

**THE EFFECTS OF IMPLEMENTING THE FLORIDA FIREFIGHTER OCCUPATIONAL
SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT ON THE BAY COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT**

EXECUTIVE FIRE OFFICER EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed:

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ABSTRACT

The Bay County Fire Department (BCFD) is a combination fire service agency consisting of 113 volunteer firefighters and 30 career firefighters. The Department provides service within a 700 square mile jurisdiction from thirteen fire stations to 150,000 permanent residents and over 2,000,000 tourists annually (Hopper, 2004). The Department operates under a five-year strategic plan that requires the BCFD to comply with federal, state, and local regulations and standards, such as those enacted by the Florida Legislature.

In 2002 the Florida State Legislature amended the States *Fire Prevention and Control* statute. The *Fire Prevention and Control* statute § 633.820 (2002) requires that the Office of the State Fire Marshall create an administrative act regulating firefighter occupational safety and health. The Statute further directs that the act specifically include volunteer firefighters.

In June of 2003 the Office of the State Fire Marshall published the *Florida Firefighter Occupational Safety and Health Act* (FFOSHA) § 69A-62 (2003). The inclusion of volunteer firefighters in the Act requires local governments in the State of Florida to insure that employees classified as volunteer firefighters are trained commensurate to the duties they are expected to perform before they can perform any emergency activities or other activities requiring such training. Additionally, the Act requires the development and implementation of a workplace safety and health compliance program and a workplace safety committee. The researcher identified that to comply with the requirements of the Act fire departments that utilize volunteer firefighters would have to accomplish three things. First, departments would have to

certify that all volunteer firefighters had obtained certification at the nationally recognized level of Firefighter I and if they were fire officers that they had met the qualifications of National Fire Protection Association Standard 1021 *Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*. Second, departments would have to create and implement workplace safety plans and have them approved by the State Fire Marshall. Third, departments would have to create safety committees to review and investigate firefighter accidents and injuries.

The problem was that the potential impacts on volunteer and combination fire service agencies were not studied prior to drafting of the Act to determine how the Act would effect an agencies ability to continue to provide emergency services once implemented. The purpose of this applied research project was to study the impact of implementing FFOSHA on the BCFD. The researcher used the Evaluative Research Method to provide answers to five research questions. First the researcher asked, is the existing Bay County Risk Management Plan in compliance with FFOSHA? Second the researcher asked, are the duties and functions of the existing Bay County safety committee in compliance with FFOSHA? Third the researcher asked, how many BCFD volunteer firefighters meet the training requirements of FFOSHA? Fourth the researcher asked, how many BCFD volunteer fire officers meet the training requirements of FFOSHA? Fifth the researcher asked, what financial impact would there be on the BCFD to come into compliance with FFOSHA?

To answer these five questions, the researcher conducted a literature review at the Bay County Emergency Operations Center. The review included published Bay County Fire Department Budgets, Personnel Training Records, Florida State Statutes,

Florida Administrative Acts, research reports, local risk management plans, and official memorandums from the State Fire Marshall's Office relating to the problem researched. The data collected from these sources was evaluated and used to draw comparisons that defined the impact of FFOSHA on the BCFD.

The results of the research indicated that the implementation of FFOSHA would have an adverse affect on the ability of the BCFD to provide fire services to the citizens of Bay County if training deficiencies created by the Act were not addressed within the defined timeframe for compliance.

