

# HOT TOPICS

Oshkosh Fire Department

## CHIEF'S CORNER



Hopefully, it being April means that spring is upon us. With spring we typically expect growth and change. That is definitely what we are experiencing here at the Oshkosh Fire Department. (OFD). This month we have several long time members

whose season with the fire department is coming to an end as they retire and leave this career. It is a time of new growth for them as they start the new chapter of their lives and enjoy well deserved retirements. While we will miss seeing them in our firehouses, we wish them all the best!

Many of these new retirees filled leadership positions. They leave behind a legacy for the recently promoted Equipment Operators, Lieutenants, and Captains to fill as they grow into their new roles and lead, coach, and mentor the firefighters in their stations. They are well prepared to meet any and all challenges and to be successful in taking this next step in their careers. The department continues to have new growth with new faces as well. Five firefighters began their careers with the Oshkosh Fire Department and are completing the recruit academy. They are just starting out in the Oshkosh Fire Department and have many years to come of learning, training, and advancing themselves to best protect the Oshkosh community. This month we celebrate new beginnings, next steps, and say fond farewells.

--Chief Mike Stanley

## TORNADO SAFETY

by John Holland, Public Information Officer

April showers may bring May flowers but they can also bring severe thunderstorms and tornadoes. Are you and your family prepared and know what to do when the weather takes a serious turn for the worse?

Your best first line of defense is to get a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather alert radio. If severe weather is approaching your area these radios will turn themselves on and alert you. Besides severe weather these radios will alert you to natural disasters, Amber alerts, chemical spills, terrorist threats and other emergencies.

Besides the NOAA radio, you should have an Emergency Kit packed and ready to go. Included in this kit should be:

- A flashlight;
- extra batteries for your radio and flashlight;
- water and non-perishable food;
- prescription medications; and
- a first-aid kit.

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# TORNADO SAFETY (Continued from page 1)

Now you need to have a plan and make sure everyone in your family knows it. Included in your plan is where you need to go to shelter. Your best bet is the basement. If you don't have one, an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor, away from any windows will do. Once you have your plan you need to practice it before you actually need to implement it.

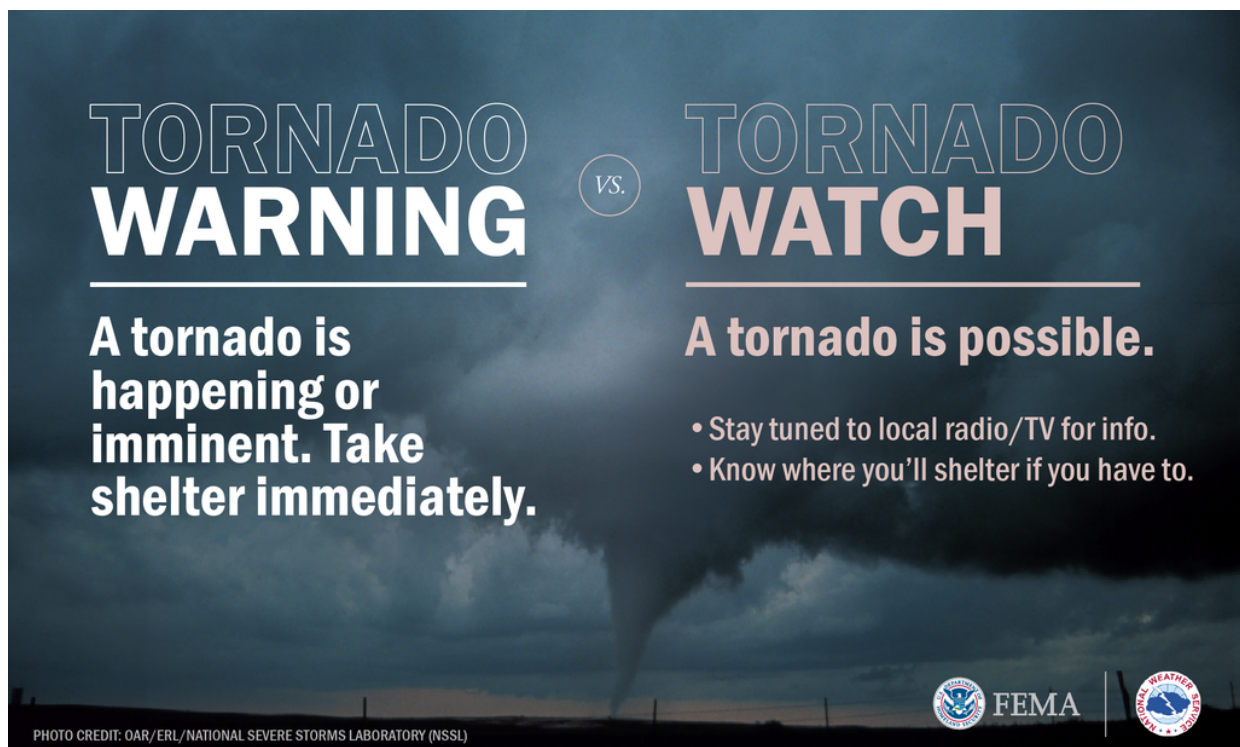
By the way, do you know when you should implement it? Many people still don't understand the difference between a "Watch" and a "Warning".

