



Fire is FAST! It only takes minutes  
for thick black smoke to fill your home.  
**Fire won't wait. Plan your escape at [fpw.org](http://fpw.org).**



# HOT TOPICS

Oshkosh Fire Department

## CHIEF'S CORNER



October is a busy month. It's Fire Prevention Week, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, National First Responder Day and Halloween! This month you will be hearing "Fire won't wait. Plan your escape!" Fire Prevention Week becomes a primary focus for our department in October.

Our Detector Trek campaign will be taking place again this year. It is our goal to prevent injuries, loss of property, and most importantly, loss of life from fires by installing smoke detectors in homes and making sure the detectors that are already installed are working properly.

Our firefighters will be out in neighborhoods with free detectors and batteries to install on the spot. Please allow them the opportunity to make sure you and your family are safe. They will also be able to assist you with planning your escape to exit your home in the event of a fire.

Little ghosts and goblins will soon be out trick or treating too. Please slow down and be alert. Costumes should be fire resistant too. Stay safe and well. Happy Halloween!

--Chief Mike Stanley

## FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

Today's homes burn faster than ever. You may have as little as two minutes (or even less time) to safely escape a home fire from the time the smoke alarm sounds. Your ability to get out of a home during a fire depends on early warnings from smoke alarms and advance planning," said Lorraine Carli, Vice President of Outreach and Advocacy at NFPA.

The Oshkosh Fire Department encourages all residents to embrace the 2022 Fire Prevention Week theme.

"It's important for everyone to plan and practice a home fire escape. Everyone needs to be prepared in advance, so that they know what to do when the smoke alarm sounds. Given that every home is different, every home fire escape plan will also be different," said Chief Mike Stanley. "Have a plan for everyone in the home. Children, older adults, and people with disabilities may need assistance to wake up and get out. Make sure that someone will help them!"

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# FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

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OFD wants to share these key home fire escape planning tips:

- Make sure your plan meets the needs of all your family members, including those with sensory or physical disabilities.
- Smoke alarms should be installed inside every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level of your home. Smoke alarms should be interconnected so when one sounds, they all sound.
- Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible. Make sure all doors and windows open easily.
- Have an outside meeting place that's a safe distance from your home where everyone should meet.
- Practice your home fire drill at least twice a year with everyone in the household, including guests.
- Practice at least once during the day and at night.

The OFD is hosting a series of events in support of this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, "Fire won't wait. Plan your escape." We will be in the neighborhoods around the UWO campus on October 11, 12 and 13 from 4:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. installing and checking smoke alarms. Rain dates are October 18, 19 and 20. For more information contact John Holland 379-3525.



## FIRE PREVENTION HISTORY

by John Holland

This year marks the 100th Anniversary of Fire Prevention Week. Since 1922, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has sponsored the public observance of Fire Prevention Week. In 1925 President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed a national observance of Fire Prevention Week on October 4-10. It has been observed on the Sunday through Saturday period in which October 9th falls every year since, making it the longest running health and safety observance on record. The reason for it being held the week of October 9th is because that is the anniversary date of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.

While the Great Chicago Fire is the most well known fire to occur on this date, there was a much worse fire that took place right here in Wisconsin on that same date. The Peshtigo Fire, the most devastating forest fire in American history, burned down 16 towns, killed 1,152 people, and scorched 1.2 million acres. The fire was so intense that it jumped from Peshtigo across Green Bay and into Door County. There were many reports of "fire tornadoes".

During this week Fire Departments nationwide remind people how to stay safe in case of a fire. Firefighters provide lifesaving public education in an effort cut down on the number of deaths, injuries, and property damage caused by fire.

On average, the OFD spreads our prevention message to over 3,800 people each October with the goal of making our community a safer place to live work and play.

## WHAT'S NEW

The Oshkosh Fire Department (OFD) was recently notified that we have been selected by the Wisconsin EMS Association as the EMS Service of the Year through their Excellence in Service Awards.

OFD rescuers were noted for their service, dedication, and persistence to go beyond the call of duty. The award will be presented at the February 2023 Wisconsin EMS Association Conference in Green Bay.



Congratulations to the graduates of the OFD Fire Academy, (L to R) Rick Guerra and Andrew Lepien. They were formally sworn in by City Clerk Jessi Balcom at a graduation ceremony held on October 5th at the Oshkosh Convention Center. Please join us in welcoming them to the OFD team!



