Implementing a Culture Change in the Fire Service to Embrace the Mission of EMS

Mike Metro, Deputy Fire Chief
Los Angeles County Fire Department
Objectives

- This class will give each of you the practical tools to do the following:
  1. Identify the need to address change within our Fire Based EMS Mission.
  2. How to become a credible partner in the EMS delivery system.
  3. How to hire those who love what we really do!
  4. How to develop training programs that will yield EMS professionals.
  5. How to establish a mindset and a vision for the EMS mission
  6. Developing leaders to implement change
The New Fire Service

- Today’s Fire Service is an all risk organization.
- The Emergency Medical Services Mission constitutes approximately 80% of Today’s All Risk Fire Department’s emergency operations.
The Bad News!
Outdated Cultures Die Hard

Many lives are lost across USA because emergency services fail

“Six Minutes to Live or Die,” a report about EMS in the nation’s 50 biggest cities.

Many fire fighters said they were unhappy because they signed on to fight fires, not tend to sick people.

The time it takes to get out of the station on an Cardiac Arrest call is 42 seconds longer than it takes to get out of the station on a fire call!
What Does That Tell Us As Leaders?

- There is more work yet to be done to change our culture.
- We must purpose to strive to embrace today’s EMS mission and inculcate this responsibility into the mindsets of those in our organizations.

Many are ‘saveable,’ few are saved

The USA TODAY survey and data analysis show that, of the 250,000 Americans who die outside of hospitals from cardiac arrest each year, between 58,000 and 76,000 suffer from a treatable short circuit in the heart and therefore are highly “saveable.” Yet nationwide, emergency medical systems save only a small fraction of saveable victims, and rates vary widely from city to city.

The analysis shows:
- The chance of surviving a dire medical emergency in the USA is a matter of geography. If you collapse from cardiac arrest in Seattle, a 911 call likely will bring instant advice and fast-moving firefighters and paramedics. Collapse in Washington, D.C., and — as one EMS official surmises — someone better call
Fire Service is being challenged on our right to provide EMS service in our own jurisdictions!
Your Local Economy
Municipalities are Dying!

- Financial challenges never seen before.
- City officials are being forced to look at debilitating cuts.
- City officials are being forced to look out of the box for solutions.
- Municipalities are considering doing things they never would have done previously.
Omaha City Council looks at privatization

Omaha Fire Department managers would have the authority to privatize fire, ambulance and hazardous material services under a proposal being considered by the City Council.
DEKALB COUNTY, Ga.
Budget Cuts

The fire department's proposal calls for cutting 197 positions to privatize ambulance services.
Councilman Sam Liccardo in a last-minute proposal Friday said the City Council should hold off on Tuesday's scheduled vote approving the tentative deal with firefighters. The agreement calls for a 10 percent salary cut, some operational changes and reduced health insurance while the two sides continue talks about pension reforms.

"Painfully," Liccardo said, "it's just not enough."
Are the wheels flying off the cart!
We Must Compete!

But who are we competing against?
The Beginning of this Competition has already started

- The referee has already blown the whistle to start the game.
- In some cases, the Fire Service did not know we were supposed to show up!
Who Are We?
Nordstrom’s” Three Pillars

♦ Price
♦ Product Quality
♦ Customer Service
Reputation: Houston, We Have a Problem?
The Question

– Are we cost effective?
– Do we have a great reputation?
– Do we provide a high quality product?
– Do we provide high quality customer service and if challenged, can we prove it?
We Must Continue to Improve in Order to Maintain Our Organizational Greatness
If We Don’t Provide High Quality Cost Effective Service, We Will Either Fail Or Lose Our Organizational Greatness
Who Are You?

• One that does not tolerate the EMS mission?
• One that only tolerates it?
• One that has fully accepted it?
• One that embraces the mission?
And the Good News?

