regulatory issue affecting the Florida Fire Service. We will keep our members and partners informed of our advocacy efforts on behalf of both the fire service and fire-based emergency medical service. We will involve interested members and other professionals in our advocacy efforts at the federal, state, regional, and local levels. We will maintain an online presence where our members and the public can see detailed information on proposed legislation, administrative code or policy affecting the fire service. We will make our position known on these issues and will engage our members to voice their positions as well. We will use technology to leverage the voice of our members and to reach the key people involved in the legislative and regulatory process.

The Florida Fire Chiefs Association will strengthen its strategic partnerships with organizations such as the Florida Professional Firefighters, Florida Police Chiefs Association, Florida Sheriffs Association, Florida League of Cities, Florida Association of Counties, Florida Fire Marshals and Inspectors Association, and Florida Association of Special Districts'. Through these partnerships, we will communicate our concerns and needs and work collaboratively on issues that cross association boundaries in the best interest of our members.

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association opposes unfunded mandates from any level of government. An unfunded mandate is when one government forces another level of government to take some action that spends or reduces revenue, without providing any resources to offset the impact. Unfunded mandates are the antithesis of government transparency. Mandates conceal the connection between the tax's city residents pay and the services they receive. Unfunded mandates cause local city leaders to be held accountable for

decisions made by others who live far away and who are not accountable for the fiscal impact on local taxpayers. The Florida Constitution prohibits unfunded mandates from state government except under certain conditions. This provision was added to the constitution in 1990 after Floridians became fed up with being forced to pay for state programs with local tax dollars. Yet, despite the clear preference of Florida's residents, unfunded mandates have continued to be passed onto cities by the Legislature.

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association opposes unnecessary State and Federal regulations and licensing requirements. Florida's constitution empowers citizens with the right of local self-government, or Home Rule. Cities and Counties are the embodiment of this right. They are formed by citizens and are governed by citizens. They administer the local affairs of the community for the special benefit of their residents. These Home Rule rights allow Cities and Counties to tailor their services to the often-unique needs of their communities and to adapt quickly to changes in the environment or technology. Thus, the FFCA opposes unnecessary State and Federal mandates, regulations, and licensing requirements without clear objective data supporting said mandates.

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports the continuance and expansion of fire service-based emergency medical services (EMS) systems in the State of Florida. Adequate healthcare is one of the primary concerns of people today. The fire service is the agency that first delivers on-scene health care services under most true-emergency conditions. In the State of Florida, over 90% of the people who call 911 for an emergency medical condition will be cared for by their local fire-rescue provider. Florida is a fire-based EMS state. The FFCA is committed to supporting legislation or rule that will allow fire departments the ability to provide EMS first response and patient transportation for medical emergencies.

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports adequate funding of fire and emergency services. The FFCA supports initiatives which improve the health and safety of all Floridians. The citizens and visitors of the State expect and deserve to be safe and secure from the ravages of fire and to be promptly and professionally cared for during times of medical or other need. The Florida Fire Service is the first to respond for their medical emergencies, the first in to care for their communities during natural disaster, the first to respond to hazardous materials or chemical emergencies, and the first to rush into a fire when people are in harm's way. The FFCA supports adequate funding from diverse sources to ensure that the fire service can and will be there for the needs of our communities. This includes efforts to provide increased financial and other resources to agencies providing fire-rescue and related services. We support the continuance and expansion of grant funding for communities who have special or unmet needs. We would oppose any efforts to limit or reduce the ability for fire agencies to adequately fund their services.

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports legislation that would expand reimbursement for the provision of EMS Delivery. Most EMS providers seek to offset their operating costs by billing patients for transport to the hospital. Reimbursement rates for ambulance transport have consistently failed to match the cost-of-service delivery. Currently, there is no reimbursement provided for EMS responses where the patient is not transported to a hospital. Consequently, the current fee-for-transport model of EMS funding does not adequately account for the non-transport costs of EMS delivery, including the cost of medical care rendered to patients by EMS providers, the cost of caring for patients who ultimately decline ambulance transport to the hospital, and the "cost of readiness" associated with maintaining the capability to quickly respond to medical emergencies on a 24/7 basis. The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports legislation or regulations that would provide for reimbursement / payment for emergency medical care not associated with transport. Moreover, the Association supports legislation or regulations that would provide for reimbursement / payments that are more representative of the costs associated with providing services. We would oppose any efforts to limit or reduce reimbursement or our efforts to collect for the services our members provide.

