

10 SERVICE REPORT

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MANAGING CONFLICT IN COMBINATION FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Combination fire departments (CFDs) are difficult to manage because career firefighters and volunteer firefighters often have different institutional interests. Administrative changes such as the creation of a combination department from an all-career or an all-volunteer department or the consolidation of several formerly separate fire departments exacerbate the problem. The local government, which can be legally and politically responsible for resolving the conflict, is often called on for a solution.

This report explains when and why CFDs are efficient compared with both all-career fire departments and all-volunteer fire departments, and it also describes the principal management problem—the conflict or potential conflict between career and volunteer firefighters. Case studies are followed by a classification of CFDs into four types. Guidelines help policy makers determine the type of CFD in their jurisdiction, and four conflict management strategies are presented.

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Managing Conflict in Combination Fire Departments

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Combination fire departments (CFDs) are fire departments comprising both volunteer and career firefighters.¹ Types of existing CFDs range from forces made up entirely of firefighters who volunteer and only a driver who is paid to departments with many paid personnel and only a handful of volunteers.² CFDs provide the most efficient organizational form of fire and emergency medical services (EMS) delivery for certain types of municipalities. The CFD is both effective at fire suppression and inexpensive to administer owing to the reduced salary costs because of its use of volunteer personnel.

Unfortunately, CFDs are difficult to manage because career firefighters and volunteer firefighters often have different institutional interests. Career firefighters fear that their employers might replace their paid labor with volunteer labor; volunteers are thus seen as a threat to the career firefighters' job security. Volunteers know that career firefighters often displace entire volunteer organizations; career firefighters are thus seen as a threat to the volunteers' sense of identity.

The individual volunteer's sense of identity is not trivial. Although the financial consequence of resigning a volunteer position is small, the psychic cost is extremely high because of the firefighter's great personal investment in the organization. Some volunteers regularly contribute 20 to 25 hours per week for decades. Furthermore, volunteer departments symbolize autonomy from government and identity with community. The structural distrust the volunteer and career groups have for each other might be more tolerable if each group did not have to work with the other; but they usually do. Efficiency of CFDs is a desirable goal; however, reaching that goal is a tortuous path of management anxiety arising from personnel conflict.

The volunteer-career enmity can lead to unwanted involvement by the local government that sees itself as legally and often politically responsible for resolving the conflict. Sometimes this interference brings volunteer and career firefighters together to face the

common "enemy," the local government, causing the combination fire chief to be pleased that one conflict is managed but also to recognize that the cost of managing one conflict is to create another. Conflict between CFD fire chiefs and local government is particularly common in larger suburban and rural countywide fire services.

This report explains why CFDs are efficient in comparison with both all-career fire departments and all-volunteer fire departments. It describes the principal management problem—the conflict or potential conflict between career and volunteer firefighters. Case studies are followed by a classification of CFDs into four types, and guidelines are provided for policy makers so they can correctly determine the type of CFD in their jurisdiction. Four conflict management strategies are presented.

THE EFFECTS OF TIME

An understanding of why a combination department is so efficient depends on an understanding of the effect of time on fire losses.³ Unchecked, the rate of growth of most structural fires is exponential. That is, growth following ignition is very slow in the first minute or so; but as the fire spreads it ignites more fuel, such as wood, paint, and fabric, and produces more heat. After approximately 60 seconds, when a smoke detector should sound an alarm and occupants should leave and call the fire department, the rate of growth of the fire accelerates. During the next five minutes, the temperature in the room begins to rise. Because hot gases and fire rise, the temperature is highest at the ceiling. After approximately seven minutes, the fire is likely to be visible in one corner of a room, burning the fuel at that spot. During the next three minutes, the temperature builds until the gases at the ceiling are so hot that the entire room suddenly ignites. This phenomenon is known as flashover. Once this happens, damage has

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increased considerably. Unless firewalls are built into the structure, the fire will spread within one minute to other rooms, and the structure will likely sustain considerable loss.

The period from minute seven to minute ten is critical. If the fire department can arrive and set up before minute seven, the knockdown of the fire is virtually assured; the resulting loss on a \$100,000 house might range between \$5,000 and \$15,000. Conversely, if arrival and setup is not achieved until after minute ten, the loss to the structure will be considerable.

Unchecked, the rate of growth of most structural fires is exponential.

Recognizing the crucial role of time, fire services (including fire engineers) have asked: How can we get to the fire faster? Smoke detectors wake and warn occupants to report the fire within a minute or two of ignition. Constant training and practice by fire companies have reduced setup time to less than one minute. (For example, a few years ago firefighters donned breathing apparatuses on their backs at the fire scene, usually a 30- to 45-second procedure. Now, pumpers are designed with breathing apparatuses in the seats so that each firefighter, while sitting, can slip on the breathing apparatus within a few seconds.)

The one remaining factor is response time, the time from receipt of the alarm to the time when the first fire department apparatus arrives at the scene. Response time is a function of the distance from the fire station to the fire and the availability of personnel in the fire department. The effect of distance is obvious. At 30 miles (50 kilometers) an hour using sirens and warning lights, a pumper can travel 3 miles (5 kilometers) in six minutes. Local governments therefore try to place fire stations close enough to nearly all buildings for acceptable response times (usually four to four-and-a-half

minutes).

Within 30 to 45 seconds of the sounding of the alarm, an all-career department will have its first pumper moving out of the station. An all-volunteer department will require more time unless volunteers are already at the station. Volunteer departments use one of the following two standard response methods.

- Volunteers receive the alarm, proceed to the fire station in their own cars, park, don protective clothing, and get into the breathing apparatuses. Any fire attack requires at least three volunteers, and the unit will not proceed to the scene until the third volunteer is seated and belted in the vehicle. Despite practice, all these steps may require three or four minutes—at least two-and-a-quarter minutes more than an all-career department needs.
- Volunteers receive a pager alarm, are given the address of the structural fire, and proceed in their own vehicles to the fire scene. Designated volunteers who live near the fire station proceed to the station and drive the fire equipment to the fire scene. At the fire scene, volunteers don protective clothing and their breathing apparatuses and proceed to set up the fire attack. This is much faster than the other method; but it requires better coordination, greater reliability of personnel, greater overall knowledge of addresses by all volunteers, and increased setup time.

EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

All-career departments usually have an advantage over all-volunteer departments in reducing response time and, therefore, property loss. See Table 1 for a comparison of response times, civilian injuries, and financial costs associated with three types of fire departments.