- The Fire Service is poised to make that change in our culture
  - IAFF’s EMS Section
  - IAFC’s EMS Section
  - Cal Chief’s EMS Section
  - Fire Service Publications
So How Do We Do It?
Embracing the Mission of EMS

First Things First

Develop Fire Based EMS
Involvement with System Stakeholders!
Develop Fire Based EMS Involvement

- **Step 1: Assess Your Credibility**
- **Step 2: Identify Your Service Delivery Partners**
- **Step 3: Create A Fire/EMS Association Locally Within Your County, Parish Or Region.**
- **Step 4: Develop Relationships with Your Regulatory Agency**
Develop Fire Based EMS Involvement

- **Step 5:** Developing Partnerships with the Other Components of your local Pre-Hospital Care delivery system.
- **Step 6:** Developing Allegiances
- **Step 7:** Create a State Based Fire EMS Association
Develop Fire Based EMS Involvement

- **Step 8:** Developing a Relationship with Your State Regulatory Authority.
- **Step 9:** Developing Partnerships with the Other Components of your State Prehospital Care delivery system.
Embracing the Mission of EMS

Second Step

Develop a Big Enough Rudder

- How big is your rudder?
- How close is the source of the passion to the troops?
Embracing the Mission of EMS

Third Step

- Hiring those who love what we really do
Recruiting

Hire Those Who Love What We Really Do!
We Have an Image and It May Be the Wrong One!

- Hollywood has painted a picture of the Fire Service
- The media has painted a picture of the Fire Service
- Sometimes we as leaders have painted a picture of the Fire Service
- Often those pictures are wrong!
We Need to Hire Professionals That Will Love What They Will Really Do

- What do we really do?
- What truly characterizes today’s fire service?
- Are you hiring those who will love what they will really do?
We Need to Develop Recruiting Programs That Reflect What We Really Do!

- What image does your job flyer give?
- What image does your recruiting posters give?
- What image does your career days give?
Clearly Articulates?

Class Specification: FIRE FIGHTER

ITEM NUMBER: 0199

APPROVAL DATE: 05/09/2001

DEFINITION:
Performs fire fighting and rescue duties in all types of fires and in other emergency situations, and enforces the Fire Prevention Code.
CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS:

Positions allocable to this class receive technical and administrative supervision from Fire Captains and perform a full range of fire fighting and related duties on an assigned shift. These positions must respond immediately at any hour of the day or night, in any weather, to combat life or property threatening emergencies. Incumbents typically work under hazardous conditions, such as those that involve exposure to fire and smoke. All positions in this class require the physical stamina to perform such strenuous activities as ascending or descending ladders while carrying victims or equipment in order to effect rescues, as well as the ability to manipulate equipment, such as fire hoses, power tools and hand tools. Incumbents must exercise working knowledge of fire fighting principles and techniques, the Fire Prevention Code, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) I principles and techniques, and the proper use of fire fighting and EMT tools and equipment.
What Will This Position Do More of in the Next 30 Years?

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Ideas for Your Organization

♦ Change the narratives of your job flyers to reflect the day to day duties of today’s fire fighter.
♦ Post the proper ratio of EMS pictures to fire pictures at your community events.
♦ Give specific directions to those handling your community relations and recruitment to highlight the EMS Mission.
♦ Engage your “on fire” EMS professionals for your career days, job fares and school demos.
♦ Examine your testing processes.
We Need to Hire Those Who Love What We Really Do
Embracing the Mission of EMS

4th Step

- We need to give our Fire EMS Professionals a vision and a performance target to aim at.
Establishing a Mind Set and a Vision
The Fire Service Has Been Shaped by Our Traditions

- We have been shaped by the proud traditions of our 200 year history
- But, the fire service today is not what it was even 25 or 30 years ago.
Establishing a New Vision and a New Mindset

- If you wish to inculcate the EMS mission into your department’s mindset, then provide the mark for all to shoot for.
- Have you set performance goals that will produce Fire and EMS professionals?
Designing a New Performance Evaluation Tool

- Identify the expectations of your customers
- Sarasota County Fire Departments Customer Service survey.
  - Get there quick
  - Take away the pain
  - Tell me what you are doing and why
  - Be concerned and caring
  - Be professional
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**STATION WORK**
- Observation of Working Hours
- Cooperation – Teamwork
- Maintenance of Quarters
- Maintenance of Emergency and Medical Equipment
- Observation of Safety Procedures
- Maintenance of Emergency and Medical Reports and Records