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports the active participation of the fire service in Florida's "Domestic Security Strategy" and the adequate funding of our services and training of our personnel for natural and man-made disasters, to include public health emergencies, terror-related events and hazardous materials incidents. There is an increasingly expanding reliance on fire-rescue agencies to respond to the communities' needs during hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, urban-wildland fires, hazardous material releases, communicable disease outbreaks, animal disease outbreaks, search and technical rescue operations, terrorist attacks, and most recently, active shooter events. For the fire-rescue service, these increasingly frequent challenges — call them all-hazard risks — require an increased level of mission preparedness and readiness, as well as prevention and recovery. The increasing frequency and complexity of these all-hazard incidents' places unprecedented demands on fire-rescue services. All-hazard responses represent some of the most difficult and complex challenges in public safety. The FFCA supports efforts to properly train, properly equip, properly protect, and properly fund the fire service to deal with these all-hazard emergencies. Moreover, the FFCA supports the inclusion of the fire service in the planning and preparation for these types of events.

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports the promotion of Fire Safety within our communities and the State. Fire Prevention is the best defense against fire. We support the expansion of public education programs that help raise the level of awareness of the danger of fire and that help people take proactive steps to prevent fires. Public education programs can be costly and take considerable man hours. We support the availability of grant funds and support funding for local Fire Safety programs.

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports the statewide enforcement of the Florida Fire Prevention Code and the Florida Building Code. These codes help ensure the safety of both the citizens of Florida and the firefighters who protect them. We are opposed to any changes that would diminish the level of safety for either the citizens or our firefighters or that would inhibit the enforcement of the Florida Fire Prevention Code by the fire service.

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association is opposed to the consumer purchase and use of fireworks in the State of Florida. Despite the dangers of fireworks, few people understand the associated risks which include devastating burns, traumatic amputations and other injuries, fires, and even death. We support legislation or rule making that would improve life safety and property protection from the dangers of fireworks and oppose the legalization and sale of fireworks to consumers in the State.

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association strongly supports the training and safety of firefighters within our State. Firefighters frequently put themselves at risk, not only from fire, hazardous chemicals, traumatic injuries, and occupational diseases, but also from exposure to many other job-related hazards that may lead to long term physical and mental health problems. It is important that these firefighters are properly trained to recognize and manage those risks. Moreover, it is essential that these firefighters have the training needed to mitigate the emergencies they are called to deal with. The FFCA supports continued and additional funding sources for firefighter training and safety. We also support the proper funding of the Florida State Fire College as training center.

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports legislation that would expand and/or enhance the fire protection services for residents and industry located in Wildland Urban Interface areas. Understanding that Florida still has a considerable amount of undeveloped land with varied and often highly combustible ground cover/vegetative types, and that urbanization is increasingly, and often rapidly, expanding into these formerly "Wildland" areas, the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association strives to improve fire protection services for residents and industry located in these Wildland Urban Interface areas.

2023 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Expansion of the Medicaid Reimbursement for Public Emergency Medical Transportation (PEMT)

The FFCA is seeking expansion of Federal reimbursement for service provided by governmental entities who provide Public Emergency Medical Transportation (PEMT) to patients who are in the managed care program. This Federal reimbursement could provide up to \$400,000,000 in new funding for current services provided by public providers of emergency medical services, with those communities serving the most medically indigent patients being helped the most.

Emergency Medical Services – Controlled Substances

The FFCA supports efforts to allow paramedics to administer controlled substances and allow Florida licensed EMS provider to obtain a DEA registration. In 2017, the Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act (PPAEMA) was signed into law allowing EMS agencies to receive their own DEA registration to administer controlled substances. The PPAEMA also explicitly allows EMS agencies to “administer controlled substances in schedule II, III, IV, or V outside the physical presence of a medical director or authorizing medical professional.” To do so, the EMS agency must (1) be authorized to do so by state law and (2) have a standing order or verbal order from a medical director or an authorizing medical professional. Florida State Statute 893.05 does not currently allow a paramedic to administer controlled substances in the physical absence of a physician, an advanced practice registered nurse, or a physician assistant. Moreover, Florida statutes and rule do not allow for the registration of a licensed EMS provider, instead requiring the EMS provider’s medical director to obtain such DEA registration.