Note that the response time of CFDs is only slightly

Table 1: The Effect of Staffing on Fire Department Performance and Cost, for communities with a population of 10,000-50,000

Staff Type	Operating Budget per capita (U.S.\$)	Response Time (minutes)	Loss per Fire (U.S.\$)	Civilian Injuries (per 100 Fires)	Department Cost plus Loss per Fire (U.S.\$)
Fully Career (n=14)	28.82	3.9	5,571	2.29	13,082
Combination (n=38)	22.60	4.2	4,345	1.48	8,153
Fully Volunteer (n=5)	6.43	5.4	6,659	1.17	8,473

Source: James McDavid, "Part-Time Firefighters in Canadian Municipalities: Cost and Effectiveness Comparison," *Canadian Public Administration* 29 (1986): 381 (Table 2), 382 (Table 3), 383 (Table 4), and 384 (Table 5). Data for civilian injuries per 100 fires are provided in the text of the article.

greater than that of all-career departments. Although CFDs respond with career firefighters directly from the station, most (although certainly not all) CFDs are single-station departments and average travel time is slightly greater. CFDs in suburban areas, where career firefighters, not volunteers, respond to incidents during regular working hours when most volunteers are unavailable owing to their job responsibilities in a central city, may be just as effective as all-career departments.⁴ For example, a 1993 study of the CFD in Montgomery County, Maryland, found that in terms of fire loss per unit of assessed value and numbers of building fires (measures of prevention) and levels of loss per building fire (a measure of suppression) Montgomery County was more effective than many all-career fire departments.⁵

If CFDs and all-volunteer departments can be equally effective, are they also equally efficient? How does the ratio of loss per fire compare with the department budget? All-career fire departments are much more expensive principally because the vast majority of an all-career department's budget is devoted to salaries and fringe benefits. The size of the budget of a CFD, on the other hand, is in direct proportion to the percentage of career personnel on the roster.

Over the long run, a CFD will provide fire services more efficiently.

Because citizens and local governments are demanding increased efficiency from their department personnel and reduced expenditures, CFDs are an attractive alternative for local governments. One consequence is the increase in the number of departments that change from all-career to combination departments. Over the short run, a change from an all-career department is not likely to induce savings; but, over the long run, as volunteers are recruited, a CFD will provide fire services more efficiently.

TENSIONS AMONG FIREFIGHTERS

Although a CFD is both effective and efficient, its management can be difficult for a fire chief. The principal problems are the relationship between the career firefighters and the volunteers as well as the natural human tendency to seek fairness. When people feel a relationship is unfair, they usually feel upset and aggrieved if they perceive themselves as the disadvantaged ones or (to a lesser extent) guilty if they are the advantaged ones.

In any relationship, people weigh rewards against costs. For example, a volunteer firefighter's rewards might be marching in the Fourth of July parade, mastering a skill during training, and fighting fires successfully. The costs are the demands of training and raising money for the department. If the rewards are sufficiently greater than the costs, the volunteer continues

to volunteer. A career firefighter might enjoy the salary, the job security, and the excitement of fires but dislike paperwork, station discipline, and direct supervision. But, again, if rewards exceed costs, the career employee will remain on the job.

Volunteers and career firefighters also compare themselves with each other, of course. They inevitably seek a fair relationship, which does not require equal rewards or equal investments but does require that the ratio between the two be equal. People rarely develop standardized calculations of rewards and costs unless all rewards and costs are expressed through a medium of exchange such as money. Consequently, each person has a tendency to see the other person as somewhat better off:

- Volunteers often feel they are selflessly donating their time to the department, whereas career firefighters are in the business only for a salary.
- Career firefighters often feel they have invested a great deal of time in training, whereas volunteers are merely playing at training.
- Volunteers believe that only they have significant firefighting experience because they respond to all alarms, whereas career firefighters respond only to alarms during their shifts.
- Career firefighters believe that because they arrive at the fire scene first, they bear the risk and burden of interior attack.

In making a comparison, each group (whether volunteer or career) usually undervalues its own rewards and overstates its own costs. Conversely, each group usually overestimates the rewards of the other group and minimizes the other group's costs. Moreover, career personnel and volunteers don't often interact informally so that status differences can be minimized.

CFDs appear to function best, however, when volunteers are trained simultaneously with career firefighters to the same standard and held accountable for performance to the same standard.⁶ As a bonus, if the same standard is required for both career and volunteer firefighters, it is easier and more effective to hire career firefighters from the pool of volunteers.⁷ Volunteer officers should be appointed by merit (they should not be elected) and held to the same standard of accountability as career officers.⁸ In addition, the volunteer coordinator must be as open as possible during any transition in order to "sell" the change to all stakeholders.⁹

The transition can be problematic, however, because volunteer and career firefighters are sometimes motivated by different rewards. Consequently, a chief must treat the two groups differently, violating the perceived fairness of the chief's actions. Explanation and constant communication can reduce perceived violations of fairness.¹⁰ One way to ease the transition is to ensure that the volunteers recognize, before the transition, the need to hire career firefighters. Volunteers should not have

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this transition forced upon them.¹¹

Aside from the bitterness and, sometimes, anger that arise between volunteer and career firefighters over issues of fairness, other factors intensify the negative relationship. Recently a number of all-career departments have been converted to CFDs that recruit and train volunteers. Most union locals (usually from the International Association of Fire Fighters [IAFF]) perceive these volunteers as the thin edge of the wedge or the factor that promises to dislodge firefighters' job security. They reasonably fear either job loss or, at least, reduced hiring after volunteers take on a greater role.

Fire service consolidation is even more threatening than conversion.

Fire service consolidation¹² is even more threatening than conversion. The consolidation of an all-career or career-dominated department with an all-volunteer or volunteer-dominated department in an adjacent jurisdiction is a major cause of job loss and layoffs.

Table 2 provides the statements and the mean (average) responses to each statement in a questionnaire given to both career and volunteer personnel of the Surrey Fire Department (SFD), a force that grew out of the consolidation of a number of suburban communities into the city of Surrey (population 300,000), a satellite city of Vancouver, British Columbia. In 1992, SFD had 13 fire stations (6 were CFDs and 7 were all-volunteer) and a complement of 210 career firefighters, or officers, and 275 volunteers. Almost 50 percent (156 career personnel and 76 volunteers) of the SFD responded to the survey, which shows that both career and volunteer firefighters have relatively positive attitudes toward their own group and relatively negative attitudes toward the other group.