**DRILLS**
- Knowledge of Basic Drills
- Application of Standard Technique
- Care and Use of Tools and Appliances
- Participation
- Cooperation – Teamwork
- Observation of Safety Principles
- Knowledge of Automotive Equipment

**EMS OPERATIONS**
- Application of Pt Care Guidelines, Prehospital Policy/Proc.
- Application and Use of EMS Equipment
- Recognition of ‘Patient’s Best Interest’
- Cooperation – Teamwork
- Observation of Medical Safety Procedures (BSI, Scene Safety)
- Readily Assumes EMS Roles and Responsibilities
- Professional/Courteous/Friendly (Patients, Bystanders, other Health Care Professionals)

**EMERGENCY OPERATIONS (General)**
- Adjustment to Situation
- Response to Orders
- Application of Standard Techniques
- Cooperation – Teamwork
- Observation of Safety Procedures

**FIRE PREVENTION**
- Application of Codes
- Thoroughness of Inspection
- Preparation of Reports
- Public Education
- Follow-up of Inspections

**PUBLIC RELATIONS**
- Personal Appearance
- Meeting and Handling the Public
- General Conduct

**SUPERVISORY ABILITY**
- Planning and Assigning
- Training and Instructing
- Disciplinary Control
- Evaluating Performance
- Leadership
- Decision Making
- Approachability
- Knowledge of Required Prehospital Care Policies/Procedures
- Effective EMS Scene Management

**COMMENTS**
Describe employee’s strengths and weaknesses. Give examples of work well done and plans for improving performance. Factor ratings of UNSATISFACTORY, IMPROVEMENT NEEDED or OUTSTANDING must be substantiated by comments (use separate page if needed.)

**SIGNATURES**
This report is based on my observation and/or knowledge. It represents my best judgment of the employee’s performance.
- **RATER**: ___________________________ **DATE**: ____________
- **REVIEWER**: ______________________ **DATE**: ____________
- **DEPT. HEAD**: ______________________ **DATE**: ____________

**OVERALL EVALUATION**

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TODAY’S FIRE DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT

EMPLOYEE NAME EMPLOYEE NUMBER ITEM NUMBER STATUS DATE

POSITION DEPT. SUB RATING PERIOD FROM: TO:

RATE EACH FACTOR
OUTSTANDING
VERY GOOD
COMPETENT
IMPROVEMENT NEEDED
UNSATISFACTORY

CHECK ITEMS:
+STRONG
-STANDARD
-WEAK

STATION WORK
☐ Observance of Working Hours
☐ Cooperation – Teamwork
☐ Maintenance of Quarters
☐ Maintenance of Emergency and Medical Equipment
☐ Observance of Safety Procedures
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DRILLS
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RATER: ____________________________ DATE: ____________

I have reviewed this report.

REVIEWER: ____________________________ DATE: ____________

I concur with and approve this report.

DEPT. HEAD: ____________________________ DATE: ____________

Copy of report ☐ given to employee ☐ mailed DATE: ____________

Report discussed with employee:

LOCATION: ____________________________ DATE: ____________

BY: ____________________________ DATE: ____________

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE: ____________________________

OVERALL EVALUATION

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# Measuring EMS Performance and Mindsets

**EMS OPERATIONS**

- Application of Pt Care Guidelines, Pre-hospital Care Policy/Proc.
- Application and Use of EMS Equipment
- Recognition of ‘Patient’s Best Interest’
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STATION WORK

- Observance of Working Hours

√ Cooperation – Teamwork

+ Maintenance of Quarters

+ Maintenance of Emergency and Medical Equipment

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Ideas for Your Organization

- Carefully design EMS performance goals
- Include attitudinal behavior elements that will likely lead to a recognition that interpersonal skills are valued and expected in the Fire Based EMS Professional.
- Reward your EMS professionals
- Become a valued member of the EMS Delivery System.
Embracing the Mission of EMS
5th Step
Developing EMS Leadership