ALS Non-Transport Service by Governmental Entities

The FFCA supports legislation that will allow any political subdivision to engage the services of a medical director and provide ALS non-transport services within the State of Florida. Current law allows a county to prevent first responders from providing more than basic life support services even if the government entity has State certified paramedics and can meet all other state legal requirements. Cities and special Districts, as representative form of government, often seek to provide a higher level of service, ALS non-transport response within their jurisdiction. Although most counties allow ALS non-transport services by first responders, some counties do not or require the governmental entity to work under the county’s COPCN and State license. All counties have the authority to limit governmental entities from providing ALS non-transport services. The FFCA supports legislation that would prevent counties from prohibiting governmental entities from providing ALS non-transport services.

Active Shooter Hostile Events (ASHER) Best Practices

The FFCA supports the adoption of NFPA 3000 Standard for Active Shooter Hostile Event Response as the best practice used to guide the response to Active Shooter Hostile Events (ASHER) in the State of Florida, including the development of common operating procedures between fire, EMS, and law enforcement that address Active Shooter Hostile Event Response. It is unquestionable that a planned and coordinated response to Active Shooter Hostile Events is essential. Recent history has shown that absent this planned and coordinated response, lives are put at great risk. Joint planning coordination between law enforcement, school districts, fire rescue and emergency medical service providers is not only needed but essential. NFPA 3000 offers a nationwide standard that was developed through consensus of law enforcement, school districts, fire rescue and emergency medical service providers. This standard, adopted as a best practice, would provide for a common point for planning and coordination of response to these events.

Extension of Deadline for Use of Drones not on DMS List

The FFCA is seeking legislation that would extend the deadline for governmental entities to use drones that are not on the Florida Department of Management Services (DMS) list of approved drones. In 2021, Governor Ron DeSantis recently signed a bill into law expanding the ability of governmental entities, including fire departments, in the state to use drones. Within that law, new “security standards” for governmental agency drone use were also adopted. The new security standards require Florida Department of Management Services (DMS) to develop a list of approved drones. These new security standards require all governmental use of unapproved drones in Florida to be discontinued by January 1, 2023. The FFCA is seeking to extend this deadline by two years.

Changes to Florida State Statute 401 for Public Health Emergencies

The FFCA is seeking changes to Florida State Statute 401 to allow paramedics to administer public health countermeasures during a public health emergency and to allow for a single agreement with the State Department of Health for immunizations and public health countermeasures.

Enhanced Sustainable Funding for State Urban Search and Rescue Teams and Light Technical Rescue Teams

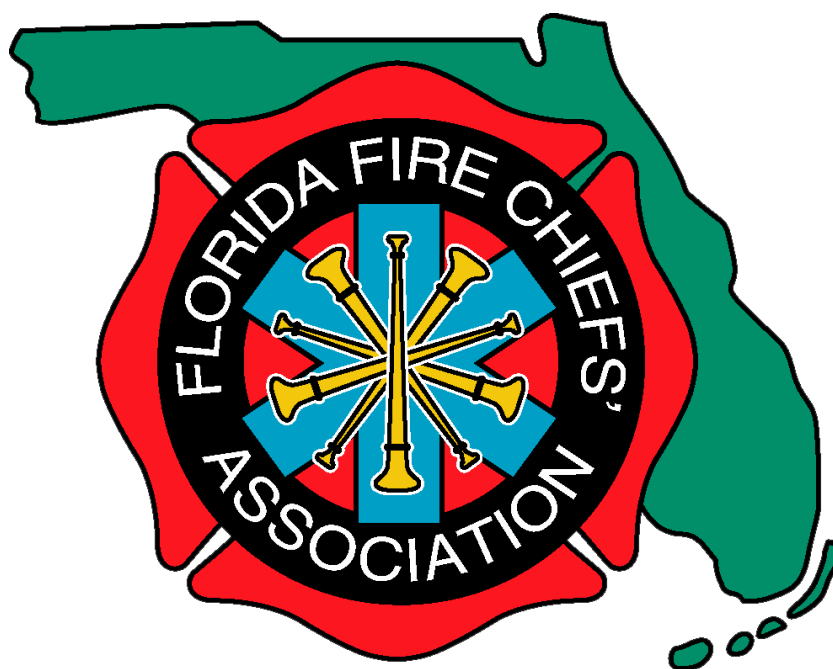
The FFCA is seeking enhanced funding for the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and Light Technical Rescue (TRT) teams that protect the citizens and visitor of Florida. State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) funds available for our FLUSAR System teams has gradually diminished over the years. As funds have diminished, programs have been impacted and cut, including all financial support of the TRT’s. In order to ensure that the State of Florida has available a highly specialized, valuable resources for USAR in times of disaster, there must be a sustained financial commitment from the state that will provide for consistent funding to support the preparedness of these vital resources.