The researcher's interpretation of the study results was that the current Bay County Risk Management Plan and Safety Committee duties and responsibilities are in compliance with the requirements of FFOSHA. However, 69.91% of BCFD volunteer firefighters and 88.88% of BCFD volunteer fire officers did not meet the training requirements of FFOSHA. Failure to address the identified training deficiencies within the timeframe defined in the Act would result in a 87.61% reduction in force and therefore would have an adverse effect on the Bay County Fire Department's organizational effectiveness. Additionally, the researcher found that while expenditures for training would not increase, the payment of overtime to instructional personnel would increase. However, the increases would not have a negative impact on the Departments revenue budgeted for expenditures in other areas. Based upon the results of the research, the author recommended that the BCFD immediately develop and implement Firefighter I, Fire Officer I, and Fire Officer II certification programs in an effort to prevent an adverse impact to the BCFD by implementation of the Act. Additionally, the researcher provided the research results to the State Fire Marshall for review. Upon

reviewing the results, the State implemented a two-year grace period for departments to come into compliance with the training criteria as set forth in the Act.

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INTRODUCTION

In April 2002, the Florida Legislature created Section 633.820 as part of the State's *Fire Prevention and Control* statute. The intent of the legislation stated in F.S. 633.820 (2002) is to "enhance firefighter safety and health through the implementation of rules that reduce the incidence of firefighter injuries" (p. 59). Under the Statute, the Florida Division of the State Fire Marshall was tasked to carry out the intent of the legislation. As required by the statute, the State Fire Marshall created the Firefighters Employment, Standards, and Training Council to address the requirements of the legislation through the administrative Act process.

The 13 member Council comprised of representatives from career fire service agencies, the State Fire Marshall's Office, and community colleges began addressing health and safety requirements for fire fighters in June 2002. The Council completed it's work in June 2003, and the first draft of FFOSHA was presented to the Florida fire service at five public workshops in December of 2003.

The problem is that impacts created by implementation of the Act to fire service agencies utilizing volunteer firefighters were not identified or studied during the process of drafting FFOSHA. The purpose of this research is to identify what effects, if any, the implementation of FFOSHA will have on the Bay County Fire Department.

The Evaluative Research method was employed to answer five research questions. First the researcher asked, is the existing Bay County Risk Management Plan in compliance with FFOSHA? Second the researcher asked, are the duties and

functions of the existing Bay County safety committee in compliance with FFOSHA? Third the researcher asked, how many BCFD volunteer firefighters meet the training requirements of FFOSHA? Fourth the researcher asked, how many BCFD volunteer fire officers meet the training requirements of FFOSHA? Fifth the researcher asked, what financial impact would there be on the BCFD to come into compliance with FFOSHA?

Based on prior experience the researcher believes that implementation of the Act will impact the BCFD in the following five ways. First, implementation of the Act will reduce the number of available volunteer firefighters who can operate on the scene of emergencies. Second, implementation of the Act will reduce the number of available volunteer fire officers who can manage emergency scenes. Third, implementation of the Act will require the BCFD to draft it's own firefighter specific risk management plan. Fourth, implementation of the Act will require the BCFD to create it's own firefighter specific safety committee. Fifth, implementation of the Act will increase training and personnel expenditures.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFIGANCE

The Bay County Fire Department is a combination career/volunteer fire service organization. The Department provides fire/rescue, emergency medical, and hazardous material response services over a 700 square mile area to a population of 150,000 permanent residents and over 2,000,000 seasonal tourists (Hopper, 2004). A hundred and thirteen volunteer firefighters and 30 career firefighters provide fire protection. The Department operates on an annual operating budget of four million dollars. As Majka (1999) states "a fundamental operating principal of the department since 1994 has been firefighter safety" (p. 24).

In April of 2002 the State Legislature revised the *Fire Prevention and Control* statute (2002) to include verbiage outlining the State's intent to reduce firefighter injuries and fatalities. Specifically, the F.S. 633 states that:

It is the intent of the Legislature to enhance firefighter occupational safety and health in the state through the implementation and maintenance of policies, procedures, practices, rules, and standards that reduce the incidence of firefighter employee accidents, firefighter employee occupational diseases, and firefighter fatalities. The Legislature further intends that the Division of the Florida State Fire Marshall develop a means by which the division can identify individual firefighter employers with a high frequency or severity of work related injuries, conduct safety inspections of those firefighter employers, and assist those firefighter employers in the development and implementation of firefighter employee safety and health programs. (p. 59)

