



VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD

A Report of Findings and Recommendations: *County of Northampton Fire and EMS Study*

September 26, 2011



REPORT AUTHORS

Virginia Fire Services Board

Kenneth J. Brown
R. Brian Mullins

Virginia State Firefighter's Association
Board of Housing and Community Development

Office of Emergency Medical Services

Michael D. Berg

Regulations and Compliance Manager

Virginia Department of Forestry

Donald M. Davis

Technician Specialist

Virginia Department of Fire Programs

Donald F. Brown
Erin B. Rice

Division Chief
Policy and Communications Analyst



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB) would like to extend thanks to the following organizations for their contributions to this report:

- Cape Charles Rescue Service, Inc
- Cape Charles Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.
- Cheriton Volunteer Fire Company, Inc
- Community Fire Company, Inc.
- Eastern Shore of Virginia 9-1-1 Commission
- Eastville Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.
- Northampton County Administration and Board of Supervisors
- Northampton County Department of Emergency Medical Services
- Northampton County Fire and Rescue Commission
- Northampton Fire & Rescue, Inc.
- Virginia Department of Fire Programs
- Virginia Department of Health – Office of Emergency Medical Services
- Virginia Department of Forestry



PURPOSE

- Presents Findings and Recommendations
- Provides Guidance
- Capitalizes on What Is Working
- Identifies Opportunities for Improvement

Note: *Not to be Construed as Legal Advice
or as a Binding Recommendations*



METHODOLOGY

- **Initiation of Study**
- **Obtain Stakeholder Input**
- **Prepare Analyses and Develop Core Strategies**
- **Prepare and Present Final Report**



WORKING THEMES

(Central focus for prioritizing study recommendations)

- **Theme 1: Communication**
- **Theme 2: Organizational Development**
- **Theme 3: Personnel**
- **Theme 4: Training**
- **Theme 5: Budget**



THEME 1: COMMUNICATION

Improve Levels of Communication

- Host a Strategic Communication Session to Resolve Existing Challenges and Barriers
- Develop a Communications Model that Ensures All Stakeholders Have Input into Public Safety Strategic Decisions



THEME 2: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Need for Centralized Authority

- Designate a Career Director of Public Safety as the Central Authority
- Appoint a Countywide Volunteer Fire Director

Fire and EMS Commission

- Define the Role of the Commission and Scope of Authority
- Thoroughly Review Bylaws and Membership Structure
- Adopt Any Warranted Changes



THEME 2: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Planning

- Develop Strategic Plan for Fire-Rescue System
- Strengthen Fire-Rescue Incident Analysis and Reporting
- Establish a System of Measurable Goals

Fire Prevention Activities

- Adopt the Statewide Fire Prevention Code
- Appoint a Fire Marshal
- Expand Fire and Life Safety Initiatives



THEME 3: PERSONNEL

Standard Operating Procedures

- Review and Implement Countywide Standard Operating Procedures
- Monitor Job Performance and Ensure Compliance

Standard of Conduct Policy

- Develop a Standard of Conduct Policy to Ensure Consistent Treatment of Both Volunteers and Career Members

Liaison Committee

- Resume Liaison Committee to Address Personnel Issues Throughout the County



THEME 3: PERSONNEL

Recruitment and Retention

- Adopt Countywide Recruitment and Retention Strategy
- Appoint Volunteer Coordinator Position to Support Existing Volunteers
- Identify Non-Fire and Rescue Needs and Establish a Fire Corps Program



THEME 4: TRAINING

Minimum Training Standards

- Develop and Implement Position-Specific Minimum Training Standards
- Establish Timeframe for All Responders to Meet Training Requirements
- Increase the Number of Available Instructors to Address Training Needs
- Require All New Firefighters Become Emergency Medical Technicians



THEME 4: TRAINING

Continuity of Leadership

- Institutionalize the Value of Strong Leadership
- Establish a Mentorship Program for Career and Volunteer Members
- Offer Leadership Training that Focuses on Growing New Leadership



THEME 5: BUDGET

Central Purchasing

- Develop of a Centralized Purchasing Option to Leverage County's Purchasing Power
- Outline Specifications for Future Apparatus and Equipment Purchasing

Apparatus Repair and Replacement

- Complete Annual Countywide Needs Assessment
- Establish an Apparatus Repair and Replacement Subcommittee



QUESTIONS





CLOSING THOUGHT

- **Use these findings to:**
 - Celebrate your successes
 - Observe opportunities for improvement
 - And, systematically discover how to “give life” to your Fire and EMS Service Organizations!
- **How? Begin by answering these questions:**
 - As a community, what do you value most about Northampton County’s Fire-Rescue System?
 - What core factors would “give life” to the organizations and help them to perform at their best?
 - Imagine the County’s Fire Rescue System ten years from now, when everything is as it should be. What is different? What were your contributions?

Use the study findings to guide your development efforts!