Out of State Tuition Waiver for Firefighter, EMT, and Paramedic Students

Some parts of the fire service are struggling to find adequate numbers of employees to fill vacancies as firefighters, EMTs, and paramedics. Florida Statute 1009.21 (10)(g) prohibits state colleges from charging law enforcement and corrections students out of state tuition. The FFCA is seeking legislation that will provide the same exemption for firefighter, EMT, and paramedic students.

2023 FLORIDA FIRE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS

August 17, 2022



Serving Florida's Fire Service Since 1958

FIREFIGHTER SAFETY, TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association strongly supports the training and safety of firefighters within our State.

BACKGROUND

Firefighters frequently put themselves at risk, not only from fire, hazardous chemicals, traumatic injuries, and occupational diseases, but also from exposure to many other job-related hazards that may lead to long term physical and mental health problems. It is important that these firefighters are properly trained to recognize and manage those risks. Moreover, it is essential that these firefighters have the training needed to mitigate the emergencies they are called to deal with. The FFCA supports continued and additional funding sources for firefighter training and safety. We also support the proper funding of the Florida State Fire College as training center. We oppose unnecessary State and Federal mandates, regulations, and licensing requirements without clear objective data supporting said mandates.

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association strives to ensure that members of the fire service community are safely and adequately trained in the areas of fire suppression, prevention, public education, emergency medical services, handling of hazardous materials releases, response to/mitigation of domestic security issues and natural disasters and special operations, and health and safety of firefighters in order to best serve the residents and visitors of Florida.

Therefore, the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association will:

- **Support** legislation and/or rules which enhances fire-rescue and emergency services agencies in the recruitment and retention of Firefighters, Emergency Medical Technicians, and Paramedics.
 - **Support** the delivery of a combined EMT/ FIREFIGHTER Curriculum and the access to grant funds for students.
 - **Support** an increase in dedicated funding provided for the Florida State Fire College, while protecting existing funding sources, including the established Trust Funds.
 - **Support** legislation and rules to achieve a tobacco-free fire service.
 - **Support** legislation, rule, and funding that seeks to prevent or reduce the impact of cancer in firefighters.
 - **Support** legislation, rule and funding that seeks to prevent or reduce the impact of mental illness and post-traumatic stress in firefighters.
 - **Support** legislation, rule, and funding to make our fire service members safer and better prepared to deal with the emerging threat of active shooters / hostile events and public health emergencies.
 - **Support** the ability of our members to obtain classes, training, and continuing education credits through an online medium where that training methodology can be effective.
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FIREFIGHTER SAFETY, TRAINING AND EDUCATION - Continued

- **Oppose** establishment of mandatory Pro-Board certification programs for Fire Safety Inspector, Fire Officer, Fire Investigator, Fire Instructor, and Fire Safety Officer.
 - **Oppose** initiatives restricting the applicant pool for Firefighters, Emergency Medical Technicians, and Paramedics. Such restrictions include mandatory degree requirements or other restrictions and impediments to certification and re-certification of Firefighters, EMTs and Paramedics.
 - **Oppose** legislation establishing a mandatory Fire Code Administrator certification program administered by the DSFM.
 - **Oppose** legislation or rule that would impose additional mandatory training without appropriate funding.
 - **Oppose** legislation or rules establishing mandatory certification requirements for specialty training areas such as Fire Investigator, Public Educator, Hazardous Materials Technician, FLUSAR, or the like.
 - **Oppose** legislation or rules increasing the hours or cost of mandatory certification programs without a clear and compelling need to do so.
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- **Monitor** legislation or rules for changes to Fire Safety Inspector, Fire Officer, Fire Investigator, Fire Instructor, and Fire Safety Officer initial certification, re-certification, and testing requirements.
 - **Monitor**, and provide input to, the development of safety rules by the FLORIDA DIVISION OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL (DSFM).

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FUNDING & SERVICES

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports adequate funding of fire and emergency services.

BACKGROUND

The FFCA supports initiatives which improve the health and safety of all Floridians. The citizens and visitors of the State expect and deserve to be safe and secure from the ravages of fire and to be promptly and professionally cared for during times of medical or other need. The Florida Fire Service is the first to respond for their medical emergencies, the first in to care for their communities during natural disaster, the first to respond to hazardous materials or chemical emergencies, and the first to rush into a fire when people are in harm's way. The FFCA supports adequate funding from diverse sources to ensure that the fire service can and will be there for the needs of our communities. This includes efforts to provide increased financial and other resources to agencies providing fire-rescue and related services. We support the continuance and expansion of grant funding for communities who have special or unmet needs. We would oppose any efforts to limit or reduce the ability for fire agencies to adequately fund their services.

