



THE REVIEW



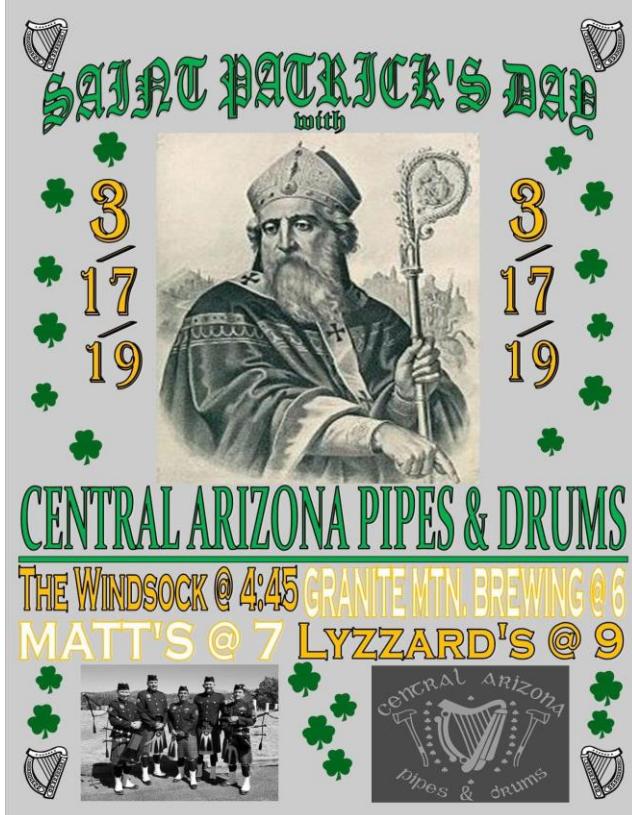
Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – March 15, 2019

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Quote of the Week

"Appearance is absolute, but reality is not that way – everything is interdependent not absolute." – Dalai Lama



The Chief's Desk



There are a few absolutes (certainties) in life e.g. death, taxes, fire is hot, and concrete will crack – oh, and the courts have ruled on the Oxford comma. Outside of those things, absolutes are relatively rare. I would like to say I will never move back to St. Louis. How many times have we used an absolute and sometime later found ourselves eating crow?? My approach, I'm not going to say I will never move back because I'm afraid of what Karma might do – and I would not find it funny. Love my family, but no use for Missouri.

As we've been working through some recent issues which have caused us to reevaluate some policies and SOG's, the concept of absolutes has become even more apparent. If this happens, then this will happen period with no room to insert the facts of the situation. The reality is that there are so many variables that the real answer is not absolutely, it's "well, it depends." There are certainly parameters for the sake of consistency, but absolutes in general terms do not fit.

We've discussed the concept for years when we talk about the fire ground during after action reviews. What is it we generally hear when a firefighter is seriously injured or killed? It was a routine fire. Really? I think we've learned over the years that there is no "routine" fire. For that matter, we don't respond to routine incidents. As we've seen, even minor motor vehicle crashes can turn into horrific incidents when a distracted driver comes crashing through the scene. Nothing we do in emergency services is routine. Routine in some ways indicates an absolute i.e. a house fire is a house fire is a house fire. Not so much.

Fire is a natural component of our eco system – to be scientific about it. The reality is that humans have learned to harness its power in many instances, but in its natural environment predictability can be a challenge. Over the years we've learned methods to help control the flow of air in buildings which will aid in controlling the fire, but the reality is we still do not have complete control of its behavior. Every structure is different, and every one of them has a different fuel load. Is it an older home that's been added to over the years creating a number of void spaces? Is it an older home built with dimensional lumber or a newer home built using light weight construction? Is it a hoarder house or the home of a minimalist? What type of furniture do they have? What are the floor coverings, window, and wall coverings? If it's a commercial structure, is it sprinklered or not? How was it constructed? How often has it been renovated? How many void spaces exist?

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Upcoming Events:

March 18 – Meet with PSPRS to review actuarial, AFCA ZOOM meeting, afternoon meeting
March 19 – Senior Leadership Academy, PRCC Liaison Meeting
March 20 – Senior Leadership Academy
March 21 – AFCA Board Meeting, Chuck Montgomery Retirement Glendale, PV Council Meeting

Board Meeting:

March 25 Admin

CVFD – 1600-1630
CYFD – 1630-1700
CAFMA – 1700-1830



How to Kill Morale

By: Frank Viscuso



This wonderful profession has often been referred to as the “greatest job on Earth.” Every time I ask the firefighters and officers who attend my leadership seminars if they agree with that statement, at least 85 percent of the hands in the room go up. Most polls in America rank firefighting among the top professions in regard to career satisfaction; many polls rate it #1. Despite that, I find it interesting that in recent years I have come across a growing number of firefighters who seem bitter, frustrated, and sometimes disgruntled to a point where they begin counting the days to retirement months and sometimes years before they are eligible.

