



# HOT TOPICS

Oshkosh Fire Department



## CHIEF'S CORNER



If you were about to go on a journey, wouldn't you ask, "Where are we going?" Or, "How will we get there?" The Oshkosh Fire Department recently asked ourselves the same questions. We are currently developing a five-year strategic plan to answer those very questions.

The first question we needed to ask is "Why are we going?" Our sessions began with over forty community leaders and stakeholders providing their input about their expectations of the fire department and what they felt priorities for our service should be. Their feedback was crucial and answered our "Why?" It gave us the background we needed to start answering "Where, How, and When?" as we prepared for our five-year mission.

An employee group that represented all levels of the organization then spent the next three days defining our mission, our values, and our vision for the future. They then developed goals, objectives, and tasks to turn these concepts into realities.

Over the coming days and weeks we will review the draft, finalize the plan, and share it with our members and our community. We are off to a great start. It will be a lot of work along the way but we know arriving at the destination will be worth it. Stay safe and well. Happy Holidays!

--Chief Mike Stanley

## PREVENT, PREPARE, PRACTICE

by John Holland, Public Information

During the winter months, the most common accidents that result in injury, slips, trips and falls, happen more frequently due to dangerous conditions created by ice and snow. While most falls result in only minor bumps and bruises, thousands of people are admitted to hospitals each year after suffering a more serious injury.

The good news is most falls can be prevented by taking these extra precautions.

- **Slow down.** Be cautious and allow for extra time. When you're in a hurry you're not paying attention to your surroundings and might not see an icy spot on the pavement.
- **Keep your walks and driveways clear** of ice and snow. Use salt to melt any icy areas. Don't be afraid to ask for help from a neighbor or relative. It's definitely worth it to prevent a fall.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## WINTER FALL PREVENTION (Continued from page 1)

- **Dress appropriately for the weather.** Although it might seem harmless to go out to the mailbox in a robe and slippers, you are setting yourself up for a fall. If you fall, who knows how long you might be stuck outside. Instead wear a warm coat, hat, mittens, and shoes with good traction. Consider buying some ice grippers for your shoes.
- **Walk like a penguin.** When you're walking outside use the "penguin walk". Slow down, widen your legs a bit, walk flat footed, and move side to side as you move forward.
- **Find the safest route.** Walk around, instead of over, piles of snow and icy sidewalks.
- **Always bring a cell phone** with you when you are outside. That way if you do fall you can call for help immediately.

But what should you do if you do fall?

Don't get up right away or let anyone help you up immediately. You don't want to cause yourself any further injury. Rather, take your time, lie there for a moment and assess how you are feeling. If you feel like you can get up, roll to one side and slowly get to your feet, pushing up with your arms first and then your legs. If you can't get up, use the cell phone and call 9-1-1.

If you find someone else that has fallen and can't get up, call 9-1-1. Keep the person as warm as you can. Don't try to move them unless you absolutely have to and stay until help arrives.

Remember, most falls are preventable, but it's up to you to take the proper steps (sorry I couldn't resist that one) to keep yourself upright and safe.

For a helpful tip, please see this month's short video from Lexipol on Incident Report Writing.

<https://www.lexipol.com/resources/todays-tips/firefighter-incident-report-writing/>

 LEXIPOL



TODAY'S TIP  
with Gordon Graham

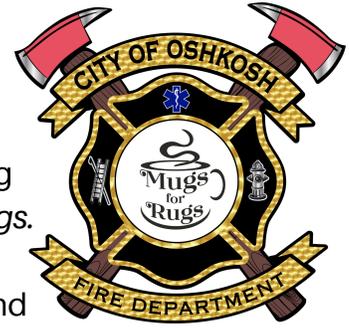
**Firefighter Incident Report Writing**

WATCH NOW

Share This Tip:  


# MUGS FOR RUGS LAUNCH

Do you know someone age 65 or older and lives in the City of Oshkosh? If you've been over to their house lately, have you noticed that they have one or more throw rugs throughout their living area? If so, they are eligible for our new program called, *Mugs for Rugs*. This new program is funded by a generous grant from the Ladies Benevolent Society, and our promotional partners 4Imprint and ArtCity.



"The goal of this program is to reduce falls among older adults in our community", said Fire Chief Mike Stanley. "We want you to get rid of those throw rugs, 4'x6' or smaller and get one free mug that may be refilled once per day for free at the following local coffee shops".



Rugs may also be exchanged for mugs at the Oshkosh Seniors Center.

