

To: Those of concern

From: Escambia County Professional Firefighters Union

The purpose of this report is to outline the violations of State Law and County contractual agreements that are being committed by the volunteer fire departments in Escambia County. This report provides the information necessary to prove that an unsafe work environment is being created for Escambia County career firefighters. These violations which will be cited are not isolated and are in fact representative of a problem that encompasses many of the Volunteer Fire Departments in Escambia County.

These repeated violations generate an unsafe work environment for county employees and deny the public the fire services they pay for and deserve. The Escambia County Professional Firefighters Union, which is entirely composed of county employees, has no greater mission than to protect the public and their property. This mission's primary function is to provide care to those in need at emergency scenes. The mission is all encompassing because it demands us to prevent further loss of life and property through preventative actions such as this report.

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RESOLUTIONS

- Immediate steps need to take place to hold the volunteer fire chiefs and their departments accountable to these infractions. This would include and not limited to a breach of contract process.
- Chief Ken Perkins needs to be officially recognized as the Fire Chief for Escambia County. Thus creating a true combination department.
- Battalion Chiefs should be required to be the officers in charge of any incident where career companies will be operating.
 - This will insure that those held liable in the event of an accident are directly supervising the County Employees.
 - The Battalion Chiefs are county employees whose county designated roles are to be the officers in charge at emergency scenes.
 - Currently volunteer personnel that may happen to be in charge at an emergency incident have questionable certifications (Assistant Chiefs, Captains, and Lieutenants, ect...).
 - This will prevent any incidents were the question will arise as to who is ultimately in charge of an emergency scene.
- A highly identifiable marker needs to be added to a volunteer's structural firefighting gear that displays if an individual is FF1 certified.
 - This mark needs to be bold enough as to provide for a quick and accurate recognition identifiable by all personnel on the fireground.
 - The County should be the sole authority over the dissemination of this mark.
 - The mark should be an item that is easily prevented from being commonly purchased or duplicated.
- The training for future FF 1 candidates needs to be coordinated through Chief Perkin's office.
 - This was the way the volunteer training functioned before the volunteers gained control over the program.
 - This will ensure accountability and reliability.
 - The FF 1 classes could be taught by volunteer certified instructors as well as career certified instructors.
 - This would maintain the standards outlined in FAC 69A-37.055 Minimum Curriculum Requirements for Training Firefighter Recruits or Firefighters.
- When Volunteer units provide dispatch with their responding radio traffic they should also be required to give the compliment of certified FF 1's that are responding.

- A thorough audit needs to be conducted to determine the FF1 statuses of the Escambia County Volunteers.
 - This audit needs to be so thorough as to provide a certificate and an individual with proper identification that corresponds with that certificate.
 - The audit also needs to include an accurate count of those members that are active. This is needed to prevent volunteers who are not active from being included in the FF1 count.
 - The audit would need to confirm that the volunteers are maintaining the standards outlined in FAC 69A-37.055 Minimum Curriculum Requirements for Training Firefighter Recruits or Firefighters.
 - Certain volunteers that had past certifications were allowed by the state to be "grandfathered" into the state FFI program. These volunteers would also need to be audited because specific rules apply to those individuals so they are "trained commensurate to duty" FAC 69A-62.003 (3)(2a)Uniform Minimum Firefighter Employment Standards
 - The auditor would need to work with the State Fire Marshalls Office for proper compliance.

- Career crews need a guaranteed staffing of four personnel per fire company.
 - This will ensure a crew composition necessary to fulfill the "two in two out" rule, FAC 69A-62.003.
 - If volunteer staffing is insufficient there will be at the very least a fully trained and staffed fire company responding.

- Need legal clarification on how career firemen with a FFII certification can be supervised by a Volunteer who has a FFI certification.

- The county needs to provide for a Safety Committee as stated in FAC 69A-62.042. The committee must follow the duties and functions outlined in FAC 69A-62.043.