In one organization, an estimated 15 percent of its members—most of its veteran core—left the job before they had intended. One member told me that his team was consumed with drama; many of his coworkers regularly made statements like “I don’t care anymore” and “I give up.” He also stressed the point that the brotherhood was dead. As I dug deeper into this with him, it became abundantly clear that his frustration had little to do with a “lack of brotherhood” and everything to do with poor leadership. This individual eventually admitted that he agreed that firefighting was the greatest job on Earth but, at the same time, he was still counting the days until he could leave what he described as a toxic “soul-killing” environment. During a group discussion later that day, it became abundantly clear that most of the members of that organization loved the job but attributed their discontent to failed leadership and poor management.

[Fire Engineering](#)

The Bret Tarver Story

Remembering Phoenix firefighter killed this day in 2001

By: 3/14/2018

[FirefighterNation.com](#)



Strategic Planning and AMR Update

Strategic Planning:

I'd like to start by thanking everyone for submitting feedback on the SWOC-T analysis. I greatly appreciate the time and thought that went into each submittal. All of the information was gathered and entered into a spread sheet that was then reviewed and tabulated by the committee. We assigned individual groups to work on each section e.g. Strengths, Weaknesses, etc. Once they categorized and organized their section, they presented their results to the group for discussion.

I have since taken their work and incorporated it into the new Strategic Plan draft. I've also gone through and updated the body of the document. The draft plan is now in the hands of a couple of outside resources for review to ensure we are on-track in regards to the overall structure.

The committee will meet again on March 27th to review the draft and provide direction for further development. We will also consider our mission, vision and values as part of the update to ensure they still fit. After all of that is complete, we will begin working on next year's annual goals and objectives. We will review an update of The Compass as well.

This is a long process, and one that should not be rushed. We are working towards obtaining accreditation again so expect to see additional emphasis in all divisions on data collection, analysis and reporting. While I believe we are in good shape to go through the process, we are working to clean up some areas identified through the last accreditation process.

Regarding accreditation, we will be looking in the next couple of years to move that direction again. It will not likely be next fiscal year, but possibly the following.

AMR:

We continue to set-up meetings, do presentations, and seek options to the current transport service. Again, it's not the AMR crews that are the problem, its AMR that is at fault for the response time issues we are experiencing. I have several more meetings coming up in the next three to four weeks including a stakeholders meeting in Phoenix with DHS and the Bureau. Keep the data flowing – we need to have good clean data, and a lot of it. We continue to file complaints, and will work in the court of public opinion to support our position. We've seen this before and know that without public and political pressure DHS is unlikely to act.

Chief's Desk Continued



All of these seemingly small details mean that no fire is routine. In short, our approach from beginning to end “depends.” I believe that for us, it’s not necessarily the plan, but the planning process that’s important. The planning process, or our training, teaches us to watch, read, act, assess, and repeat. We’re not just looking at what’s in front of us, but instead assessing all conditions around us as well. In many accident investigations I’ve read over the years, wind has been a significant factor, as well as other weather conditions. Weather is not inside the building per se, and yet it is inside and outside driving fire conditions.

The same vigilance, or situational awareness, needs to be applied to every incident to which we respond. Simple things like dumpster fires, car crashes, and even medical calls can go south rapidly. I have a friend back in the St. Charles area that was on a medical call. He is someone that maintains a high level of situational awareness every day, which played a vital role as a patient went for a gun tucked in the bed underneath him. The Captain’s actions, and those of his crew, saved several lives that night. There was nothing extraordinary about the call and nothing that indicated that there could be violence. Nothing is routine and nothing is absolute.

The same is true regarding absolutes on the administrative side as I mentioned earlier. There are some situations that lead to a “you shall,” but even that is situation dependent. We have policies and procedures that provide direction; however they have to be broad enough to allow us to deal with the facts, not rumor, of each situation. We’ve just recently experienced instances that have caused us to revisit a couple of policies, and create a new SOG. Some were written with little room to deal with situation dependent factors and others were so broad that no clear guidance was provided.



Consistency is vitally important, I get that point. However, there are slight variations in every situation. It can be a real struggle to come up with the best decision when you match policy guidance with specific facts. In the end, no matter what decision is made, it’s wrong in someone’s opinion. You know what they say about opinions – they’re like Never mind, you know what I’m saying.

Whether it’s an emergency scene or a disciplinary situation, there are always arm chair quarterbacks that know better than the people that were there. They do after all have the benefit of hindsight, and in the case of disciplinary situations they have all the rumors to which they can refer as a basis for why the decision made was the wrong one.



As I write this, I think about watching a football game and jumping up and down yelling at the screen when the professional football player makes a blatantly obvious mistake. Having never played football myself, I absolutely know better than the person on the field. There are a couple of points to consider. One, I'm not the one that had a 300+lbs person getting ready to squish me. Two, I have the benefit of the 30,000' view of the field and can see things the person on the field cannot. I believe point number two relates to the concept of escaping to the balcony i.e. separate yourself from the situation, get a better view of "reality," and reengage. I'm sure a quarterback would love to see what we see on the TV without anyone in their face before they decide where to go with the ball. I know I can make a better decision for him from that vantage point.

I think in the end, we need to remember that things are generally fluid and not absolute. If we approach life as if each situation has its own unique quirks, maybe we'll make better decisions in the long term. And, maybe if we take the time to separate ourselves from a given situation to get a 30,000' view, we'll gain a little better perspective overall.