# WHAT'S NEW

## New position for Jack Clark

Starting in January 2022, Jack Clark is taking on a new challenge. He'll be moving into an office at Station 15 as the new Captain Inspector/Deputy Fire Marshal replacing Dave Neuber who is going back on line.

Jack has big shoes to fill, but after 26 years on line, he is up to the challenge. Jack began his career as a firefighter/paramedic with OFD in 1996. Shortly after that, he joined the HAZMAT team. He's been leading the HAZMAT Team for the last 2 years.

Jack has moved steadily up the ladder. He was promoted to Equipment Operator in 2006. After 9 years, he was promoted to Lieutenant in 2015 and then Captain in 2020.

Jack has taught the HAZMAT Technician course at Fox Valley Technical College for the past 10 years. He enjoys hunting and fishing in his free time. He is looking forward to inspecting some interesting buildings and meeting new people in his new role.

Assistant Chief/Fire Marshal Brian Bending said, "Jack's extensive fire service knowledge and background will be a great addition to this position, assisting with the day-to-day challenges this position faces."

Please help me in congratulating Jack Clark on his new position.

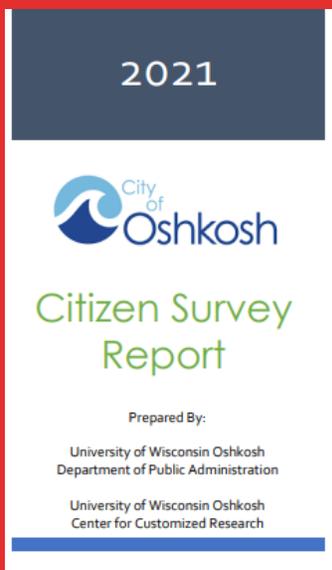


The results of the 2021 Oshkosh Citizen Survey are in and posted to the City of Oshkosh Home page. To read the full report which includes fire department results, click here:

<https://www.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/CitizenSurveyResults/OshkoshCitizenSurveyReport2021.pdf>



**Captain Jack Clark**



# MEDICAL DIRECTOR MINUTE

by Dr. Kerry Ahrens



As the Medical Director of the Oshkosh Fire Department I have the extreme privilege of participating in 'ride alongs'. These are when I wear my EMS gear and join a given station on any medical calls they happened to be called to that day. Not only do I get to hang out with my team, but I get to see in live-action how they manage their patients, often termed 'Transport Medicine'.

In the past two weeks I have managed to have two ride along days. When OFD responds to a 911 call within Oshkosh city limits, 911 will often dispatch an engine with an ambulance to provide any additional needed assistance. The first day we had a mid-morning call to help a person who slipped outside and needed help getting up. The person fell while doing yard work. When we arrived, the engine crew had already assisted the caller, who thankfully had no injuries. The caller was raking leaves and branches when the fall occurred. Not only did OFD assist medically, but several of the engine crew helped to rake up and move the leaves that were blocking the door.

On another day we were called to a sick person in Algoma. As we pulled up to the home, the volunteer first responders had already arrived and were getting vital signs on the patient. Towns such as Algoma, Winneconne, and Omro who cannot support a full service Fire Department like Oshkosh, provide care to their community via volunteer first responders (80% of Wisconsin EMS departments are made up of volunteers); many have other primary 'day' jobs such as machinists, bankers, school lunch ladies, etc. Two of the three of those Algoma first responders were OFD paramedics on call volunteering in their local town on off duty days.

I cannot express on paper how very proud I am of this team. The Oshkosh Fire Department is made up of great people who have made the time and the effort to train not only as paramedics and firefighters (among the many other services they provide); but also are working to make a positive impact in our communities. Whether they go the extra mile to help Oshkosh residents on medical responses or work on their days off, volunteering their skills by responding to calls in the smaller surrounding communities these are the people who make a huge difference in our lives.

Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort and intelligent execution. It represents the wise choice of many alternatives. Choice, not chance determines your destiny.

--Aristotle

# KITCHEN TABLE TRAINING

by Captain Jason Shikoski

MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!

Arguably, the three most dreaded words that we can hear on the fireground is three “maydays” in rapid succession. It means that something has gone terribly wrong for at least one of our brothers and/or sisters. It means that several things NEED to happen quickly to help mitigate the problem.

Do you know what you can do to help prevent a situation requiring a mayday call? Do you know when and how to properly call a mayday? Do you know what actions you can take if you did call a mayday? Do you know what may be expected of you when you are assigned as a RIC company?