A "Watch" means conditions are prime for severe weather to develop. Immediate action is not necessary, but you should keep an eye on the weather just in case.

A "Warning" means severe weather is imminent and in your area. If it's a tornado the warning emergency sirens should sound. It is now time to implement your plan. You may only have minutes to react. It is not time to go out and look for funnel clouds. Stay put until the "All Clear" is given.

If you are outdoors, try to find shelter inside the closest building. If there is no shelter available, go to a low lying area and lie flat.

If you are in a vehicle do not try to outrun a tornado. Avoid overpasses and bridges. A vehicle is a very dangerous place to be in a tornado. If possible, get out of the vehicle and get into a ditch or ravine.





## WHAT'S NEW: RETIREMENTS



**Battalion Chief Dan Mrochek**

Battalion Chief Dan Mrochek is retiring from the OFD on Tuesday, April 19 after nearly 27 years. Dan started as a firefighter/paramedic in 1995. He was promoted to equipment operator in 2001, then to Lieutenant in 2011 and finally to Battalion Chief in 2015. Watch the May issue of *Hot Topics* for the full send off.



**Captain Scott Abbrederis**

Captain Scott Abbrederis retired from the OFD on Wednesday, April 6 after 27 years. Scott started as a firefighter/paramedic in 1995. He was promoted to equipment operator in 2005, then to Lieutenant in 2015 and finally Captain in 2021. Colleagues joined Scott at Station 19 for his send off.



**Lieutenant Bob Buchholz**

Lieutenant Bob Buchholz retired from the OFD on Tuesday, March 29 after 30 years. Bob started as a firefighter/paramedic in 1992. He was promoted to equipment operator in 2003, then to Lieutenant in 2019. Colleagues joined Bob at Station 15 for lunch.



**Equipment Operator  
Steve Stini**

Equipment Operator Steve Stini is retiring from the OFD on April 28 after 27 years. Steve started as a firefighter/paramedic in 1995. He was promoted to equipment operator in 2005. Celebration details are yet to be announced.



## WHAT'S NEW: NEW HIRES

*Welcome to the Team!*



Nick Peppard



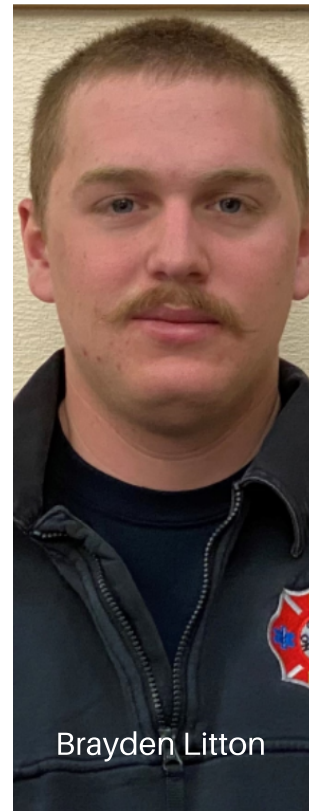
Dennis Kilgore



David Burroughs



Alex Johll



Brayden Litton

Nick has over 17 years of experience in the Fire and EMS industry and an Associate's Degree in Fire Science, EMS Technology and General Studies. In Nick's free time, he enjoys spending time with family, traveling, playing the guitar and sports.

Dennis has over 13 years of experience as a Paramedic and has an Associate's Degree in Fire Protection/Paramedic. In Dennis's free time, he enjoys reading, target shooting, and snowshoeing.