The week of October 3, seven OFD company officers attended a three day Blue Card training. Bob Conrad from Fox Valley Technical College performed the training. The following are now Blue Card certified:

From left to right:

- Capt. CJ Wedell
- Lt. Ryan Koplin
- Lt. Tony Montag
- Lt. Mike Stephens
- Lt. Eric Schallhorn
- Lt. Tony Heyroth
- Lt. Don Simonet

Blue Card training produces Incident Commanders that make better decisions and that will potentially eliminate the lethal and/or costly mistakes that cause injury, death, and unnecessary fire losses in our local response area.





# HUNTER BECOMES A FARMER

by MJ VanGompel, Management Analyst



Did you know what you wanted to do with the rest of your life when you were in high school? According to a 2022 study by OnePoll from Colorado State University, 34% of respondents didn't have a plan after completing school.

Most employers across the United States are struggling to fill open positions due to the mass exodus of Baby Boomers from the workforce; demand for services has created another 200,000 jobs just in September. Fire Departments across the country struggle with "unprecedented staffing shortages".

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that "As a result of declining birth rates, the population of the U.S. is growing more slowly than in previous decades and is also getting older". The average annual growth rate of 16-to 24-year-olds in the labor force is projected to decline by a significant 1.4 %. It is expected that, in 2024, the younger age group will constitute 11.3 % of the labor force, down from its 13.7% in 2014. Prime-age workers, those between the ages of 25 and 54, are projected to have a growth rate of 0.4 % and are expected to make up nearly 64 % of the labor force in 2024. The overall labor force participation rate is expected to decrease even further by 2024.

At our Strategic Planning session, recruitment, retention and succession planning were a top priority. How do we fill our open vacancies now and how do we build interest for our profession? We need a 2-pronged approach... we need to 'hunt' for short term needs and "grow our own" as a farmer would.

Several of our members put their heads together and came up with a way to "grow our own." They realized the importance of introducing the possibility of a career in firefighting to young adults. Many of these firefighters either got their start through an Exploring program or had worked with similar programs in the past. This led to the formation of the Oshkosh Fire Department Explorer Post 9424.



As a high school senior at Oshkosh North High School, Hunter Resop was undecided about his future. He initially thought about law enforcement but then decided to enroll at Fox Valley Technical College after his ride along with the OFD. He is happy about his choice and wants to share his enthusiasm for the profession with others. Hunter has been with the OFD since March 2020.

**Hunter Resop, Program Coordinator**

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## EXPLORER PROGRAM (Continued on page 5)

Hunter said, "When I started at Fox Valley Tech in the Fire program, we had 40 students in our cohort. By the end we only had 20 people that actually finished". His hope is that when people get real life experience they will enroll and graduate as a firefighter/paramedic.

The Explorer Program is an interactive, worksite-based career education program of Learning for Life, an affiliate of the Boy Scouts of America. The Explorer program gives high schoolers an opportunity to experience what it would be like to be a fire fighter.

As the program coordinator, Hunter plans the curriculum and is an advisor to the 5 high school students, along with other OFD members. The advisors mentor the Explorers and assist them in not only learning about the firefighting profession, but also helping build upon essential life skills such as leadership, teamwork and community involvement.

The program began in September and wraps up at the end of the school year. The students meet every other Tuesday evening for 3 hours. The curriculum includes hands on experience with bunker gear, firefighting equipment and CPR certification. They will also go on tours to partner agencies such as: Fox Valley Technical College, The Winnebago County Communication Center and Theda Star. Hunter hopes that they will be able to grow the program to include more people next year.

If you know a high school student who may be interested in participating in the Explorer program, contact us at 920.236.5240.

Do you have what it takes  
to be a firefighter?

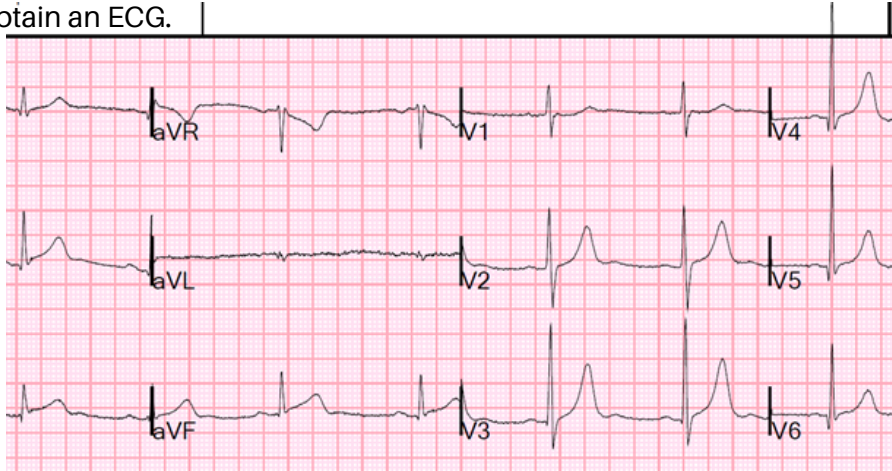
Watch this video!