CFDS: FIVE EXAMPLES

For five years we have examined CFDs in the United States and Canada. This has involved intensive case studies of several combination fire departments. Four departments were studied over the five-year period; we interviewed chief officers and municipal officials, attended meetings, and gathered relevant documents. We studied 15 additional departments through interviews with chief officers and the review of relevant documents. In one department questionnaires were administered to both career and volunteer firefighters. We also conducted a statistical analysis on about 250 combination fire departments found at Fire/EMS Net.¹³

Brief descriptions of five pseudonymous cities follow; we supply the state, province, or region so that the reader will be able to place each case in context.¹⁴

Michiganburg, Midwest United States

Michiganburg (with 33 career and 36 on-call firefighters) exemplifies a successful transition from a volunteer department into a CFD. Its suburban location has led to high growth that includes industrial and commercial activity as well as residential housing. This positive economic trend has enhanced the tax base, permitting a CFD; but it has also detracted from the maintenance of a volunteer, on-call firefighting force because many volunteers have moved away because of high land values.

In response, the city government and the fire department went beyond the informal word-of-mouth approach and actively recruited on-call firefighters, using mass mailing, Web site advertising, and media advertising. To retain on-call firefighters, the training program pays its on-call personnel and uses career firefighters as instructors. In addition, performance criteria for on-call firefighters were revised upward. Uniforms and rules were standardized. Monthly meetings were expanded to include career as well as on-call firefighters. Every step enhanced morale and reduced the turnover of on-call firefighters.

Clearly Michiganburg applied best-practices techniques, but it had the advantage of its booming economy, which reduced any perceived threat the career firefighters might have had that their job security was threatened by the recruitment of volunteer (on-call) firefighters.

Suburb, Atlantic Canada

Suburb is a growing satellite community with its own local government within easy commuter distance of a major city. Its 10,000 people live within a larger urban community of 350,000; this economy is not booming, however. The Suburb Combination Fire Department (SCFD) has 40 volunteer members (including the volunteer fire chief and several chief officers) and 10 unionized career personnel; the career firefighters report to one career chief officer who reports to the volunteer fire chief. As is common, the SCFD was once an all-volunteer department, but, because so many volunteers were commuting to the central city on weekdays, the city had no choice but to hire some career firefighters. Relations between the career firefighters and the volunteers were particularly strained because the SCFD operated with career firefighters on weekdays, but volunteers responded on nights and weekends. Suburb's career firefighters compared their situation unfavorably with the career firefighters of the central city who had a more favorable shift schedule that allowed for moonlighting; in the SCFD they were at an economic disadvantage. Attempts to rectify this by collective bargaining failed.

The volunteer firefighters elected the fire chief and, except during the month before an election, tended to get along well with each other. Moreover, the local government in Suburb supported the position of the volunteer fire chief against the union local of the career

Questions	Paid Firefighters Mean (n=140) ^a	Volunteer Firefighters Mean (n=57) ^a	Overall Mean (n=197) ^a
Career firefighters just want job security. ^b	2.24	2.56	2.33
Volunteers mostly join up just to get a career job.	2.97	2.73	2.90
Career firefighters are mostly interested in their second jobs. ^b	1.87	2.26	1.98
Volunteers are not trained well enough to perform effectively on the fireground. ^b	2.78	1.91	2.53
Sometimes the Union is a bad influence on career firefighters.	1.78	2.50	1.98
Volunteers are taking away jobs and promotions from career firefighters. ^b	3.24	1.89	2.85
Career firefighters would prefer to see the volunteers disbanded and be replaced by career firefighters. ^b	3.75	3.22	3.60
Volunteers just want to be seen wearing turnout gear and driving around in fancy apparatus with the siren blaring. ^b	2.87	1.59	2.50
Career firefighters are the backbone of the Surrey Fire Department. ^b	4.45	3.00	4.03
Volunteer firefighters are the backbone of the Surrey Fire Department. ^b	1.81	2.96	2.14
Volunteer firefighters leave the equipment in a mess after training. ^b	2.30	1.40	2.04
Volunteer firefighters provide a great help to Surrey. ^b	3.74	4.70	4.02
There are few things more exciting than responding to an alarm. ^b	2.91	3.35	3.03

^aThe value of *n* (the number surveyed) is at a minimum but ranges from: 140 to 156 for paid firefighters; 57 to 76 for volunteers; and 197 to 232 for the total. The value of *n* varies depending on the amount of missing data.

^bThese item exhibits statistically significant differences between the mean responses of career and volunteer firefighters ($p < .05$).

firefighters and was also grateful for the support that the volunteers often gave local politicians at election time. The career firefighters trusted only each other; they did not trust the other groups or management. This combination of relationships is stable despite the distrust between the career members and all other par-

ties. Only the fire chief has to deal with the distrust on a day-to-day basis.

Suburb is clearly much more ripe for conflict than Michiganburg because the career firefighters' livelihoods are threatened. Also, the volunteers' sense identity is threatened because of the conversion to a CFD.

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Conflict need not always be high or low; it can fluctuate as the next case illustrates.

Barrier Island, Atlantic United States

Barrier Island Fire Department (BIFD) was an all-volunteer department in a small town in southeastern United States, situated on a barrier island very popular as a tourist destination. Over a three-year period, BIFD went from a legally incorporated, all-volunteer organization on the brink of disbanding to a valued unit of municipal government. This transformation was set in motion by a scandal in which a number of firefighters routinely purchased personal items—such as tools, tires for their trucks, and video movies—all in the name of the department. A state-level criminal investigation caused sustained embarrassment for the department, a resignation by the chief, and disparagement from the town council.

In response, the town hired its first career firefighter—a new chief—to be paid out of the department's own budget generated from fundraising. This new chief, however, was not really an outsider but had been a volunteer in the department 10 years earlier. The new chief began to rebuild the credibility of the department in the eyes of the town council and the local community by following four strategies that caused members of the department to focus not on him but on what the organization had to do to get beyond the scandal and garner credibility as a respected public agency.

First, he had to pull, not push, the department into the future. (Pull factors were future conditions that were attractive and could motivate and integrate individuals into the leadership objectives.) The chief wanted to reconstruct the department, emphasize training, and establish better relations with the town. The chief made it known that the department would need career firefighters to help it ascend to the level of effectiveness and public support that almost everyone agreed it needed (except the former chief, who remained in the organization as a firefighter).

Second, he increased the level of bureaucratization. The history of the department was one of too much informality and a good-old-boy network characterized by little individual accountability. Bureaucracy in this instance meant establishing job descriptions for the line positions, complete with application processes and performance evaluation plans. With this, the chief established the value of professional standards, not favoritism or personality.