David previously worked for the Oconto Falls Area Ambulance for 4 years as an EMT-B and for 2 years as an AEMT. He also served 2 years as a Paramedic with County Rescue. In David's free time, he enjoys anything outdoors, including hiking, backpacking, kayaking, fishing, hunting and sports.

Alex has over 6 years of experience working as a Paramedic and 4 years a volunteer Firefighter. In Alex's free time, he enjoys running, hiking, camping and generally anything outdoors.

Brayden previously worked at the Grant Chute Fire Department as Firefighter. In Brayden's free time, he enjoys bow hunting, boating and fishing.



## WHAT'S NEW - PROMOTIONS



Battalion Chief Aaron Droessler



Captain Scott Rasmussen

Congratulations to Aaron Droessler and Scott Rasmussen on their recent promotions. Both promotions were approved at the April 5 Police and Fire Commission meeting. Best wishes in your new positions!

## SECRETARY CRIM VISITS OFD

Dawn Crim, Secretary of the Department of Safety and Professional Services made a visit to the Oshkosh Fire Department on Monday, March 21. OFD leaders had a chance to meet with her and Section Chief, Brad Johnson and Fire Prevention Coordinator, Gary Peck. Discussion focused around the new electronic licensing/certification system, grant funding, recruitment, and fire fighter health.



# ANNUAL AWARD CEREMONY

Nearly 100 firefighters and guests attended the 2nd Annual Oshkosh Fire Department Award Ceremony on Saturday, April 2nd at the Best Western Hotel in Oshkosh. A number of employees received recognition for their outstanding performance in a number of categories.

Each award recipient received an engraved plaque.



## **Lifesaving Award**

Lt. Tony Montag

Sponsored by:



## **Exceptional Duty Award**

EMS Coordinator Ryan Homman

EMS Coordinator Andrew Knoll

## **Community Service**

Equipment Operator Jamie Dutschek

Fire Fighter/Paramedic Tim Reitz

Watch the ceremony on YouTube

[Watch the ceremony here](#)

## **Teamwork Award**

Cathie Ercegovac, EMS Battalion Chief,

Winneconne Poygan Fire

Glenn Demler, Town of Algoma

**Photography provided by:**

**Nic Charles Photography**

[Look at the pictures from the ceremony here](#)

## **Guardian Angel Award**

Rexford Smith

Allen Schwartz

## **Friends of the Fire Department**

Glenn Curran, Battle on Bago

Karen Kryzaniak & Chris Farrell, EAA

## **Fire Chief Award from Chief Stanley**

Phil Karsnia, Country Financial





# MEDICAL DIRECTOR MINUTE

by Dr. Kerry Ahrens

There have been a few complaints lodged in the past where patient's wondered why lights and sirens were not used by an OFD ambulance. Lights and sirens historically have been used to warn other drivers and request the right-of-way for emergency vehicles. The erroneous public presumption is that this is expediting patient transport. What the public is unaware of is the use of lights and sirens has been shown to be more harmful to fellow drivers on the road, with minimal benefit to our community.



A National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) research found there were approximately 4,500 motor vehicle vs ambulance crashes each year from 1992-2010. From these crashes, 34% of people involved were injured and <1% were killed(1). A further dive into this data found that of these 1,500 ambulance crashes nationwide each year, over half (59%) occurred while in emergency use; further more, of the estimated 29 fatal crashes, more than half (58%) occurred while in emergency use aka 'lights and sirens'(1). So which individuals are more likely to be injured? Our EMS teams or the general public? Shockingly of total 10,400 people injured, 54% were occupants in the 'other' (non-emergency) vehicle, 29% were ambulance passenger and 17% were ambulance drivers(1). Of the total 662 people killed in ambulance vs car crashes in that time frame, 63% were the occupant in another, civilian vehicle(1).

Another more recent study reviewed 2016 National EMS Information System (NEMSIS) found that lights and sirens use was associated with increased crash rates compared with no lights and sirens use(2). This study found that the rate of transport phase crashes more than doubled when lights and sirens were used (defined as the time when EMS is transporting a patient to his/her care destination) - this equated to 1 additional crash per 10,000 transports(2).

