

## Firefighter Health and Wellness Initiatives

The leading cause of firefighter on-duty deaths are stress and cardiac-related, which historically have accounted for nearly half of all firefighter fatalities. Effective health and wellness programs can reduce this number one cause of firefighter deaths. To support this, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) has developed the following partnerships and programs:

### Expansion and Quantification of Effectiveness of the Fire Service Joint Labor Management Wellness-Fitness Initiative

USFA partnered with the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) to support expanding the use of the Fire Service Joint Labor Management Wellness-Fitness Initiative to additional fire departments. The Initiative was developed by the IAFC and the IAFF to enhance firefighter wellness, health, and safety and has been implemented successfully in many fire departments throughout the United States.

- ▶ With the IAFC, USFA supported an ongoing program to develop best practices in firefighter health and wellness for the fire service. This partnership with the IAFC continues to educate the fire service on the importance of wellness and fitness, primarily through educational sessions at national conferences.
- ▶ The partnership with the IAFF supported the development of the Peer-Credentialing Program for fire department Peer Fitness Trainers that is recognized by the American Council on Exercise (ACE), the largest nonprofit fitness certification and education provider in the world. Many fire department Peer Fitness Trainers have been certified through this program.

### Volunteer Fire Service Fitness and Wellness

Partnership efforts between USFA and the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) involved research and development of effective health and wellness program(s) aimed at the needs of volunteer firefighters. Through this partnership the *Health and Wellness Guide for the Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services* was developed and updated.

### Emergency Incident Rehabilitation

USFA, in partnership with the IAFF, developed an updated USFA *Emergency Incident Rehabilitation* incorporating the latest information on the care of firefighters engaged in emergency scene and training operations through effective rehabilitation. The manual also provides case studies illustrating the need for effective emergency responder rehabilitation. An effective emergency incident rehabilitation program supports firefighter health and wellness.

### Study of the Impact and Mitigation of Sleep Deprivation in Emergency Services

USFA worked with the IAFC in studying the impact of sleep deprivation on human performance and developing mitigation measures related to the fire and emergency services. It examined this issue and its impact on cardiac stress as well as human performance issues such as vehicle operations, firefighting, providing medical care, and managing and commanding incidents. This research resulted in the report and accompanying video presentation – “*The Effects of Sleep Deprivation on Firefighters and EMS Responders*”.

### Study of Emerging Health and Safety Issues of the Volunteer Fire Service

This partnership effort between USFA and the NVFC involved the study of emergent issues related to firefighter occupational health and safety occurring in the volunteer fire service, and developed a comprehensive report detailing programs and strategies on how firefighter fatalities among volunteers may be reduced.