Third, he systematically integrated several career firefighters into the organizational structure. This was done with almost no resistance because both volunteers and career personnel could hold the same positions in the department, with the same standards for training and performance. When he discussed the addition of paid firefighters, the new chief was careful to explain that these individuals would not be a threat to the mission of the department because paid help was neces-

sary for the department to become the best it could be. Firefighter positions were emphasized, not whether they were filled by career or volunteer. As a result, the new chief managed to avoid creating a we-versus-they situation.

Finally, and most risky, was the new chief's effort to bring the former chief back into an officer position. The new chief felt it was necessary because the former chief was influential among a small group of members, and it would be better to have him where he could be watched instead of in a position to undermine the new chief. The former chief was also a good firefighter whose skills were needed. As it happened, the former chief did not accept the new direction of the department, and he quit.

The BIFD went from being the butt of jokes by the town government and the public to a respected department that gave up its legal autonomy to become part of town government. Along the way, the new chief's vision, planning, diplomacy, and—as he said—luck made the transition to combination status necessary and positive and would promote the change needed for future survival. He effectively managed a creative tension between local government and the volunteers.

Riverside County, Atlantic United States

Riverside County is one of the fastest growing counties in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The complex combination fire and EMS system in Riverside County serves an area that was once rural but now ranges from urban to rural. The fire and EMS service structure consists of the following components that have roughly equal power and authority—a situation ripe for instability and conflict:

- 17 volunteer corporations, roughly half of which have three government-paid firefighters on a day-time shift
- A government bureau headed by a director whose mission is to aid the volunteer corporations by providing training and placing career personnel in departments only at their request
- An eight-member commission that represents the volunteer corporations.

Instability and potential for high conflict came about when the longtime bureau director left his position. An outside successor was hired who did not understand trust and power. First, he immediately alienated the volunteers by taking for himself the title of chief. This violated a taboo and symbolized what the volunteers feared most—that the fire and rescue services were soon going to be headed by a countywide chief who would minimize their power and influence. Second, the new director insisted that career firefighters wear their uniforms during training with the volunteers; both career and volunteer personnel saw this as an unnecessary attempt to create a distinction between two groups that had considerable respect for each other.

Taken together, these two issues made it appear to the volunteers that they were headed for extinction as real players in the system. The career firefighters were not sure what was in store for them, but they did not want to be the target of the volunteers' wrath. Third, the new director immediately demanded information from the departments that had never before been required. For example, he expected to know the number of successful and unsuccessful attempts by EMS personnel to make intravenous needle insertions.

The new director appeared to be unilaterally asserting his power over the entire fire and EMS system, and he squandered his honeymoon period and eroded trust dramatically. The result was that the volunteers (not aided by but not hindered by the paid personnel) were able to exert pressure on the county government to remove the new director, which it did. The volunteers, who were greatly relieved but anxious about what would come next, began to retreat into a bunker mentality. The paid personnel did the same, forming a club that became an IAFF union local.

The county government, worried that the system was about to collapse, appointed an interim director who had three factors in his favor. First, he was a county employee like the career firefighters and thus was seen as able to understand their concerns; second, he was an active volunteer firefighter in a nearby county, which gave him instant credibility with the volunteers and their commission; and, third, he brought with him vision that he called "stone soup." (Stone soup is based on a parable of a person coming to a village of mistrustful and hungry people and announcing that he has a few ingredients for good soup, which, in reality, are water and a stone. Villagers are encouraged to contribute whatever they can to the making of a successful soup.) Everybody in Riverside County—the government, the volunteers, and the career firefighters—won by contributing something. Akin to the BIFD, described earlier, the interim director was able to manage the creative tension between the bureau and the commission of volunteer fire chiefs.

Port City, East Coast Canada

Although Port City is old, the municipal government is new, resulting from the consolidation of four municipalities: two cities, a town, and the surrounding county. The county was previously served by 33 fire departments: 16 were CFDs and 17 all-volunteer. The town department was a CFD and the two city departments were all-career. Management after consolidation began to be carried out by a government bureau.

Although the director of the bureau was hired five months before the date of consolidation, the bureau staff was not in place until a few weeks before consolidation. Little time was available to plan, and much time was spent reacting to myriad events that followed the consolidation itself. Bureaucratization was resisted by many of the fire chiefs in the rural fire departments. The rural fire chiefs' attitudes toward the bureau were

predictable almost entirely on the basis of their geographic location. Rural fire chiefs farthest from the urban core (more than 40 miles) had the poorest equipment and the least training; they welcomed a commission that would subsidize their operations with usable cast-off apparatus and equipment, free training, and free management services.

The threat of loss of power, status, and identity engendered considerable conflict.

But rural fire chiefs closest to the urban and suburban core managed CFDs already. Their call volume required a modest number of career firefighters. Consolidation generated many problems for these rural fire chiefs because they were unused to the formal labor-management relations that arose once their firefighters joined the consolidated IAFF local. In effect, consolidation had increased the bargaining power of the career firefighters in CFDs over their fire chiefs. On the other hand, the bureau assisted the fire chiefs of the CFDs by establishing a chief's committee that developed job descriptions, selection criteria, and modest stipends for chiefs. Most CFD chiefs have been ambivalent about the wisdom of consolidation but are supporting and trusting the bureau itself.

Those rural fire chiefs farther from the core than the CFDs but within 40 miles of the urban core of Port City were the most resentful of the effect of consolidation. They trusted neither the local government nor the bureau. They had resisted the bureau on various issues ever since consolidation. The issues themselves were unimportant. What was important was the threat that these particular volunteer departments would become CFDs, a change that would alter a chief's status to that of a CFD chief, resulting in selection by committee instead of by a vote of the department membership.¹⁵ It would also mean altering administrative procedures to be consistent with the collective agreement with the union. This threat of loss of power, status, and possible identity engendered considerable conflict.

In dealing with the various conflicts, the bureau worked tirelessly, responsibly, and with integrity. Nevertheless, the competing interests of each group are difficult to reconcile because any agreement the bureau reaches with one group is seen as being at the expense of another group. Jensen and Snook have addressed the importance of trust relationships:

Ironically success has less to do with the strength of a management team than with an alliance among management, labor and policy makers. Most important, however, it has to do with motivation, the ability to set egos aside, taking the time to build relationships based on trust and following through on commitments.¹⁶

STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING

Conflict within a CFD can best be managed by diagnosing the type of CFD it is and prescribing a set of recommendations based on that diagnosis. CFDs are either simple or complex, and they are engaged in either low or high conflict.