Does the use of lights and sirens save lives with the more rapid response? A study by EMS guru Dr. Jeff Jarvis found that of lights and siren use in 85% of the over 5 million ambulance calls in the greater Austin Texas area made in 2018, only 6.9% of them resulted in life-saving interventions (3). Does it save time? Probably not. Compiling results of multiple studies over 25 years found that use of lights and sirens reduces the time of EMS response between 1.7 to 3.6 minutes and reduces transport time between 0.7 and 3.8 minutes(4). In total this time difference produced difference in patient outcome only in about 5% of cases. Will that extra 3 minutes make a difference ? Perhaps... but at what cost?

That being said, lights and sirens use does have its place. The only request nationally of EMS agencies is to use this tool judiciously within the framework of an accepted protocol.

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## MEDICAL DIRECTOR MINUTE (Continued from page 7)

You all will be happy to know Oshkosh Fire Department has a protocol which outlines appropriate use of lights and sirens to optimize response time while mitigating any harm that could be done to our residents. Now, however, we must work to shape the expectations of the public that lights and sirens, when not used by OFD, does not reflect a lack urgency nor does it diminish the importance of their or their loved one's medical care.

### Sources:

1. NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) 1992-2010 Final and 2011 Annual Report File (ARF) and National Automotive Sampling System (NASS) General Estimates System
2. Watanabe BL, Patterson GS, Kempema JM, Magallanes O, Brown LH. Is Use of Warning Lights and Sirens Associated With Increased Risk of Ambulance Crashes? A Contemporary Analysis Using National EMS Information System (NEMSIS) Data. *Ann Emerg Med*. 2019 Jul;74(1):101-109. doi: 10.1016/j.annemergmed.2018.09.032. Epub 2019 Jan 12. PMID: 30648537.(GES), 1992-2011.
3. Jarvis JL, Hamilton V, Taigman M, Brown LH. Using Red Lights and Sirens for Emergency Ambulance Response: How Often Are Potentially Life-Saving Interventions Performed? *Prehosp Emerg Care*. 2021 Jul-Aug;25(4):549-555. doi: 10.1080/10903127.2020.1797963. Epub 2020 Aug 7. PMID: 32678993.
4. Hunt RC, Brown LH, Cabinum ES, Whitley TW, Prasad NH, Owens CF, Mayo CE. Is ambulance transport time with lights and siren faster than that without? *Ann Emerg Med*. 1995 Apr;25(4):507-11.



**Be sure to watch this month's video from Lexipol!**

The image is a promotional graphic for a Lexipol video. At the top, the Lexipol logo is displayed in white on a dark grey background. Below this, the main content area has a bright blue background. On the left, the text 'TODAY'S TIP' is enclosed in a white rectangular box, with 'with Gordon Graham' written in smaller white text below it. Underneath, the title 'Preventing Firefighter Cardiovascular Events' is written in bold white text. A red rectangular button with the text 'WATCH NOW' in white is positioned below the title. At the bottom left, the text 'Share This Tip:' is followed by icons for email, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Facebook. On the right side of the graphic, there is a photograph of a man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit and tie, with his arms crossed.



# PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS OF WISCONSIN HONOR GUARD

by Jason Roberts, PFFWHG Secretary



Some of you may have seen us at one of your department functions, at a local hockey match or other special event in Oshkosh. The Honor Guard assists with an array of functions across the state from Active, Line-of-Duty, and Retiree funerals, Wisconsin and Professional Firefighters of Wisconsin (PFFW) firefighter's memorial, presentation and posting of colors at business meetings and sporting events, fund-raising functions, and opening ceremonies. They also assist with any requesting pipe and drum duties.

The PFFW Honor Guard renders tribute and honors fallen brothers and sisters; assists departments in their time of need; properly displays and shows respect towards the colors we fly and the proud profession of the fire service. DUTY, RESPECT and TRADITION. The Honor Guard falls under the PFFW Charitable Foundation. Members of the PFFW come together from across the state averaging participation of 50 plus events a year. The benefit of having members throughout the state is to make it logistically feasible, fiscally responsible, and have familiar faces for the loved ones of your own department. Currently, there are 84 members of PFFWHG and PFFW Pipes and Drums.

The honor guard provides individual, department, regional, and state-wide training throughout the year. These trainings provide participants confidence to participate in and lead in the designated functions. The honor guard welcomes all experience levels and will provide training to meet your needs. The honor guard is aware of the need for a large volume of personnel to perform the number of events as well as the large-scale events as a Line-of-Duty Death Funeral. Everyone's ability to participate is paramount in the success of our organization.

