



# The Metro Insider

PROUDLY SERVING ACME, EAST BAY AND GARFIELD TOWNSHIPS SINCE 1980

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*Patrick J. Parker ~ Fire Chief*

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## Chief's Corner...

As I sit in front of the computer writing this article, I can't see the other side of the parking lot from blowing snow and I'm watching the temperature drop below zero. The thought ran through my mind on how I hope that the citizens we serve feel safe and secure. It's my hope that no matter how big or small their perceived emergency is, they are comfortable that we will be there to help. It is also my hope that our crews will show up with a solution to their problem and with a courteous smile on their face. I quickly remembered a principle from college that "hope is not a strategy." There is even a book out there on the topic. James Cameron the Canadian filmmaker is also quoted, "Luck is not a factor. Hope is not a strategy. Fear is not an option." I've got to disagree with him on a few of his thoughts. Yes, we should not count on Luck while out there performing emergency services. Fear is not an option? That is BS. I want our crews to have a little "fear" every time we drive our trucks, enter a building, stabilize a scene, and care for a patient. A little fear is a good. What about this Hope thing?

I surely am not hopeless, I think that I'm a pretty optimistic person. Our organization is surely not hopeless, we know where we are going, maybe not how we are going to pay for it. I would agree that hope is not a strategy when based on illusion or false assumptions. But hope based on what is possible and probable is a strategy. Hope based on experience, knowledge, and data is a good thing. An article written in the Harvard Business Review by Deborah Mills-Schofield says that "trust is necessary to implementing any strategy. Without faith in the people, how can we achieve anything?" Hope supports realistic optimism. Trust and Optimism is what we place in our people and our organization. I say, let's always play the Champion not the Victim. So, what would happen if you tried to make hope part of your strategy? Mills-Schofield writes, "Remember: 1) base it in fact, not fiction; 2) learn and apply from failures along the way, 3) focus on what's working instead of what's broken, and 4) use optimism as your greatest act of rebellion against the naysayers and status quo."

Let's hope we will have a great shift, let's hope we will have great outcomes, and let's hope we all go home safely! Hope really can be a strategy.

Until next time, BE Safe Out There!

- Chief Parker



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## Sleep Deprivation & Shift Work: How Do These Impact Your Stress Level?

Light sleep and no sleep – they are just part of a firefighter's job. With shifts that last for days, not hours, it is expected that firefighters be able to nap when necessary but also remain prepared to jump up at a moment's notice, get dressed, in the truck, and on the go in minutes.

It's not an easy line to walk: getting good, quality rest that infuses you with energy and keeps you going while also remaining on high alert and ready to go if needed. Without positive attention paid to quality sleep, the ability of a firefighter to remain alert and able to manage stress plummets.

### The Stages of Sleep

There are three stages of non-REM sleep, followed by REM, the deepest part of the sleep cycle:

*Stage 1:* The first 5-10 minutes after you fall asleep is spent in stage 1 when it is still relatively easy to wake up.

*Stage 2:* Lower heart rate, blood pressure, and body temperature kick in during the second stage of sleep as you prepare for deep sleep.

*Stage 3:* This is a deep stage of sleep. If someone were to attempt to wake you during this stage, you may feel "out of it" and disoriented until you got your bearings. It is during this stage that your body begins to repair tissue, rebuild your immune system, and attend to the repair and improvement of physical processes and systems.

**REM sleep:** This is the deepest sleep possible, and it is essential for positive mental health. This stage of sleep usually begins 1.5 hours into the sleep session and lasts for about 10 minutes in the first cycle. It then extends longer and longer – up to an hour – in later sleep cycles during the same sleep session. This is when dreams occur, and heartbeat and breathing rate increase.

Unfortunately, firefighters on shift – and often, when they are off shift as well – do not reach REM sleep easily, if at all. This can wreak havoc on the body's ability to heal physically and mentally, making the hazards of the job that much more deeply impactful.

### The Job

Rigorous physical activity, high stress, life-threatening situations, and exposure to trauma are par for the course for firefighters. Sleeping is ideally a time of regeneration and rejuvenation for those who do not experience these intense situations on a regular basis. For firefighters, it is essential to have sleep sessions that promote health and wellness – and that much more difficult due to the nature of the job. Unfortunately, the high stress level on the job and the inability to repair oneself mentally during sleep can add up to increased rates of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, suicidal thoughts and behaviors, and other mental health disorders, as well as increased difficulties in managing stress on the job.

### Positive Change

Though it's impossible to change the shift schedule or the nature of the job, firefighters can improve their ability to manage stressors and the increased issues caused by lack of quality sleep by:

- Quitting smoking
- Eating well (e.g., cutting back on saturated fats, fried foods, sugar, etc.)
- Exercising regularly
- Avoiding use of electronics or exercise in the hours prior to sleeping
- Getting medical attention for any injury or ailment, connected to the job or not
- Talking to someone when stress, depression, anxiety, and/or constant sleep disruptions become intrusive in the ability to function in everyday life

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## Safe Neighborhood

A properly installed and maintained smoke alarm is the only thing in your home that can alert you and your family to a fire 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Whether you're awake or asleep, a working smoke alarm is constantly on alert, scanning the air for fire and smoke. According to the National Fire Protection Association, almost two-thirds of home fire deaths resulted from fires in properties without working smoke alarms. A working smoke alarm significantly increases your chances of surviving a deadly home fire.