Classifying CFDs

Most CFDs are single-department fire services that report directly to the local government. They may cooperate with other fire departments by engaging in mutual aid, but that remains the extent of cooperation. Most of these CFDs had their origins as all-volunteer departments that are typically nonprofit corporations. However, increased demand for service coupled with an increased tax base often leads to the hiring of some career firefighters. In this report, this is called a simple CFD.

A complex CFD, on the other hand, is embedded in a system of fire departments, some of which may be combination, or all-volunteer, or even all-career. Typically these departments report to a bureau that, in turn, reports to local government. Sometimes another formalized structure, which may be called a commission, is involved. This body often represents the volunteer-firefighter organizations and can be purely advisory, but it can evolve into a quasi-policy-making body that represents both career and volunteer interests.

Conflict between groups can arise when one group feels aggrieved about the actions of the other group.

In addition to CFD classification on the basis of organization, CFDs can be classified according to the degree of conflict present within a CFD. That degree of conflict may be designated high or low, but in reality it is a continuum. The degree of conflict is not constant; it rises and falls depending on many circumstances.

There are, therefore, four possible types of CFDs: (1) simple CFD—low conflict, (2) complex CFD—low conflict, (3) simple CFD—high conflict, and (4) complex CFD—high conflict. Proper classification of a CFD is useful for selecting strategies for reducing conflict.

Simple CFDs. When we consider simple CFDs, we must determine whether these CFDs are in a state of low conflict or high conflict. To make this determination, we have to understand the preconditions that lead to conflict. Conflict between any two groups can arise when one group feels aggrieved about the actions of the other group. Although such aggrieved feelings may be necessary to induce high conflict, such feelings are not sufficient. When aggrieved feelings arise, conflict will not always occur. A single, paid driver in a CFD is not likely to challenge the volunteer membership be-

cause his relative power is so low. But when a single, paid driver becomes linked with others, as did happen in Port City, that driver feels more powerful. When either volunteers or career firefighters feel relatively weak, even if they feel aggrieved, they are unlikely to initiate conflict. Thus conflict between volunteer and career firefighters is more likely to be intense when two conditions exist:

- Either group (career or volunteer) feels aggrieved about the other group
- Both groups are relatively equal in power.

If neither group feels aggrieved about the other, there is no reason to fight. Moreover, if the groups are unequal in power, the weaker group will yield to the demands of the more powerful group.

What causes aggravation between groups?

- Career firefighters feel aggrieved toward volunteers when career firefighters feel their livelihoods are threatened.
- Volunteers feel aggrieved toward career firefighters when volunteers feel their identity is threatened.

What determines the relative power of career and volunteer firefighters?

- Relative numbers—CFDs with fewer than 5 or 6 career firefighters and 40 or more volunteers are so volunteer dominated that conflict is unlikely no matter how aggrieved the career firefighters feel, but a dozen career firefighters with threatened livelihoods confronting 40 volunteers is high conflict.
- Union presence—when career firefighters are unionized, they have power beyond their small numbers, and volunteers are more likely to feel that their identity is threatened.

Three communities in the case studies—Michiganburg, Suburb, and Barrier Island—have simple structures: one fire department reports directly to one local government. That department's involvement with other fire departments is confined almost entirely to mutual aid. As communities grow into cities with suburbs or even suburban cities adjacent to a metropolitan city, however, more complex systems of fire protection evolve.

Complex CFDs. In complex CFDs the same principles explain the degree of conflict but the target is different. Most conflict within complex CFDs is between the CFD chiefs or volunteer chiefs and the government bureau. Career and volunteer firefighters may still be in conflict, but this conflict is somewhat removed from the attention of municipal officials. The conflict between the chiefs and the bureau often involves the chief administrative officer, the mayor, and the council, however.

The volunteer or CFD chiefs in a complex CFD can feel their identity is threatened by the bureau (recall

Port City) and are thus aggrieved with the bureau. Also, despite the good intentions of the bureau director, many volunteer chiefs will feel that the bureau is the thin edge of the wedge that leads to bureaucratization and that chiefs no longer act as incident commanders. Instead, chiefs now attend committee meetings, fill out forms, and call finance experts and their secretaries whose offices are in central cities. This happened in Riverside County. The bureau may also feel aggrieved with volunteer fire chiefs whose apparent lackadaisical behaviors can expose the bureau and the local government to liability.

Such aggrieved feelings, although necessary, are once again not sufficient to induce high conflict between the bureau and the chiefs. If either the bureau or the volunteer chiefs and CFD chiefs are relatively weak, the weaker party will give in to the demands of the stronger. In complex CFDs, however, the volunteer chiefs usually need the bureau’s money and the bureau needs the volunteers’ labor. Thus power tends to be fairly balanced, making conflict likely. Because power is so balanced, the key to reducing conflict is to address the aggrieved feelings of either the bureau or the volunteer and CFD chiefs. Table 3 summarizes these conflict situations.

For example, in Michiganburg, a simple system, the career and volunteers are relatively equal in power, making the potential for conflict high, but the career firefighters are not threatened because the local economy is booming. Thus conflict is low. In Suburb, Atlantic Canada, the power of career and volunteer firefighters is relatively equal, but the local economy is much weaker than in Michiganburg. As a consequence, the career firefighters in Suburb do see the volunteers as a threat to their jobs, particularly because Suburb is seeking to cut municipal expenditures. Thus Suburb, which has a simple system, is in a high-conflict condition.

Conflict, however, is not static. Its dynamic nature is demonstrated by the Barrier Island Fire Department, which is also a simple system. Initially the BIFD was an all-volunteer department; thus conflict was low. Nevertheless the local government’s subtle threat to dissolve the BIFD might have generated BIFD–local government conflict because the volunteers’ sense of identity would have been threatened. Before the scandal, conflict was low; the potential for conflict rose during the publicity surrounding the scandal but then diminished after a new chief was able to establish a professional vision accepted by nearly all the members.

In complex systems, the principal conflict is between the bureau and the volunteer or CFD chiefs.

In complex systems, the principal conflict is between the bureau and the volunteer or CFD chiefs. In Riverside County, the power struggle between volunteer chiefs and the bureau was so intense that the volunteer chiefs were able to replace the director of the bureau when the director threatened the identity of the volunteer chiefs. Recently the successor director has been successful at reducing conflict by facilitating a team vision of the future and conflict has diminished.

In Port City, recent consolidation of all-career, CFD, and all-volunteer departments produced a complex CFD system. The bureau and the volunteer and CFD chiefs were relatively equal in power. The fact that the bureau threatened the identity of some volunteer chiefs suggests high conflict, but the fact that other volunteer chiefs and most CFD chiefs were not threatened suggests possible low conflict. Port City balances between low and high conflict.

