

MEMORANDUM

September 23, 2019

TO: Public Safety Committee

FROM: Susan J. Farag, Legislative Analyst *SJF*

SUBJECT: **Briefing: Fire and Rescue Service Training**

PURPOSE: To receive information training requirements for the Fire and Rescue Service

Today the Committee will receive a briefing from MCFRS. Those expected to brief the Committee:

Chief Scott Goldstein, MCFRS
Division Chief Charles Bailey, Human Resources, MCFRS
Assistant Chief Adam Jones, Training Chief, MCFRS

BACKGROUND

MCFRS is a combined service, comprised of both career and volunteer firefighters. MCFRS responds to over 120,000 emergency calls for service annually and is staffed by approximately 2,700 certified and trained career and volunteer responders. The volunteer complement is comprised of volunteers from 19 separate Local Fire and Rescue Departments (LFRDs) throughout the County.

FIRE AND RESCUE TRAINING

Fire and rescue training for both career staff and volunteers is provided at the PSTA. MCFRS currently has 17 full-time staff members (10 career and seven civilian). MCFRS also uses 60 fire and rescue instructors on overtime, as well as LFRD staff.

Training follows the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute (MFRI) instructional programs. A comprehensive list of classes is included on ©1. In general, both career personnel and LFRD personnel take:

- Firefighter 1 and 2 classes;
- CPR/Basic Life Support;
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training;

- Hazardous materials classes;
- National Incident Management System (NIMS) courses;
- Required IT courses; and
- Human Relations and EEO courses.

LFRD Emergency Medical Services (EMS) volunteers take all courses but the Firefighter 1 and 2 classes. Career personnel receive additional training in:

- Emergency Vehicle Operator's course;
- EMS Company Operations;
- Confined Space Awareness;
- Confined Space Operations;
- Firefighter Safety and Survival; and
- Pediatric Emergencies for Prehospital Providers (PEPP).

Additional training is provided to both career and volunteer staff. A full list is included on ©2.

Career recruits attend a 26-week recruit school. Career personnel can access additional classes as they are held. LFRD personnel also take classes as scheduled. The PSTA provides fall, spring, and summer semesters for Firefighter, EMT, and other fire-based courses. The schedule provides for weekday classes for off-duty shift career personnel, and night and weekend courses for volunteer personnel.

The paramedic course is a year long class. The Academy currently offers four consecutive courses on different days and times to accommodate all three work shifts, and a class with night and weekend hours to accommodate volunteer schedules.

Scheduling: All classes are open to all MCFRS personnel regardless of whether they are career or volunteer personnel. Scheduling is handled through an online training system, the Online Training Registration System (OTRS). Volunteer enrollment in classes is determined by the Chief at the respective LFRD.

Class enrollment is split evenly between career and volunteer staff. If there are additional volunteer personnel interested in taking a particular class, the LFRD Chief will rank the students and pick who may attend.

Blended Class: The EMT class taught by MFRI requires 165 hours of in-class instruction. The State is moving toward a longer EMT class, consisting of 222 hours of classroom instruction. These hours do not include required on-line training which averages more than 125 hours per student.

Volunteers have requested to have less in-class instruction to help minimize travel issues to the PSTA. The new class has 28 sessions that provide both in-class and on-line interactive instruction.

Accreditations: The PSTA is authorized by MFRI to teach and test personnel. The courses are developed in accordance with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, and all job performance requirements must meet those standards.

The PSTA has also been given the designation of authority as an accredited training review agency (ATRA), which allows MCFRS to conduct a review of certification applications. There are only four full Designation of Authority ATRAs in the State, including Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, Howard, and Montgomery.

The EMS Training Section is also nationally approved as a Paramedic Training Program. It is accredited through the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CoAEMSP), the Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for Emergency medical Services Professions (CAAHEP), and the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS).