# MEDICAL DIRECTOR MINUTE

by Dr. Kerry Ahrens

You are called to the workplace of a 32 year old male without any prior medical history having chest pain. His pain is midsternal, radiates to the right, and was sudden in onset for the past 3 hours. You, as a wise medic, obtain an ECG.

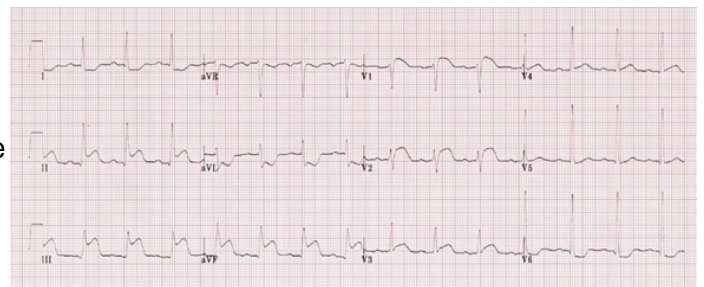


Thoughts? He is young, but appears uncomfortable and wants hospital evaluation. En route, he states his pain is getting worse. You repeat his 12 lead and see this.



What would you do next?

**Answer:** You notice the ST-depression in V2, V3 and are AN ASTUTE MEDIC!! You get a R sided ECG which demonstrates ST elevation 2+ mm in the posterior leads. You are watching the evolution of a posterior STEMI (or Acute Coronary Occlusion as the new term). First ECG is the patient having hyperacute T waves. The second is the development of STEMI but is only seen as ST depression in the anterior leads. Once R-side ECG is obtained the STEMI was discovered and called in for this young guy.



# EVERYONE GOES HOME

by Battalion Chief Drew Jaeger

For the past few issues I have been talking about our shared values. This issue I'd like to talk about **respect**.

We are most effective when we maintain a perspective of respect for our citizens and coworkers, driven by a compassionate understanding that they may be under tremendous stress due to illness, injury, or fear. I have witnessed a consistent respect for the citizens that we serve, by both the members of the Oshkosh Fire Department, and from our public safety partners in law enforcement, which are most commonly the Oshkosh Police Department and Winnebago County Sheriff's Department.



I have watched as members of these teams acted with grace and professionalism when met with intensely emotional behavior by members of the public. It is part of what we are expected to do, and shared in training and our values. Actually witnessing a police officer defuse a situation by careful choice of words, or a paramedic soothe a scared family member who has lost their composure is something that is rarely shown on television dramas. Most civilians probably don't realize that the police officers are the ones that will be providing the extended support at the time when there is a fatal outcome to one of our calls. Our support usually lasts a shorter time, but the police will usually offer hours or more of in-person support. Our firefighters could tell you stories of the times when they or a coworker acted calmly when faced with verbal or physical abuse. We do discuss them as learning points in the firehouse, but you will not hear these stories shared with civilians, because of the value of respecting the privacy of those we serve.

Another component of respect is that for the practices of firefighting and EMS. They say that to truly master a skill takes 10,000 repetitions. Practitioners of a given trade progress from novice to apprentice to journeyman, to craftsman to master craftsman. But we can't rely on, nor would we want the community damage that would come from, 10,000 fires or heart attack patients to get us to a high level of professional skill. So we must rely both on our training, and our willingness to continue to learn throughout our careers, to keep us sharp. Some firefighters will say "It's just a job" and some will say it is a "calling" to be a firefighter. I think there is room for both perspectives, as long as one is committed to improvement and staying up as science and new technology gives us better ways to treat illness and injury, and to both prevent and combat fires.