Policy makers can use four different strategies to manage conflict in a CFD. The effectiveness of each strategy depends on correct typing of the CFD. Just as

Table 3: Questions That Determine Level of Conflict in CFDs

Type of CFD and Relevant Questions	Level of Conflict Resulting from Answer Combinations			
Simple CFDs	High¹	Low	Low	Low
Are career and volunteer firefighters roughly equal in power?	Yes	Yes	No	No
Is the job security of the career firefighters threatened, or is the identity of the volunteers threatened?	Yes	No	Yes	No
Complex CFDs	High¹	Low	Low	Low
Are volunteer or CFD fire chiefs and the bureau roughly equal in power?	Yes	Yes	No	No
Are the volunteer or CFD fire chiefs threatened by the bureau?	Yes	No	Yes	No

¹Note that in both simple and complex CFDs, the level of conflict is high only when the answer to both questions is “yes.”

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a physician asks patients diagnostic questions, the policy maker asks the questions presented in Table 3 to determine the level of conflict. Table 4 places four conflict management strategies where they are most successfully used.

Simple CFD, Low Conflict—Integration Strategy

When conflict is low, a simple fire department system can successfully integrate its career and volunteer firefighters on a day-to-day basis at the station as well as at the emergency scene. Such a CFD will have a common training schedule, and career and volunteer firefighters receive the same training to the same standard. Recognizing that the volume of training may well exceed the available time or capacity of a volunteer, management must insist that volunteers specialize. For example, volunteers who are medically and physically fit to engage in interior attack will train with career firefighters with the same capabilities. Career officers and firefighters will then know the capability of responding volunteers.

Other volunteers will have specialized orders in fire prevention, fire safety education, fund raising, fireground support, apparatus and pump operation, EMS response, HAZMAT response, complex emergency response, water rescue, high-angle rescue, and whatever other special function is offered. These specialties should be matched at the same standard as specialties of career personnel. Identical training requirements avoid the charge that the volunteer is inadequately trained. Of course, it allows for replacement of career firefighters but, as we have already established, this is either not a threat in a low-conflict community or, if threatening, will not be resisted by a relatively weak career force.

Volunteer firefighters will continue to raise funds or, if not currently doing so, will begin to establish a fund-raising capacity. Such a strategy achieves two objectives. First, it preserves power for the volunteer force vis-à-vis the local government. This is crucial because it reduces local government's temptation to either privatize the service or replace the volunteers with

career firefighters. Second, in communities with low call volume, fund-raising integrates the community whether or not fires are fought or a new piece of apparatus is needed.¹⁷

Because volunteer specialization will be necessary and because the mandate of the fire service must be broad rather than narrow, volunteer recruiting must draw on a wide spectrum of the community. Volunteers may even be drawn from outside the response area because many volunteers will not be emergency responders.

Complex CFD, Low Conflict—Federation Strategy

Even when conflict is low, a complex fire department system requires more management skill than a simple system. External pressures may disrupt normally stable relations between career and volunteer firefighters. Often volunteer fire chiefs, fearing a loss of power, will mobilize the volunteer membership against the government bureau, as happened in Port City and Riverside County. This strategy may separate the volunteers who are loyal to their chief from the career firefighters who support the local government that pays their salaries. Avoiding this requires good relations among the various fire chiefs and between each fire chief and the bureau.

To enhance harmonious relations and ease the task of managing a complex CFD, policy makers should select for and monitor the diplomatic skills of the bureau director and divide the managing powers between the government bureau and each fire department.

To maintain authority and encourage group solutions to problems, a bureau director must first act diplomatically and sometimes even tolerate insult in order to avoid an open breach with a resistant volunteer chief. Although the director may recognize a deliberate provocation, the director almost always will have to ignore it. A director who has gone through a rigorous selection process is more likely to have the strong ego required to ignore these challenges. Ideally, that director would not be from the community because past involvement will be perceived as bias, whether correct or not. The director must be a team builder, which will be more likely if the director is confident enough to not require constant support from others. The term of director probably should be limited to five years. After five years, even the most diplomatic director will have too many enemies to be effective.

Second, an explicit division of power between the fire department and the bureau—a federated complex fire department system—reduces ambiguity by clarifying which decisions are made by chiefs within fire departments and which decisions are made by the government bureau.

Fund-raising must be a fire department power. The fire department will be motivated to raise funds itself; moreover, community integration is advanced if the fund-raising activity is local. Several departments may wish to coordinate and pool expenses to pay for mass

Table 4: Leadership Strategies for CFDs

Type of CFD	Level of Conflict	
	Low	High
Simple	Integration	Separation in space and/or time
Complex	Federated division of powers	Confederated division of powers

media advertising, but fund-raising power should remain local.

Operational planning (except mutual aid) must also remain local with the fire department because the local incident commanders must be involved in the planning process. They will know how to maximize the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of their personnel and equipment. (Few secrets can be kept in a fire station, but many can be kept from senior officials.) Unlike local officers, the bureau will be largely unaware of the weaknesses of individuals and the strengths of old apparatus.

The government bureau must be able to enforce operational standards even though the fire department is responsible for operational planning. If certain practices (e.g., riding the tailgate) are unsafe, alternative safe practices must be enforced. If a master planning activity conducted by the bureau involves a standard that is not achieved by a specific fire department, that department must report it.

Implementation of fire prevention activities must be a local fire department power. Local implementation will motivate volunteers to conduct residential inspections or engage in public fire safety education. However, the research, planning, and design of many fire prevention activities ought to be a power of the bureau. Only the bureau will have the staff to contract for research, arrange liaison with other jurisdictions on prevention activities, and plan a campaign. But local knowledge is necessary, and often only local volunteers can collect sufficient data to address the local needs that will inevitably vary from fire department to fire department.

Recruitment of volunteers should also be a local power subject to oversight by the bureau. Only the local fire department will command the loyalty that attracts volunteers, making the local department best able to recruit. Nevertheless, the bureau ought to have veto power over any recruit, particularly if a background check reveals a criminal record.

Overall personnel policies, however, must reside with the bureau, particularly if career firefighters are unionized. Consistency in application of a collective agreement is paramount, particularly because grievances are often filed on the basis of inconsistency and because inconsistency is a criterion that arbitrators use in awarding a grievance to a union. At a practical level, this means that all senior officers will have to be oriented to the collective agreement and reoriented to modifications in the agreement that arise from collective bargaining.