DISCUSSION ISSUES

1. Overtime has been an ongoing concern in the department, and the PSTA is a significant component of MCFRS overtime. MCFRS projects that overtime costs will total \$3.3 million for the PSTA and account for 56,000 hours of work. Are there any ways to decrease overtime without compromising training? Will the blended paramedic class help reduce instructor hours? If so, is this a model that might be useful for other training courses?
2. There has been discussion of both having to cancel classes due to low enrollment, as well as having volunteer staff on wait lists for certain classes. Are these variations primarily driven by volunteer enrollment? Is there any role the PSTA can take to help balance course offerings?

<u>This packet contains</u>	©
MCFRS Responses	1-8
MCFRS PSTA Organizational Chart	9

1. Training courses required for both career and volunteer for promotion on IECS list. (a list of classes)

All entry level courses required by a 1st year Firefighter / EMT

Course	Career Personnel	LFRD Personnel Fire/Rescue	LFRD Personnel EMS
Firefighter 1	Yes	Yes	
Firefighter 2	Yes	Yes	
CPR – Basic Life Support	Yes	Yes	Yes
Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hazardous Materials Awareness	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hazardous Material Operations	Yes	Yes	Yes
Emergency Vehicle Operator’s Course	Yes		
EMS Company Operations	Yes		Yes
National Incident Management System (NIMS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICS 100 • ICS 200 • ICS 700 • ICS 800 	Yes	Yes	Yes
Required IT Courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FireApp • MDC Training • eMeds Elite • 800mhz Radio Training 	Yes	Yes	Yes
Human Relations and EEO courses	Yes	Yes	Yes
Confined Space Awareness	Yes		
Confined Space Operations	Yes		
Firefighter Safety and Survival	Yes		
Pediatric Emergencies for Prehospital Providers (PEPP)	Yes		

Note:

- 1 – Career personnel obtain these class requirements during 26 week recruit school
- 2 – LFRD – Fire/Rescue obtain minimum staffing at Fire/Rescue Firefighter II level – chart reflects FFII requirements – frequently takes up to two years
- 3 – LFRD – EMS Only Rescue obtain minimum staffing at EMS Provider I level – chart reflects EMS I requirements – traditional takes one year

**2. The additional training available for both career and volunteer (a list of classes)
All courses offered by the PSTA.**

EMT Refresher/Skills
Inspector 1 and 2
Emergency Vehicle Operators Course, Class B, Class A Driving Courses
Personal Radiation Detectors
Pumps and Hydraulics
Aerial Apparatus Operator,
Hazmat Operator /Hazmat Technician
Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation Instructor
Instructor 1 and 2
Paramedic and Paramedic Refreshers (Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Airway,
Trauma, Medical, Peds/OB), ITLS/Basic Trauma Life Support , Pediatric Advanced
Life Support
Rescue Technician Site Operations, Vehicle/Machinery, Ropes, Structural
Collapse, Trench, Confined Space, Swiftwater
Individual Performance Planning & Appraisal (IPPA)
Boat Crew/Operator
Command Officers - Professional Development Instruction classes
In-Service Training
Fire training for companies using burn buildings
Metro training for companies in partnership with WMATA
Strategies and Tactics
Emergency Medical Services Company Level Officer
PDI for Instructors (MICRB Approved PDI)

3. What classes, of these, are required by the State or other accreditation entities

Montgomery County Executive Regulation 36-08
Certification Standards for Training, Experience, and Credentialing Requirements
dictates the minimum level of training required at each rank, career or
volunteer, while MCFRS Policy 512, *Promotion Procedure*, outlines additional
requirements for career personnel only in conjunction with the OHR position
classifications for fire rescue occupational series positions.

Executive Regulation 36-08 *Certification Standards for Training, Experience, and Credentialing Requirements*

Policy 512 *Promotion Procedure*

These standards are not set at the Maryland State Training level, but at the requirements stipulated in County policies and procedures.

Montgomery County Public Safety Training Academy follows the *Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute* (MFRI) Instructional Programs. MFRI is a branch of the University of MD educational curriculum based out of College Park MD. MCFRS uses the MFRI course curriculum, standards, and tests for our students. The PSTA State accreditation is done by MFRI and the Maryland State Professional Qualifications Board (MFSPQB)

All of our MCFRS Instructors are MFRI State Certified or Maryland Instructor Certification Review Board (MICRB) Instructors. MICRB requires that instructors take 12 hours of professional development every three years to maintain their certification. The MICRB is defined in Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) for initial certification requirements, recertification requirements, evaluator requirements, and instructor trainer requirements.