PFFWHG currently has two trailers strategically located in the state filled with equipment to carry out the requested duties. Members are provided chords, gloves, and badge covers for participation. PFFWHG is currently working to purchase uniforms for those that meet the requirements of participation. Communication is performed through standard forms of phone and email.

However, the majority of communication for notification of events and requested responses occurs through the use of the Teamapp. This can be accessed by going to [www.teamapp.com](http://www.teamapp.com) and searching Professional Firefighters of Wisconsin to sign up. This app allows members to provide their availability, message each other, and provide updates on events and future trainings.



*(Continued on page 11)*

# EVERYONE GOES HOME

by Lieutenant Drew Jaeger

Life Safety Initiative 14 deals with public education. We traditionally think of this during October, since we complete things such as smoke alarm neighborhood Detector Trek and Safe House activities at schools. These are legitimate and beneficial programs that we do to help reduce the risk of our community.

Our department has made a priority of fall prevention education and outreach in an attempt to reduce this other significant community risk, as it makes up one fifth of our EMS call volume. Are there other opportunities where our advocacy might prove helpful? We are concluding an ice rescue season after an amazingly challenging night of whiteout conditions on both Lake Winnebago and Poygan. Maybe we need to consider augmenting our outreach and prevention efforts in this realm of our response before next year?



**Consider each fire inspection a chance for education.** We will soon begin our annual company level fire inspections. These serve both as an opportunity for us to educate the public about fire safety, and for our line personnel to learn about the layout, access, and building features in our community. Engage with the business owners and tenants that you encounter. They often have insights about access or fire risks that goes beyond our standard checklist. Ask if they have questions or concerns.

**We have some true champions of prevention on our department.** The next time you meet a child that lives in Oshkosh, ask them if they know Firefighter John. I can guarantee that if you ask, they will tell you that they do, because Fire Prevention Educator John Holland has spent years developing a rapport with, and serving the schools and children of our city. Equipment Operator Mike Wos is the executive director of our statewide PFFW Charitable Foundation. This is the leading advocacy group for the state for burn survivors, firefighters, and safe communities. We are fortunate to have them as members of our fire service.

**Look at smoke alarm calls as a win for fire prevention rather than a nuisance.** No one enjoys the middle of night smoke alarm call for a burnt pizza. But the fact that the smoke alarm alerted the residents, or perhaps their neighbors in adjacent apartments, means that an aspect of fire prevention worked. Maybe consider pointing out to the homeowner or tenant that the working smoke detector may have prevented a tragedy, instead of just focusing on the careless cooking aspect that may be causing feelings of embarrassment.

**Are we serving as fire prevention advocates to our friends and family?** Do you know enough to gently encourage fire safety with your family and friends? I have personally had the CO detector go off in my home due to a furnace issue, had my neighbors call the department because they heard my detector going off due to a battery problem, and had my mom say "What do you know?" when I pointed the fire hazard of the octopus plug in her home.

*(Continued on page 11)*



## EVERYONE GOES HOME (Continued from page 10)

I'm not saying to become the person who's no longer welcome at Thanksgiving because you lecture everyone. (Might work if that's your secret agenda) Have you found tactful ways of advocacy with those that mean the most to you? I had a friend who was letting the family stay at his cabin, and asked if I would install the smoke detectors he had left on the table. They were 20 years old, still in the box. We found some 10 year battery life types at the local hardware store instead.

Fire prevention and community risk reduction are less glamorous but critical components of our sworn duty to protect the public. The best fire response is to prevent or stop a small fire before our response is even needed. A fire that we never have to respond to is one of the best ways to ensure Everyone Goes Home.



## HONOR GUARD (Continued from page 9)

The honor guard off-sets expenses through mileage reimbursement as well as hotel and meals when determined necessary. The expenses is off-set from fund-raising and dues that members pay to the PFFW. Those who wish to become more involved can volunteer to serve on the PFFWHG board serving roles in leadership of the organization.

Oshkosh Fire has been active and supportive with the PFFWHG in the past through facility use for training and storage of the HG trailer, and active member participation. This opportunity is open to current and past members in good standing.

If you would like participate with PFFWHG , please contact me or any of our PFFWHG board members (<https://www.pffwhg.org>) to obtain more information.



Please join us for the American Cancer Society 40th Anniversary Sole Burner 5K Run/Walk on Saturday, May 7, 2022 at City Park in Appleton, WI. Please join the City of Oshkosh team by clicking on the Sole Burner logo on the right to register yourself and family.



## LET'S CONNECT