Training is a power that must be shared between the bureau and the local fire department. Basic training should be conducted by the bureau, and classes should include volunteer and career trainees to ensure that equal standards are met and seen to be met by both groups. Centralized training also permits a common indoctrination of both groups to the philosophy, policies, and practices of the entire complex fire department system. After basic training, however, company

and multicompany training evolutions are within the power of the local fire department. This permits group practice for the maximum quality of response in the minimum time. However, those departments involved in mutual aid will have to train together to enhance the quality, quantity, and speed of that response.

Apparatus purchasing should be accomplished by the bureau, primarily to increase savings by volume purchasing. Nevertheless, within a standard package of vehicle specifications, options for local fire departments should be permitted provided that those options not deemed useful by the bureau are acquired with local funds from the fire department. Although some of these options—extra chrome, for example—are wasteful if viewed narrowly, the value of the fund-raising itself, as well as the motivation of the volunteer leadership and membership, makes such purchases efficient. The bureau is also more likely to have the expert knowledge needed to deal with apparatus manufacturers.

A complex fire department system requires more management skill than a simple system.

Apparatus deployment is a difficult issue, particularly if it entails redeployment of existing apparatus. Such deployment usually disadvantages the rich fire departments. Unfortunately, these same departments may be the most effective. The bureau should make apparatus purchases gradually; therefore, apparatus is eventually owned by the bureau. But bureau ownership requires that the bureau purchase apparatus from the local fire departments at fair market value. Because such purchasing requires significant capital funds, this process will likely require several years, during which time the apparatus will depreciate. Such a purchasing strategy allows the fire departments to spend more money on training, prevention activities, and diversification of service to EMS. The funds the fire departments raise by selling their apparatus will, after all, be spent on other fire service functions. Most volunteer fire departments currently spend inadequately on these functions. Above all, the bureau should not, even if supported by legislation, expropriate apparatus without paying fair market value. The volunteer membership and leadership would see such a tactic as legalized theft.

These enumerated powers over various activities carried out in a federated complex fire department system are summarized in Table 5 below:

Simple CFD, High Conflict—Separation Strategy

If a simple CFD undergoing high conflict, the strategies presented above will be insufficient or ineffective.

Often a multistation simple fire department system is easier to manage than a single-station fire department system because career firefighters can be

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assigned to one station and volunteers can be assigned to others. In this way, two groups that threaten each other can be separated and overt conflict is less likely.¹⁸ Unfortunately, circumstances may prevent spatial separation. Volunteer stations that have a poor daytime response on weekdays may require career firefighters.¹⁹

Local government can play a meaningful role in establishing trust between career and volunteer firefighters.

If this is so, career and volunteer firefighters can be separated in time if career firefighters are assigned to a weekday daytime schedule and volunteers respond in evenings and on weekends. This is usually not as effective, however, because conflict arises from complaints from both volunteers and career firefighters and often involves small irritants such as who is responsible for cleanup after evening training. Although the complaint seems petty, the underlying conflict is not.

The separation strategy seeks to lower the level of conflict and build the level of trust between career and volunteer firefighters so that separation is no longer needed and the integration strategy, presented earlier, can be used instead. Local government can play a meaningful role in establishing trust between career

and volunteer firefighters by protecting the job security of career firefighters. This will eliminate one factor that created high conflict in the first place.

For example, the local government might agree to a no-layoff clause in the collective agreement in return for the right to lower wages, if necessary, after the end of the contract term. For career firefighters, such a contract protects jobs and provides some protection for wages.

Complex CFD, High Conflict—Confederation Strategy

A complex fire department system cannot use the federated model described earlier for low conflict if the level of conflict is high. The conflict between volunteer chiefs, who perceive loss of power, and the government bureau is too great. Inevitably, the contending parties seek allies. Career firefighters will ally with the bureau because they see it as providing significant wage increases. The volunteer fire chief will mobilize volunteers against the central authority.

The solution here is a confederation, not a federation. In a confederation the central authority is much

Table 5: Ideal Division of Responsibility between the Local Fire Department and the Government Bureau in a Complex CFD with Low Conflict

Responsible Organization	Activity
Local Fire Department	Fundraising Operational Planning Fire Prevention Implementation Volunteer Recruitment Company Training Evolution Apparatus Optional Frills
Government Bureau	Operational Standards Fire Prevention Planning Personnel Policy Basic Training Apparatus Purchasing

Best Management Practices for CFDs

Career and volunteer firefighters should be trained to the same standard.

Career and volunteer firefighters should receive training together.

Career and volunteer firefighters should be held to the same performance standards.

Career and volunteer firefighters should be subject to the same rules and standards of conduct.

Career and volunteer firefighters should be trained in the team approach.

Career and volunteer officers should be appointed on the basis of merit; they should not be elected.

During an administrative transition, management should make clear the reasons for the transition.

During an administrative transition, management should implement the transition slowly, being careful to “sell” new ideas and practices to all stakeholders.

The volunteer coordinator should possess an “open” type of personality.

Volunteer involvement should be increased.

Certain volunteers (for example, students) should be offered living space in the firehouse.

Volunteers should be offered small financial incentives for performance improvement.

Career firefighters should be hired from the volunteer contingent.

weaker and powers are divided so that most of these powers rest with the individual fire department. In fact, in this confederated scenario, apparatus purchasing, recruit training, and standards monitoring should be the only functions controlled by a bureau (compare with Table 5).

Although the bureau has little formal power in a confederation, its de facto influence is somewhat greater. Its presence encourages effective mutual aid among adjacent volunteer and combination fire departments. Most volunteer fire chiefs realize that retaining power is possible only if effective mutual aid can be provided. The presence of a bureau provides the implied threat that, if local fire departments cannot provide effective mutual aid, the heavy-handed bureaucratic approach of the government bureau may be necessary. Port City successfully used this strategy to develop mutual aid response zones.

Also, when two parties do not trust each other, they have recourse to a binding contract if they must work together. For example, in the suburbs of Chicago, a confederated model operates whereby local volunteer and small CFDs work together by adhering to the rules specified in a contract. One role of the bureau, therefore, is to monitor fire department performance in meeting the terms of the contract. Thus, such criteria as response time, safety, and amount of joint training can be prescribed and evaluated.