Therefore, the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association will:

- **Support** legislation that would establish immediate reimbursement for agencies who send resources to assist in declared disasters or emergencies.
 - **Support** legislation that would provide sustainable funding for State Urban Search and Rescue teams and Light Technical Rescue teams.
 - **Support** legislation that would require State-owned properties, including educational and other institutional occupancies, to pay for fire protection in lieu of taxes.
 - **Support** the stature and significance of the DSFM in the Florida Cabinet.
 - **Support** the establishment of a sustainable funding source for the Florida Firefighters Supplemental Compensation Program.
 - **Support** legislation and rules supporting voluntary fire and EMS incident collection and reporting.
 - **Support** continuance of legislation supporting the Safe Haven for Newborns initiative.
 - **Support** legislation that will allow alternative funding sources, such as CRA funding to be used for providing existing and new fire-rescue operations and EMS services.
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- **Oppose** legislation or rule that would significantly decrease the revenue needed to provide fire and emergency services.
 - **Oppose** legislation or rule that would impose additional mandatory training without appropriate funding.
 - **Oppose** legislation and rules requiring mandatory fire and EMS incident collection and reporting without appropriate funding, both initial and ongoing.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports the continuance and expansion of fire service-based emergency medical services (EMS) systems in the State of Florida. The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports adequate funding of fire and emergency services. The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports legislation that would expand reimbursement for the provision of EMS Delivery.

BACKGROUND

The FFCA supports initiatives which improve the health and safety of all Floridians. Access to adequate healthcare is one of the primary concerns of all Americans. The fire service is the initial health care provider during most true-emergency conditions. In the State of Florida, over 90% of the people who call 911 for an emergency medical condition will be cared for by their local fire-rescue provider, making Florida a fire-based EMS state. The FFCA is committed to supporting legislation or rule that will allow fire-rescue departments the continued ability to provide EMS first response and patient transportation services.

The FFCA supports adequate funding from diverse sources to ensure that the fire service can and will be there for the needs of our communities. This includes efforts to provide increased financial and other resources to agencies providing fire-rescue and related services. We support the continuance and expansion of grant funding for communities who have special or unmet needs. The FFCA supports legislation or regulations that would provide for reimbursement / payment for emergency medical care not associated with transport. Moreover, the Association supports legislation or regulations that would provide for reimbursement / payments that are more representative of the costs associated with providing services. We would oppose any efforts to limit or reduce reimbursement or our efforts to collect for the vital services our members provide.

Therefore, the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association will:

- **Support** legislation, rules, and funding that would expand the role of fire rescue agencies in the delivery of public health countermeasures, telemedicine, urgent care, and non-emergency health initiatives.
- **Support** the expansion of the Medicaid Reimbursement funds for public emergency medical transportation (PEMT).
- **Support** legislation and rules that allows local design and control of EMS Systems and/or the flexible deployment of fire service ALS non-transport units.
- **Support** legislation and rules that would provide for an appeal process or local vote for fire service agencies that are denied a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (COPCN).
- **Support** legislation and rules that would allow for medical director control of ambulance equipment requirements.
- **Support** legislation and rules that would establish a fixed standard for ambulance design and construction.
- **Support** funding for emergency trauma care.
- **Support** funding for first responders to deal with the suspected opiate overdose crisis that exists within our state.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES - Continued

- **Support** legislation and rules that allow government owned emergency medical transport and care providers to be reimbursed by the federal government for their care of indigent or Medicaid patients using the certified public expenditure process and/or intergovernmental transfer process.
 - **Support** legislation and rules for maintaining the newly established combined EMT/Firefighter certification curriculum and encourage the availability of grant funding for students.
 - **Support** legislation and rules that enhance the establishment and sustainment of fire-based EMS services, to include ALS transport and non-transport systems.
 - **Support** legislation and rules that would allow EMS agencies to obtain a DEA registration as opposed to Medical Director DEA registration; as well as ensure Florida based EMS agencies can administer controlled substances for pain and other valid reasons.
 - **Support** legislation that would extend liability protection to law enforcement officers or other responders who are assisting EMS in the care of incapacitated persons being treated against their wishes.
 - **Support** legislation that would extend liability protection, like that extended for AED use, to anyone who in good faith uses a “Stop the Bleed” kit.
 - **Support** funding for personal protective equipment and decontamination equipment needed to deal with emerging viral illnesses.
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- **Oppose** legislation and rules that would weaken or jeopardize the authority and control of local EMS Medical Directors.
 - **Oppose** legislation and rules that would allow out of state Paramedics, EMTs, and/or services to operate in Florida without first having obtained the same licensure, permits, and COPCNs that Florida providers must obtain unless they are providing emergency services through the agreement of the service area’s provider, or they are operating in a disaster situation.
 - **Oppose** legislation enacting the REPLICA Compact that would allow out of state Paramedics, EMTs, and/or services to operate in Florida without first having obtained the same licensure, permits, and COPCNs that Florida providers.
 - **Oppose** legislation and rules that would diminish the effect or intent of the existing EMS grant program.
 - **Oppose** any legislation and rules that will require “mandatory background checks” for “EMS Recertification.”
 - **Oppose** rule or legislation that increases the number of hours required for EMT or Paramedic recertification without specific and fact-based evidence that additional hours are needed to maintain proficiency.
 - **Oppose** any legislation and rules mandating a two or four-year degree for paramedic certification.