MFSPQB issues certifications inside the state of Maryland in both International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and National Fire Services Professional Qualifications Board (Pro-Board). All certifiable courses are developed by MFRI and taught at MCFRS Training Academy and are MFRI sponsored, therefore eligible for National (IFSAC/Pro-Board) Certification.

4. What accreditations you have, and possibly how this compares to surrounding jurisdictions

All training classes are coordinated in conjunction with MFRI and they develop and maintain all curriculum and testing material. As a training academy, MCFRS operates with an agreement (The Academy Agreement) and authorized to teach and test personnel at MCFRS Training Academy. These courses are developed in accordance with *National Fire Protection Association* (NFPA) standards and all job performance requirements associated with those standards. All Fire and EMS academies in the State of MD have agreements to teach MFRI courses at their respective locations.

MCFRS Training Academy is part of the Maryland Council of Fire/Rescue Academies (COA), which represents all career training academies in the State of Maryland. As part of COA and the MFSPQB, we have been given the designation of authority (DOA) as an accredited training review agency (ATRA). This allows us to conduct a review of certification applications using Option 2, Breakdown Option and Option 3, Challenge Examination for the means of certifying personnel. This delegation of authority allows MCFRS Training Academy to have a seat at the Verification Review Group (VRG) which reviews all Option 2 applications for certification.

There are only 4 full *Designation of Authority* ATRAs in the State:
Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, Howard, and Montgomery

There are 3 limited ATRAs in the state:
Baltimore City, Frederick, Prince George's

The MCFRS EMS Training Section is nationally approved as a Paramedic Training Program. Our policies and rules meet nationally accepted standards. Currently accreditation is through the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CoAEMSP), Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions (CAAHEP) and the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS).

5. When classes are held (what are the general timeframes and length of the academy sessions?), when do volunteers receive training?

Courses at the academy vary due to the type of course and the curriculum of the specific courses. We host fall, spring and summer semesters for Firefighter, EMT and other fire based courses. We offer a revolving balance of weekday (day time) sessions that lend themselves to off-duty shift career personnel and night and weekend courses that support volunteer personnel.

Courses such as driver's training are offered monthly to accommodate students as they meet the prerequisites to be able to drive a certain class of vehicle.

The Paramedic course is roughly a yearlong timeframe and we are currently offering 4 consecutive courses on different days and times to accommodate all 3 work shifts and a class with night and weekend hours to accommodate volunteer schedules.

6. How is enrollment in volunteer classes determined by each LFRD?

Enrollment of classes at the LFRD level is determined by the Chief of the LFRD and the LFRD Training Coordinator. Each training coordinator and chief of an LFRD has access to the *MCFRS* Online Training Registration System (OTRS).

All classes are open to all MCFRS personnel regardless of their affiliation. (volunteer/career). Classes are split evenly between career and volunteer personnel based on available seats. Should there be an excess of volunteer personnel interested in taking a particular class, the LFRD's are given an equal amount of spots in the course and the LFRD Chief or training officer will rank the students and pick a list of individuals that will receive the allotted spots.

7. How do you staff classes? (i.e. how many permanent staff are at the PSTA, how many firefighters are pulled in on overtime to teach? What positions have you civilianized? Are there more that could be civilianized?)

The PSTA currently has 17 full time staff members, (10 Career uniformed and 7 Civilian.) See attached PSTA Organizational Chart

Ninety percent (90%) of our full time staff are all predominantly national and State certified Fire and EMS Instructors We utilize 60 Fire and Rescue Instructors on overtime, detailed off of the floor from field operations, or LFRD personnel to staff our training courses when they are in session.

During career recruit classes currently in session, we request a long term detail of a Lieutenant and a Master Firefighter from the field to support the administrative duties for the recruit class. We also request primary support instructors during the paramedic courses.

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) budget pays for 1 full time career Lieutenant to work with MCPS to recruit, coordinate and train our high school cadets.