LEADERSHIP OBJECTIVES

Managing conflict is not resolving conflict. In a CFD, the tension among management, local government, career firefighters, and volunteer firefighters will always be with us. The goal is to manage the tension so

MABAS

The Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) is a multicounty (even multistate) network of fire departments centered on Chicago that extends as far north as southern Wisconsin, as far south as northwestern Indiana, and as far west as approximately 65 miles from downtown Chicago. More than 300 fire departments are involved, including Chicago's. Most, however, are fully volunteer or combination in type. Joining MABAS permits access to apparatus, personnel, and skills in geographically contiguous communities. Such access also requires the discipline to observe safety and operational standards and to train volunteer and career personnel together. Despite these requirements, there is little bureaucracy. Indeed, the involvement of three states and about a dozen counties may prevent excessive bureaucratization. MABAS is a confederation.*

* The authors thank Gene Carlson of Oklahoma State University for bringing MABAS to their attention.

that it will be creative instead of destructive. Tension can be better managed if planners determine whether the CFD is either simple or complex. The questions in Table 3 help determine the level of conflict. An appropriate leadership strategy as shown in Table 4 can be determined and applied. It will be more difficult to determine the level of conflict than it will be to determine whether the CFD is simple or complex, but proper classification is part of this planning process. Leadership is essential for resolving the tensions inherent in a CFD. A successful leader accomplishes at least two objectives.

A Leader Educates

The leader must be very knowledgeable about the organization itself, the audiences watching the leader, and the power relations of the specific situation. If the leader is not aware, the leader is doomed to fall into a trap set by people who do not like what they think the leader plans to do. (What the leader really has in mind is unimportant; the power players' conception is important.) For example, the outsider in Riverside County had not educated himself about the entire organization and quickly became entrapped in a power struggle he could have prevented.

Managing conflict is not resolving conflict.

A leader also must educate others by passing knowledge to other members of the organization. This does not guarantee that conflicts will be avoided, but it works toward a common definition of the situation by other players. If there is a common understanding about the organization and its players, there will be less to argue over. Discussion can be aimed at options for solutions instead of attempts to agree on the problems. Building a common understanding of organizational reality is not easy, but it is necessary. Both the most recent chief at Barrier Island and the most recent bureau director in Riverside County did this.

A Leader Builds Trust

In an organization, staff that does not trust a leader will obey only the letter of the law, not the spirit; and powerful groups outside the leader's direct control that do not trust a leader will ensure that the leader has a short tenure. Although, in theory, in a bureaucracy people are compelled by policy and rewarded by salary to obey, a leader of a complex CFD with a bureau and a set of semiautonomous corporations for fire and EMS volunteers cannot ignore the role of trust. Even in a simple CFD, trust in the chief is important because it is the glue that binds volunteers to the organization.

How does one build trust? A leader's role as educator allows the leader to communicate the realities of the organization to all parties. The leader can build re-

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lations with individuals and groups that are characterized by openness and two-way dialogue. Interpersonal communication skills can build trust. If a leader learns and practices active listening, it imparts a sense of trust. Sometimes the ego of the leader gets in the way of trust building; if the ego is not kept in check, audiences will begin to think the leader is trying to build an empire and will begin to distrust the leader.

The leader must also encourage a stakeholder planning process—for example, the stone-soup plan in Riverside County, where the volunteers, unionized career firefighters, government, and commission were brought to the planning table. Planning, which can be done in a variety of ways, is one of the responsibilities of the leader. A top-down process in which the leader—without any messy, time-consuming consulting with others—presents a plan for the organization might seem most expedient, but it will not build trust. Its unintended consequences could very well be the undermining of trust.

For planning, some leaders rely solely on an outside consulting firm hired to assess the needs of the combination organization. Alone, this strategy can be seen as a thinly veiled attempt to rubber-stamp what the leader already has in mind. But buying a plan from an outside consulting agency can work if it is used as a starting point for a larger planning process that involves stakeholders. Here an internal planning process—with use of the typology presented in this report, for example—can supplement outside recommendations. Usually the outcomes of any type of strategic planning process are much less important than the process itself. Through the process, trust can be built and players can turn to thinking about the future instead of retreating to the past. People can create desirable scenarios that pull, not push, them into the future.

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- 10 Richard Marinucci, "Dual Duty," *Fire Chief Executive* (January 1987), 39–43; "Problem Solving in Combination Departments," *International Association of Fire Chiefs* (March/April 1988), 27–30; "Transition to a Combination Department."
- 11 Scott Baltic, "The Combination Transition." This conclusion is consistent with the case of the Barrier Island Fire Department on page 6.
- 12 In Canada, consolidation is called amalgamation.
- 13 <http://www.fire-ems.net/resources/library.html>.
- 14 Our book, *Leading the Combination Fire Department: Finding Buried Treasure with Career and Volunteer Firefighters*, contains appendixes that identify all those interviewed and all their departments and communities.
- 15 The committee that selects and evaluates CFD fire chiefs includes two other CFD chiefs, the bureau's volunteer coordinator, and the bureau's personnel specialist.
- 16 Alec Jensen and Jack Snook, "Consolidations à la Carte," *Fire Chief* (February 2000): 102–5.
- 17 Kenneth B. Perkins and John Benoit, "Volunteer Fire-Fighting Activity in North America as Serious Leisure," *World Leisure and Recreation* 39, no. 3 (1997): 23–9.
- 18 We have yet to hear of any problems when both types of firefighters are on the same fireground. The importance of the emergency seems to repress any conflict at the emergency scene.
- 19 The live-in volunteer, such as a university student who receives free accommodation for daytime response (except during class time) is one way to address the problem without using career firefighters. Auburn, Massachusetts, uses fire engineering students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute; and College Park, Maryland, uses fire engineering students from the University of Maryland.

¹ Combination fire departments are called composite fire departments in Canada. Although the authors' research draws on fire departments from both the United States and Canada, we use U.S. terminology in this report.

² Volunteer firefighters often are paid a small hourly wage for time actually spent fighting a fire; or, instead of a wage, volunteers are sometimes paid a flat rate per call. In some jurisdictions, volunteers receive no reimbursement although in at least one state in the United States they receive a pension after 20 years of volunteering and in Canada they receive an income tax deduction. The status of an on-call firefighter is similar to that of a volunteer. Career firefighters are those who fight fires as their main occupation.

³ This section and the next two sections are revised from Chapter 8 of Kenneth B. Perkins and John Benoit, *The Future of Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services: Taming the Dragons of Change* (Stillwater, Okla.: Fire Protection Publications, 1996) and is reprinted with permission.

⁴ Harry Carter, "The Combination Fire Department: A 21st Century Solution," *Firehouse* (March 1993), 60–4.

⁵ Don Flinn, *Volunteer Incentives in the Fire and Rescue Services* (Rockville, Md.: Montgomery County, 1993).

⁶ Carol Rose, "Paid and Volunteers: Working Together in Blooming Grove," *Firehouse* (July 1979), 28–9; 64–6; John Gill, *Training within a Combination Fire Department: An Ongoing Di-*

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