- **Oppose** legislation or rule requiring the mandatory collection and/or submission of electronic patient data that is not aggregate in nature and/or allows itself to be subject to quality assurance investigation by the State or any other investigating body.
 - **Oppose** legislation or rules that adversely affect fire service EMS providers through the requirement of mandatory complete run report submission to the emergency department.
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- **Monitor** and provide input on any proposed structural changes in the State EMS Office.
- **Monitor** any changes to Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (COPCN) legislation or rule.
- **Monitor** legislation amending Emergency Medical Services for children (EMSC).
- **Monitor** and provide input on legislation that affects the delivery of emergency medical care to victims of Stroke, Heart Attacks, Trauma, and Cardiac Arrest.

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WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports legislation that would expand and/or enhance the fire protection services for residents and industry located in Wildland Urban Interface areas.

BACKGROUND

Understanding that Florida still has a considerable amount of undeveloped land with varied and often highly combustible ground cover/vegetative types, and that urbanization is increasingly, and often rapidly, expanding into these formerly “Wildland” areas, the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association strives to improve fire protection services for residents and industry located in these Wildland Urban Interface areas.

Therefore, the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association will:

- **Support** legislation that would establish immediate reimbursement for agencies who send resources to assist in declared disasters or emergencies.
 - **Support** legislation for rural Fire Protection Funding Program.
 - **Support** the adoption by Statute or local ordinance of Firewise Communities principles and practices that provide for the use of best management building, zoning and landscape design practices to protect structures from Wildland fire without the use of fire suppression response units and personnel.
 - **Support** the Florida Forest Service legislative funding priorities including replacement of the FFS equipment meeting the State's standard for replacement.
 - **Support** the Florida Forest Service helicopter replacement funding priority so that safe and effective helicopter operations can support ground resources and protect homes in the Wildland Urban Interface.
 - **Support** funding for the Florida Forest Service to provide train the trainer courses in wildland firefighting.
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- **Oppose** legislation or rules that would weaken or limit the ability to utilize prescribed burning for agricultural and/or hazardous fuel reduction purposes by certified, authorized and/or permitted private or public sector burners.
 - **Oppose** elimination of, or reduction to, state Wildland fire protection services provided by the Florida Forest Service.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports the active participation of the fire service in Florida's "Domestic Security Strategy" and the adequate funding of our services and training of our personnel for natural and man-made disasters, to include public health emergencies, terror related events and hazardous materials incidents.

BACKGROUND

There is an increasingly expanding reliance on fire-rescue agencies to respond to the communities needs during hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, urban-wildland fires, hazardous material releases, communicable disease outbreaks, animal disease outbreaks, search and technical rescue operations, terrorist attacks, and most recently, active shooter events. For the fire-rescue service, these added challenges — call them all-hazard risks — require an increased level of mission preparedness and readiness. The increasing frequency and complexity of these all-hazard incidents' places unprecedented demands on fire-rescue services. All-hazard responses represent some of the most difficult and complex challenges in public safety. The FFCA supports efforts to properly train, equip, protect, and fund the fire service to deal with these all-hazard emergencies. Moreover, the FFCA supports the inclusion of the fire service in the planning and preparation for these types of events.

