

Valley Safety Officers Meeting

August 20, 2008

Members Present:

Ben Avitia, Avondale	Daniel Guerra, Sun Lakes	Robert Olmstead, Sun Lakes
Dawn Bolstad-Johnson, Phoenix	Jason Jessamine, Buckeye Valley	Brian Parks, Phoenix
Craig Caraker, Goldwater Range	Rob McLeod, Chandler	Kore Redden, Rural Metro
Wayne Clement, Guadalupe	Nicole Minnick, Phoenix	Bobby Ruiz, Phoenix
Scott Collins, Surprise	Jeff Mitchell, Mesa (Chair)	David Vera, Phoenix
Shawn Dotson, Gilbert	Chuck Montgomery, Glendale	Hugh Zembruski, Sun City West
Jay Evans, Maricopa	Ed Nied, Tucson	

Old Business:

Evacuation Signal (air horn) update:

Per Chief Yeager, this is waiting further review from Senior Staff and the Life Safety Council.

Safety Week Overview – Safety Stand Down:

Jason Jessamine (Buckeye) indicated that Safety Stand Down went well. It was a welcomed event and members felt the training was good. They have had six fires since the training and no injuries. They have 100% seatbelt compliance.

Jeff Mitchell (Mesa) discussed that Mesa Fire prepared a DVD for Safety Stand Down which included discussion on the National Seat Belt Pledge with members and Labor endorsing it.

Rob McLeod (Chandler) also shared that they moved to get “buy in” from members first regarding the seat belt pledge.

There was some general discussion about the fact that some of the members were concerned that signing the seat belt pledge would exempt them from insurance coverage if they were in an accident and not wearing a seat belt.

Rehab:

Jeff Mitchell (Mesa) provided a DVD on Rehab procedures. The DVD discusses the forearm immersion technique, hydration and nourishment. MFD collecting data on the benefits of reducing core temperatures quickly, reducing heat stress, and improving work performance.

New Business:

Phoenix Fire – Dräger SCBAs (Compatibility)

Chief Vera (Phoenix) discussed the implementation of the Dräger SCBAs into the field. The SCBA change out will occur in phases:

- Phase 1 will occur in September 2008 and will involve a handful of the SCBA units to be delivered to the Battalions to allow the members to see the new units. A video is being produced to go over the features of the Dräger SCBA units.
- Phase 2 will involve fit testing of all members.

- Phase 3 will be “hands on” training of the SCBA units during minimum company standards.

Chief Vera indicated there would be videos and some “hands on” training available for other departments. They expect the full transition to the Dräger SCBA by the end of this year.

Pump Panel Accountability:

The question was raised as to how well the tag system is working at the pump panel for firefighter accountability.

Rob McLeod (Chandler) indicated that this system is about as consistent as the accountability boards (not much better than accountability boards). Chief McLeod also suggested that there should be a field incident data technician assigned to only track accountability. Downloading rosters and tracking incident command is too much for the IC to do.

David Vera (Phoenix) indicated that it is a “hit and miss:” they are being used on large commercial fires but not as often on residential fires.

Jeff Mitchell (Mesa) felt that this current system is archaic given the availability of technology today. An accountability system should be automatic (i.e. GPS) and “firefighter proof.” Jeff suggested emphasizing using the accountability system in training until something better comes along.

Robert Olmstead (Sun Lakes) indicated that the challenge is durability of technology. Most stuff doesn’t work well under fire conditions. Some radios have the ability to identify a carrier signal. Proximity cards could also be used but it always boils down to what do you have and what is the range.

Brian Parks (Phoenix) indicated that the accountability tags were developed in 2004. GPS technology was not available then. The human side is always a factor. Success of this program largely depends on the commitment by the BCs. If the tags are not used in small incidents, they won’t be used in large incidents either.

ACTION: Each department emphasis the use of this system during drills, the smaller incidents as well as the larger incidents.

Roundtable:

Fire Study Proposal

Chief Vera (Phoenix) introduced firefighter Nicole Minnick who has recently returned to the field following her pregnancy. The question firefighter Minnick brought up is how long does carcinogens stay in our bodies? This is not just a question for females but could benefit all firefighters.

After exposure to a fire, firefighters have mentioned that they can smell fire in the shower, on their sheets, in their sweat for approximately three days post fire. As a nursing mother, Nicole mentioned this to her Pediatrician and he could not provide her an answer as to what her child may receive through her milk.

A literature review and independent research by firefighter Minnick has shown that this remains unstudied. To assist with the cost of a study, grant funding, working with the University of Arizona, Howard Hughes Foundation and the IAFF were all suggested.

ACTION: Dawn Bolstad-Johnson (Phoenix) will provide an outline of possible costs for a study and share at the next VSO meeting.

Jeff Mitchell (Mesa) suggested leaving this as an ongoing agenda item.

Craig Caretaker (Goldwater Range Fire) discussed a large fire of a toilet paper plant in which they assisted Gila Bend Fire. Toilet paper was stacked up to the sprinklers and sprinklers were not functioning properly.

Everything that could have failed...failed. They fought fire for three days – the plant burned for 7 days. The event really enlightened them about limitations of resources. Wildland firefighters from Benson came in and finished the fire fight.

Rob McLeod (Chandler) encouraged everyone to join a NFPA 1500 technical committee. He recently participated in NFPA 1581 Infection Control and he indicated that firefighter presence at these committees can be critical as the people writing the procedures often are not familiar with the culture or the nuances of the fire station. Go to <http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files/PDF/TCApp.pdf> to join technical committees.

Jeff Mitchell (Mesa) Housekeeping Issues:

- Fire Department Safety Officers Conference (www.fdssoa.org) is coming up in Orlando, October 27 – 31. You can get your ISO 40-hour rating at this conference.
- It was suggested to form regional safety groups throughout the state where multiple jurisdictions within a geographical area could convene (ex: Northern Arizona Safety Officers, Southern Arizona Safety Officers etc.). The regional groups would discuss regional safety issues/concerns, conduct training, network and exchange information with other groups while working under the umbrella of the Safety, Health and Survival Section of AZFC.
- Surprise Fire is offering a Human Trafficking Class September 3 from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Presentation on Drop House Hazards:

Chief Parks and Chief Ketterer presented a video of a home that had several booby traps throughout which could be deadly if there were a fire in the home. This DVD was made available to everyone.

Presentation on MRSA

Chief Nied from Tucson Fire Department shared a PowerPoint on MRSA. This was a study completed by the University of Arizona and Tucson Fire to identify where MRSA may be located within fire stations.

The next VSO meeting will be October 15 at Phoenix's Fire Academy at 2430 S. 22nd Ave. beginning at 0930.