The Positions of Training Course Coordinator and Driver's Training coordinator were civilianized from a uniformed career Captain position to a Program Manager II.

The full time PSTA staff members are a mix of program managers and professional educators that are correctly balanced with uniformed and civilian staff. The volume of uniformed student personnel and the specialized training we provide supports the current staffing model. In FY19, we implemented a outside contractor support agreement for EMS training adjunct instructors. This was aimed to reduce the cost of adjunct instructor overtime while balancing the instructor to student ratio. We are currently analyzing the impact and cost savings of this contract with the results that will influence future expansion or re-adjustment.

The PSTA could create more FTE's for EMS instruction which would off-set OTP but current CBA schedule limitations limit the hours of work and hour/day changes. Changes in the CBA would allow greater flexibility to support night and weekend course blocks.

8. Please describe the change to a blended class for certain subjects. Why did you make this change and when does it start?

Currently, the State funded EMT class taught by MFRI consists of 54 in-class 3-hour sessions and accounts for 165 hours of in-class materials.

The new (currently in beta testing) State funded EMT class that MFRI will be running consists of 77 3-hour sessions and a total of 222 hours of classroom attendance. These hours do not account for the required on-line training and content which averaged more than 125 hours per student per EMT Class.

In addition, these hours also do not count for the State mandated class Internship which requires in-field precepted and evaluated incidents. Each student must complete ten (10) positive evaluated emergency incidents and transportation of patient to a medical facility that generally takes 10-70 hours of time per student.

The LFRD's have requested if there would be any way to have less in-class sessions to minimize the travel issues with students to the PSTA. The publisher of our new EMT combined on-line and classroom curriculum, *Jones & Bartlett*, meets and exceeds their request.

All 28 classroom sessions (including test sessions) are required and involve “no instructor” lectures. All sessions are active learning sessions for the students. *Jones and Bartlett* refers to this new course model as the “Flipped Classroom.” The field internship is still required per state regulations (COMAR Title 30) independent of the type of course (traditional vs flipped etc.).

9. What are historic and projected overtime costs associated with the PSTA?

	OTP	Hours
FY17	\$3,176,698	54,128
FY18	\$3,324,653	57,935
FY19	\$3,317,034	55,872
Projected	\$3,300,000	56,000

10. Div. Chief Bailey and Assistant Chief Jones mentioned that Prince Georges County would like to use our academy for certain training. If this is true, will you allow them? And will you charge them? Do any other jurisdictions use our facilities/staff?

The initial meeting with the Prince Georges’ Operations Chief was 9/10/19. In that meeting, Prince Georges’ County (PGFD) OPS Chief described that their current training plan was not meeting their needs to train and staff their paramedic compliment.

We discussed our paramedic training model with them in detail. We also discussed our student requirements and our mandate to remain a top paramedic college in the Country.

Upon completion of the meeting, representatives from PGFD advised that they were in the preliminary stage of researching new options to train their paramedics. They were going to go back and discuss the feasibility of partnering with Montgomery County with their stakeholders as an option.

PGFD seemed optimistic of a possible pilot program for fall of 2020 with just 5 students from PGFD in the MCFRS paramedic course. They discussed a willingness to compensate MCFRS for training their students and even give us instructors, hospitals for clinical time and additional medical training units for

interns to ride. The initial meeting was positive and looks like both counties could benefit by having a collaborative program.

We have an agreement within the MD State Council of Academies where we are able to use other fire facilities within the State and they are able to use ours on a as needed basis and if scheduling permits. We try not to rely on this practice as the norm, primarily because of extended travel times, logistical issues and Montgomery County is much larger and has higher demands than most other surrounding jurisdictions.

Employees affiliated with MCFRS, career and volunteer, are also eligible to sign up on the MFRI website to take MFRI training courses at MFRI in College Park site and at other Fire Training Academies within the State. It should be noted however that many times these MFRI sponsored courses are cancelled due to lack of logistical equipment, low enrollment or inability to locate a State Instructor. Additionally these classes could be held anywhere within the state.

11. And any other issue you'd like to discuss.

Not at this time

Division of Human Resources - Fire & Rescue Training Academy