Therefore, the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association will:

- **Actively participate** in any formal committees established to discuss policy and funding relative to Domestic Security and the Fire Service's role in Disaster Response.
- **Support** legislation that would establish immediate reimbursement for agencies who send resources to assist in declared disasters or emergencies.
- **Support** legislative initiatives which ensure the Fire Service has input on all issues affecting the Fire Service, which includes, but is not limited to;
 - Maintain a Co-Chair position as the Fire Service discipline representative on each of the Regional Domestic Security Task Forces and State Working Group committees utilizing executive ranking officers.
 - Maintain two membership positions on the Domestic Security Oversight Council in partnership with the State Fire Marshal's Office.
 - Ensure knowledgeable representation on all established committees relative to Domestic Security, Health and Emergency Management, which involve the Fire Service.
- **Support** enhanced funding of Fire Service specialty teams and resources inclusive of all Type I, II, III, and IV Urban Search and Rescue Teams, Type I & II (TRT) Technical Rescue Teams, Type 1 Fire CBRNE Hazardous Materials Teams and the Regional Mutual Aid Radio Caches, established to meet the needs of communities identified through risk/threat/vulnerability analysis.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS - Continued

- **Support** and encourage continued funding for exercises and drill.
 - **Support** long-term funding for maintenance and repair of the Domestic Security special teams and equipment.
 - **Ensure** the Fire service domestic security response capabilities and the FFCA State Emergency Response Plan aligns and supports one another.
 - **Support** legislation providing for the designation, financial support and continued maintenance/training of regional hazardous materials teams within municipal, county, or fire control district fire departments within the State.
 - **Support** legislation to create a statewide hazardous materials emergency response and management cost-recovery program.
 - **Support** the use of NFPA 3000 to guide the response to Active Shooter Hostile Events (ASHER) in the State of Florida, including the development of common operating procedures between fire, EMS, and law enforcement that address Active Shooter Hostile Event Response in accordance with NFPA 3000.
 - **Support** the Stop the Bleed Initiative through funding and encouraging adoption and training throughout the State.
 - **Support** funding for personal protective equipment and decontamination equipment needed to deal with emerging viral illnesses.
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- **Monitor** all legislative activity related to Chapter 943 F.S. while encouraging legislative changes that supports more balanced representation within the Domestic Security Oversight Council as well as the Regional Domestic Security Task Forces, and the State Working Group Executive Board.
 - **Monitor** all legislative activity related to Chapter 252 F.S.
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- **Oppose** repeal of, and monitor changes to, Florida Statute 403.7215 - Tax on gross receipts of common hazardous waste facilities.

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FIRE SERVICE PENSION PROGRAM

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association will strive to ensure members of the fire service community receive adequate compensation benefits from the State of Florida.

BACKGROUND

Firefighters frequently put themselves at risk, not only from fire, hazardous chemicals, traumatic injuries, and occupational diseases, but also from exposure to many other job-related hazards that may lead to long term health problems. A well trained and highly experienced workforce is essential to ensuring the safety of our communities.

Therefore, the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association will:

- **Support** a change in the definition of “disability” to ensure that it is equitable in its application throughout the Florida Statutes as it relates to fire service personnel.
 - **Support** legislation to include civilian pilots when performing fire suppression and EMS missions in the special risk pool.
 - **Support** qualified presumption for firefighters, paramedics, emergency medical technicians who suffer an occupational exposure to SARs associated coronavirus diseases.
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- **Monitor** workers' compensation issues as they relate to first responders.
 - **Monitor** legislative and administrative actions related to Chapter 175 plans and pensions as they relate to consolidations and mergers of fire and rescue departments.
 - **Monitor** legislation relating to the Florida Retirement System and Chapter 175 plans.
 - **Monitor** all pension and disability retirement legislation and rule changes.

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LIFE SAFETY AND PREVENTION

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports the promotion of Fire Safety within our communities and the State.

BACKGROUND

Fire Prevention is the best defense against fire. We support the expansion of public education programs that help raise the level of awareness of the danger of fire and that help people take proactive steps to prevent fires. Public education programs can be costly and take considerable man hours. We support the availability of grant funds and support funding for local Fire Safety programs. The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports the statewide enforcement of the Florida Fire Prevention Code and the Florida Building Code. These codes help ensure the safety of both the citizens of Florida and the firefighters who protect them. We are opposed to any changes that would diminish the level of safety for either the citizens or our firefighters or that would inhibit the enforcement of the Florida Fire Prevention Code by the fire service.