At the end of December, we will be holding department wide RIC training at the training center and all the above questions and more will be answered then. I look forward to working with each of you and while the training division will be ready to instruct, we will also be ready to learn. The first fire that I went to was on January 23, 1995, and it was a moment that I will never forget. It was my very first shift as an intern with the Oshkosh Fire Department and I was assigned to E-15. Since that moment almost 27 years ago I have (knock on wood) never been to an incident where a MAYDAY has been called and if I can help it, I hope to never be at one where I hear the three infamous words over the radio. Maydays don't occur often, but when they do the time to learn is over, immediate action is required. When I first started; maydays, RIC's, RIT's, etc. were unheard off, but the fire service has adapted tremendously in that time frame. We are learning new rescue techniques on a regular basis.

When I said in the last paragraph that the training division will be ready to learn I hope that you will teach me now before training. NFPA 1407, OFD policies, guidelines, Instruct-R-Guides and various other training resources will be used, but we have many individuals in our department that have a vast amount of experience and when it comes to a mayday incident, you can check your ego at the door. Whatever tactic that works to save one of our own could be crucial. Our RIC lesson plan is forming, but I love to hear about new techniques or ideas that are out there that we can talk about at training. Lesson Plans, much like IAP's, can always be adapted. A radio call for a “firefighter down” is a most difficult one and the more that we are prepared to solve the problem and save one of our brothers and/or sisters lives the better we will be. I look forward to hearing from you and to seeing you at training. Take care.

# EVERYONE GOES HOME

by Lieutenant Drew Jaeger

Life Safety Initiative #1 deals with the defining and advocating for a cultural change in the fire service related to safety. It encompasses responsibilities of all levels of fire service organizations. This includes areas of leadership, management, supervision, accountability, and personal responsibility. The reason this was implemented as the very first life safety initiative ahead of the remaining 15 additional components of the National Fallen Firefighters *Everyone Goes Home* campaign, was based on the recognition that without wholesale philosophical change at every level in the fire service, the average number of line of duty deaths and injuries would not change.



The National Fire Administration published their findings on the issue in 2015. They noted that the rate of firefighter death and injury had remained constant between 1973 and 2007, despite the frequency of fires decreasing by 40 percent and civilian deaths decreasing by 44%. So, we are going to less fires, but still getting hurt or killed at the same rate. The guidance document can be found here: [https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa\\_342.pdf](https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa_342.pdf)

There are some tough observations in the report. One that resonated with me was that firefighters get the same line of duty death recognition whether they were killed while engaged in actions consistent with good risk benefit analysis and following best practices, or they were doing something foolish such as speeding in a personal vehicle to a call. The authors pull from both external examinations of fire service culture, and those from respected national leaders within the fire service. They all share that our traditions might be both our greatest strength and our greatest obstacle. Some of these have evolved during our careers. More frequent use of SCBA, reduced use of lights and sirens for non-critical calls, recognition that driving at high speed does not improve outcomes, and evolving tactics are a few examples.

According to the National Fire Service Cultural Change Initiative.

“In 2011, Kunadharaju, Smith and DeJoy conducted an analysis of 189 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health firefighter fatality reports for the time period 2004-2009. They found that there were four higher-order causes of firefighter death and injury: insufficient resources, inadequate preparation, insufficient incident command structure, and suboptimal personnel readiness “

(Continued on page 8)

# EVERYONE GOES HOME

## 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives

1. Cultural Change
2. Accountability
3. Risk Management
4. Empowerment
5. Training & Certification
6. Medical & Physical Fitness
7. Research
8. Technology
9. Fatality, Near Miss investigation
10. Grant Support
11. Response Policies
12. Violent Incident Response
13. Psychological Support
14. Public Education
15. Code Enforcement & Sprinklers
16. Apparatus Design & Safety

We have made recent changes to our MABAS practices to ensure that we get more resources quickly to the scene. We are working to widen our recruitment efforts and provide a fully staffed department. We are continuing to improve the frequency and variety of our company and department training, and have committed to more standardized incident command practices.

The personal readiness part is up to each one of us. We need to each make a commitment to ourselves and our fellow firefighters to be fit for duty in all dimensions from our first day on the job to our last. It certainly gets harder as we age and deal with health challenges along the way.

Our department recently began a strategic planning process that included contributions from all ranks in the department. There are several components to the process that will be explained by department leadership over the course of the next few months.

The part that current OFD members played in this stage of the process was to examine our current practices and traditions, examine what works well and supports our mission and values, as well as the traditions and practices that may be barriers to such ideal states of performance. We found many positive traditions such as our community charity work, and some that might be barriers to our best work. I encourage everyone to keep an open mind and continue to show the devotion to each other and our community that have demonstrated in the past.

## NOVEMBER 2021



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## LET'S CONNECT