Where the leaders go, the troops will follow.
(For better or worse!)
Developing New Leadership

♦ Promotional Strategies
  – Develop written tests that incorporate the knowledge required to be a successful EMS supervisor.
  – Develop an indoctrination program for those that are reachable on your supervisor’s and manager’s exam list.
Officer’s Induction Program

- Twelve 8-hour days
- Voluntary
- Topics range from operations to supervision to business writing.
- Includes an EMS segment
EMS Segment

- EMS mission and values
- Importance of the EMS mission
- The characteristics of a successful Captain
- Supervisor’s responsibility in EMS
- EMS Delivery and quality of care
- EMS Education Program
- Documentation
- Equipment
- Primary Paramedic Training
Embracing the Mission of EMS

6th Step

Give Your Existing EMS Leaders the Tools They Need
Tools for Fire Based EMS Leaders

- A Vision
- Behavioral Expectations
- Solid Policies
Give Your EMS Leaders the Tools They Need

- A Vision
- Behavioral Expectations
- A Performance Target
Behavioural Expectations

• The Big Five from Sarasota. Are they expectations?
  • Get there quick
  • Take away my pain
  • Tell me what you are doing and why
  • Be professional
  • Be Nice
Give Your EMS Leaders the Tools They Need

- A Vision
- Behavioral Expectations
- A Performance Target
**SUPERVISORY ABILITY**

+ Planning and Assigning
+ Training and Instructing
✓ Disciplinary Control
+ Evaluating Performance
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Ideas for Your Organization

- Develop promotional strategies that are designed to provide you with Fire Based EMS Professionals
- Develop an officer indoctrination program that includes an EMS officer development module.
- Provide your leaders with a clearly articulated vision, behavioral objectives and solid policies.
So Where Are Your Leaders Leading Your Personnel?
Primary Paramedic Training That Compliments Your Vision
Paramedic Training That Incorporates the EMS Mindset

- Most primary PM training facilities do a great job teaching the clinical aspects of the job.
- Make sure your primary paramedic training partner teaches the mindsets you are looking for as well.
  - Customer service
  - Patient advocate
  - EMS mission oriented
Ideas for Your Organization

- Partner with your paramedic training organizations. They are building your team!
- Make sure your training partners are not just developing clinical excellence, but attitudinal excellence as well.
Quality Improvement

Do You Know How Well Your Organization Is Doing?

Or not doing!
Why Do We Need a Quality Improvement Program?

- We have entered an era of change within the fire service.
- Greater expectations have been and will be placed upon us.
  - NFPA 1710, NFPA 450, IAFF EMS Benchmarks
  - Complacency in the private sector will likely increase the expectations placed upon us in the public sector.
- Legal requirements
How Do You Build One?

- Develop top level management commitment
- Create a tool that will measure your system performance
- Understand what makes EMS Systems successful
- Develop an educational system within your organization that can take the message to the street.
- Develop a means of spreading your success stories
What Are the Obstacles to Developing a QI Program

- Personnel not able to look beyond the four walls of the fire house
- Sometimes we are handcuffed by the way we have always done it.
- Lack of commitment from the top
What are the Principles of Developing a QI Program

♦ Customer satisfaction
♦ Management by fact
♦ Respect for people
♦ PDCA- plan, do, check, act
Measuring is Important, But?

- The establishment of a vision
- The establishment of a corporate mindset
- The establishment of performance goals
- The measuring of them all
- What do you do with that?
Quality Improvement Resources


The Future Leaders of Our Organizations May Now Be in Your Recruit Tower!

How does that make your feel?
Developing Future Leaders Is a Responsibility for Us All

1. Identify the need to address change within our Fire Based EMS Mission.
2. Become a credible partner in the EMS delivery system.
3. Hire those who love what we really do!
4. Implement training programs that will yield EMS professionals.
5. Establish a mindset and a vision for the EMS mission
6. Developing leaders to implement change
7. Develop a meaningful quality improvement process
Questions?