Therefore, the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association will:

- **Support** legislation that mitigates the financial obstacles to retrofitting High-rise condominiums with fire sprinkler systems as required by NFPA 1 and NFPA 101.
 - **Support** legislation requiring the installation of fire sprinkler systems in all new construction and 50% or greater renovations to existing properties, including manufactured homes.
 - **Support** legislation that would require fire sprinklers in all health care facilities and churches as defined by state sales tax exemption statute.
 - **Support** legislation for appropriate funding for fire research facilities.
 - **Support** legislation or DSFM rule requiring local fire official oversight and approval in any new building construction, throughout all phases of the project from site plan review through building plan review, inspection during construction and final certificate of occupancy.
 - **Support** legislation that would mandate local school boards correct Fire Safety deficiencies as determined by the AHJ required inspections.
 - **Support** legislation that would require appointment of two to three members of the fire service as representatives on the Florida Building Commission.
 - **Support** legislation that would mandate home sprinkler systems for all new single-family homes.
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- **Oppose** legislation or rule that would weaken the High-rise fire sprinkler retrofit requirements within NFPA 1 and NFPA 101.
 - **Oppose** legislation or rule that would weaken the minimum radio signal strength requirements of the Florida Fire Prevention Code.

LIFE SAFETY AND PREVENTION – Continued

- **Oppose** legislation or rule making that would reduce the existing life safety requirements in any historical structure.
 - **Oppose** legislation or rule making that would weaken fire safety as a result of a localized issue.
 - **Oppose** legislation or rule that would permit any person to enforce provisions of the Florida Fire Prevention Code (FFPC), including plans review and inspections, without first obtaining a Fire Safety Inspector I certification.
 - **Oppose** any legislation or rule that would weaken provisions of the FFPC.
 - **Oppose** legislation that would expand authority of the Florida Building Commission into fire code adoption and enforcement.
 - **Oppose** legislation that would privatize code enforcement functions without maintaining local approval and oversight.
 - **Oppose** legislation or rule limiting support of the DSFM to local governments for fire investigation.
 - **Oppose** establishment of mandatory Pro-Board certification programs for Fire Safety Inspector, Fire Officer, Fire Investigator, Fire Instructor, and Fire Safety Officer.
 - **Oppose** legislation or rule that would make the Fire Code Administrator certification mandatory.
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- **Monitor** legislation and Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (FDEP) Rules regulating training burns and open burning. In addition, monitor and provide input to the Florida Division of Forestry (DOF) with respect to open burning rules.
 - **Monitor** legislation concerning ADA requirements and building, or fire code interpretations related to Fire Stations.
 - **Monitor** legislation that would modify regulations for fire sprinkler/engineering in commercial fire sprinkler system design and installation.
 - **Monitor** legislation and rule that would affect life safety in schools.

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FIREWORKS

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association is opposed to the consumer purchase and use of fireworks in the State of Florida.

BACKGROUND

Despite the dangers of fireworks, few people understand the associated risks which include devastating burns, traumatic amputations and other injuries, fires, and even death. We support legislation or rule making that would improve life safety and property protection from the dangers of fireworks and oppose the legalization and sale of fireworks to consumers in the State. The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association supports legislation that will promote safety, education and regulations of fireworks, including the use of pyrotechnics for motion picture and television special effects, in our State.

Therefore, the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association will:

- **Support** legislation or rule changes that will improve the enforcement of existing laws and reduce injuries from illegal fireworks.
 - **Support** legislation that would give the right of confiscation to the local authority having jurisdiction.
 - **Support** legislation requiring a stamp or seal on legal fireworks indicating that it has been approved by the Division of the State Fire Marshal.
 - **Support** the promulgation of local ordinances or rules eliminating the sale and use of fireworks by the public.
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- **Oppose** any legislation reducing or eliminating home rule powers of local jurisdictions to create and adopt ordinances addressing fireworks.

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2023 - 2023 FFCA KEY LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS

FFCA Legislative Chair
Darrel Donatto, Fire Chief
Town of Palm Beach
ddonatto@townofpalmbeach.com
(561) 719-3517

FFCA Secretary/treasurer& Legislative Vice Chair
Carlos Aviles, Fire Chief
St. Augustine Fire Department
caviles@citystaug.com
(904) 825-1098

FFCA President
Doug Riley, Fire Chief
City of Lakeland Fire Department
douglas.riley@lakelandgov.net

Immediate Past President
Ty Silcox, Fire Chief
Fernandina Beach Fire Department
tsilcox@fbfl.org
(904)277-7331

Florida Fire Chiefs' Association
Executive Director/CEO
Wm. Ray Colburn, Fire Chief-Retired
ray@ffca.org
(850) 900-5180

Lobbyists
Eric Prutsman
Prutsman & Associates, P.A.
Travis Blanton
Johnson & Blanton
Jon Johnson
Johnson & Blanton