Some folks put energy and time into studying and learning the leadership components needed for supervisory roles, and some put time and energy into skill sets such as forcible entry or aircraft firefighting. Some teach either in formal classrooms or as paramedic preceptors as a way of staying current. Some will read trade publications and attend conferences to learn from other departments. Some folks have skill sets such as carpentry or mechanical skills that lend themselves to application on the job. And some folks will only attend the training offered on the department. All of these paths can be successful with a sincere amount of effort and focus, and I've been honored to serve

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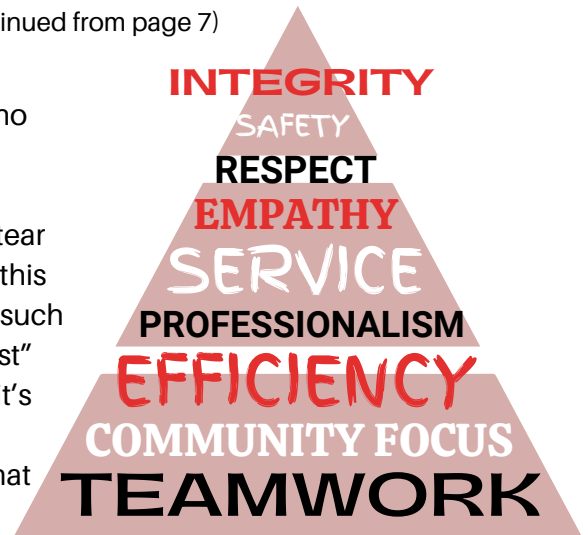


# EVERYONE GOES HOME

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with an amazing variety of people throughout the years who have taken all of these paths towards professional growth.

On the flip side, I have also observed others that saw fit to tear down those that were trying to grow. The sad thing about this disrespectful aspect of the fire service, is that those giving such discouragement often think that they are “just being honest” or “keeping up tradition.” When we do that to each other, it’s just disrespect with a different label. Riding the tailboard wasn’t better, or faster, it was a bad risk benefit decision, that we learned better ways and moved on from.



The final type of respect that I would like you to consider is quite personal. Several years ago, my son became acutely ill, and my wife and I took him to the emergency room. The attending physician was concerned about his situation, and recommended that he be transferred to a hospital with a pediatric intensive care unit. I suggested that I would prefer that an Oshkosh Fire Department ambulance crew perform the transfer. The doctor questioned whether I might be making an emotional decision, and asked if I thought that my coworkers who would provide the care might also be challenged by the feelings of knowing my son. The doctor noted that providing advanced life support skills should they become needed can be challenging in pediatric patients. I stated that I had complete confidence should life-saving skills be necessary for me or any member of my family, and that the training and experience of our team members would absolutely without question prepare them to be ready. So, in the middle of the night, on Christmas Eve, the crew from Med 17 came, provided the transport without incident on the medical side of things, but was maybe the best Christmas gift I ever received in terms of emotional support from the OFD.

I have eternal respect for the type of servants that join and work for the Oshkosh Fire Department. I know that should your family ever need our services, we will provide them with the best of our skills, knowledge, and respect. These are the people that I know, both from the giving and receiving end of such care, you want coming to help. It is a rare and special thing to be associated with people you would literally trust with not only your life, but that of your children. There are other stories of OFD members, spouses, and children who have received not only respectful care, but truly life-saving care as well.

Acting with respect to our citizens, our chosen profession, and to our brothers and sisters in arms, helps to keep us safe by de-escalating conflict and allows us to think more clearly in times of chaos. It is another critical component in all we do to ensure that *Everyone Goes Home*.

## Our Mission

The City of Oshkosh Fire Department is a highly trained team that adds value to our community by providing a wide range of emergency services with skill and compassion. We advocate risk reduction through prevention and education, and we provide leadership in times of crisis.



## National First Responder Day is October 28

Thank you to the Police, Fire, EMS and dispatchers!



Chief Mike Stanley, Training Division  
Chief Tim Heiman and Battalion Chief  
Drew Jaeger

## HOT BOOKS

Our friends at the Oshkosh Public Library hid *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury over at Station 15 for Banned Books week.

Typically held the last week of September, Banned Books Week is an annual event celebrating the freedom to read. It spotlights current and historical attempts to censor books in libraries and schools and brings together the entire book community — librarians, booksellers, publishers, journalists, teachers, and readers of all types — in shared support of the freedom to seek and to express ideas, even those some consider unorthodox or unpopular.

In Bradbury's dystopian novel of the future, firefighters are the bad guys burning books not putting out fires. You can borrow *Fahrenheit 451* at [Oshkosh Public Library](#).

Have an idea for an article?  
Training you'd like to share?  
Contact [mvangompel@ci.oshkosh.wi.us](mailto:mvangompel@ci.oshkosh.wi.us)

## LET'S CONNECT