Through the Safe Neighborhood Campaign Grand Traverse Metro Firefighters are working door-to-door, and by request, to check and change batteries in smoke alarms, check and/or provide and install smoke alarms in homes that are in need, and provide local coupons for the purchase of additional smoke alarms. This program is supported through the generosity of local and national businesses such as; Home Depot, Kidde, the National Fire Protection Association, Ace Hardware, Gilroy's, DeWeese Hardware, Lowe's, Roy's General Store, Northern Fire & Safety, and the Rotary Good Works. There is no cost to participants.



## Grand Traverse Guns N Hoses - 2016



The Guns N Hoses board would like to say Thank You to all of their supporters in helping support the Lone Family! They proudly presented a check for \$14,512.00 to Alyssa and her family. What an amazing community we live in!

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## From Fire and Life Safety Public Educator Kyle Clute...

It's that time of year, still. We survived the holidays, all the food and if you are anything like me your new year's resolution has already come and went. However these past two months have already proven to be busy ones here at Metro Fire. The mild temperatures have been pleasant but it now looks as if winter is going to rear its ugly head for the last month of the winter months. With the bitter cold comes it's fair share of safety concerns. Here are some tips you and your family can take to put the Freeze on winter fires.

The winter months represent the highest months for home fires and in January Michigan lead the country with 19 fatal home fires, and is currently sitting at number two. So please make sure you are testing your smoke alarms every month! Don't forget your Carbon Monoxide alarms as well!

**Half of all home heating fires** occur in the months of



**Heating equipment** is involved in **1** in every **6** reported **home fires** and **1** in every **5** home fire deaths.

Keep anything that can burn at least **3** feet from any heat source like fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators, or space heaters.

Keep portable generators outside, away from windows, and **as far away as possible from your house.**

**Install and test** carbon monoxide alarms at least **once a month.**



Have a qualified professional clean and inspect your chimney and vents **every year.**

Store cooled ashes in a tightly covered metal container, and keep it outside at least **10** feet from your home and any nearby buildings.

Plug only **1** heat-producing appliance (such as a space heater) into an electrical outlet at a time.





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from left to right  
Chief Weber, Chief Parker and Chief Tuller at the  
Grand Traverse Guns N Hoses Benefit Game



Newly certified Ice Rescue Technicians



Extrication training



Chicken Coop Fire





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## Fire Prevention Bureau Duties...

The fire prevention bureau is a lesser known division of the fire service, but nonetheless has a powerful impact on the community it serves. The trend that has been emerging for the last ten years or so is focusing more on fire prevention and fire and life safety education. The big red trucks with lights and sirens are the most recognizable and where most of the focus has been in the past. The big red trucks will always be in the stations and ready to respond, but balance between fire prevention and fire suppression is rapidly gaining ground.

The fire prevention bureau is comprised of the Fire Marshal, Fire and Life Safety Educator, Fire Inspectors, Fire Investigators, and the Youth Fire Setter Program.

Since the duties and functions of the fire prevention bureau are not widely known, below are listed the positions that make up the bureau and the responsibilities for each position. Keep in mind that these lists are not all encompassing of the duties that each position is responsible for.

### Fire Marshal

- Oversees all aspects of the fire prevention bureau.
- Develops short and long term goals for the bureau.
- Writes policies and procedures for the fire prevention bureau.
- Develops an annual budget and a year- end report.
- Develops, maintains, and enforces the fire prevention and open burning ordinances.
- Assists in department wide strategic planning.
- Responsible for all NFIRS data.
- Responds to and takes command of emergency situations.
- Oversees various programs such as the Neighborhood Smoke Alarm Project and Company Inspections.
- Completes plan reviews and related inspections.
- Assists citizens and other agencies with code interpretation and information as requested.
- Interacts with building officials and has input on upcoming building projects.
- Works closely with developers from concept through occupancy.
- Maintains all required certifications.

### Plan Reviewer

- The duties of this position are shared by the Fire Marshal and an inspector at this time.
- Reviews submitted building plans, fire sprinkler plans, fire alarm plans, commercial cooking hood suppression plans, clean agent suppression plans, and site plans for code compliance.
- Conducts all related inspections.
- Must be familiar with a variety of codes.
- Reads industry publications, books, and conducts online research pertinent to equipment or processes that are involved with plan reviews.
- Maintains all required certifications.

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## **Public Educator**

- Develops original or modifies existing fire and life safety programs to present to the public.
- Evaluates the overall effectiveness these programs by collecting and analyzing relevant data and statistics.
- Participates in collaborative partnerships and coalitions of professionals involved in life safety issues.
- Determines the priorities of specific programs of instruction and allocates resources appropriately.
- Schedules and coordinates community fire and life safety events.
- Responds to emergencies as needed.
- Maintains all required certifications.

## **Fire Inspector**

- Inspects public, commercial, and multi-residential occupancies to ensure compliance with the International Fire Code as adopted.
- Conducts inspection of fire hazard complaints for compliance with jurisdiction, state, and federal regulations.
- Identifies corrective actions that must be made to bring properties into compliance with applicable fire codes, laws, regulations, and standards.
- Assists citizens and other agencies with code interpretations and information when requested, prepares written documents, and maintains files.
- Provides court testimony regarding fire code violations.
- Responds to emergencies as needed.
- Assists and performs public education programs.
- May be required to assist with fire investigation duties.
- Maintains all required certifications.

## **Fire Investigator**

- Conducts all origin & cause investigations.
- Generates origin & cause reports and maintains files.
- Provides court room deposition testimony.
- Maintains a working relationship with law enforcement, Prosecutor's office, private industry investigators, and insurance adjusters.
- Maintains all required certifications.

## **Youth Fire and Life Safety Counselor**

- Counsel youth fire setters.
- Teach pertinent educational or rehabilitative programs.
- Maintain all required certifications.
- Work with juvenile court systems to prevent recidivism.