The Bay County Board of Commissioners strongly agrees with the State and defines fire as the great equalizer since fire does not distinguish between those firefighters whom are compensated and those who are not. The Board has conveyed this belief to its firefighters formally in the text of the *Bay County Risk Management Plan* (BCRMP). Martin (2004) states that:

It shall be the policy of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to minimize the financial burden incurred by its citizens and tax payers as a result of fortuitous or accidental loss to which they are exposed, and to protect the assets, operations, and employees to the maximum extent from the adverse consequences of such loss, including such loss as may result from vehicular

accidents, physical damage to property, injury in the workplace, fraud, criminal acts, or civil liability to members of the public, which may arise out of operations of the entity. (p. 6)

Martin (2004) states that “to demonstrate its support of this philosophy, the BCC strongly lobbied for new state statutes and changes to existing statutes in 1993 and again in 1995 regarding firefighter safety in the workplace” (p. 9). The creation of Florida Statute 112.191 *Firefighters; death benefits* and the amendment of Florida Statute 112.181 *Firefighters, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, law enforcement officers, correctional officers; special provisions relative to certain communicable diseases*, expanded the definition of firefighter under state law to include volunteers.

In June of 2002 the Florida Division of the State Fire Marshall created a council known as the Firefighters Employment, Standards, and Training Council and charged the council with the responsibility of drafting an administrative Act that would give the State Fire Marshall the power to enforce the intent of the Legislature. The composition of the 13-member council is defined in Florida Statute 633.31. The F.S. 633.31 (2002) requires that:

Two members shall be fire chiefs appointed by the Florida Fire Chiefs Association, two members shall be firefighters who are not officers, appointed by the Florida Professional Firefighters Association, two members shall be firefighter officers who are not fire chiefs, appointed by the State Fire Marshal, one member appointed by the Florida League of Cities, one member appointed by the Florida Association of Counties, one member appointed by the Florida Association of

Special Districts, one member appointed by the Florida Fire Marshal's Association, and one member appointed by the State Fire Marshal, and one member shall be a director or instructor of a state-certified firefighting training facility appointed by the State Fire Marshal. (p. 34)

In June of 2003 the Council completed its task and the Florida Fire Marshall published FFOSHA in December of the same year.

Since the composition of the Council did not include representatives from volunteer and combination fire service agencies to insure a well rounded picture of the firefighter health and safety issue was drawn, the resulting Act is a product of the Group Think phenomenon. FEMA defines the Group Think phenomenon in the Executive Leadership Student Manual as “the mode of thinking that persons engage in when concurrence seeking becomes so dominant in a cohesive in-group that it tends to override realistic appraisal of alternative courses of action” (FEMA, 2000 p. SM 3-4).

The Effect of FFOSHA (2003) is to “provide for firefighter workplace safety and health programs, and to provide requirements for safety and health compliance by firefighter employers and firefighter employees” (p. 3).

The Act empowers the State Fire Marshall to achieve the intent of the Legislature by implementing and enforcing four rules defined as Parts. Part I adopts Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards, National Fire Protection Association Standards (NFPA), and defines the minimum requirements to be recognized as a fire department by the State. Part II defines firefighter employers, defines the general guidelines firefighter employers must follow, defines safety/health

programs and plans, and defines the criteria for high frequency of injuries. Of significance to the BCFD are Sections three, five, six and seven of this Part.

Section Three, paragraph (m) of Part II of FFOSHA (2003) requires firefighter employers to:

Provide training and education for all firefighters and supervisory personnel commensurate with those duties and functions that such firefighters and supervisory personnel are expected to perform. Such training and education shall be provided to firefighters and supervisory personnel before they perform any emergency activities or other activities requiring such training. Supervisory personnel shall be provided with training and education that is more comprehensive than that provided to the general firefighters. (p. 20)

Historically, training for volunteer firefighters and volunteer officers in the BCFD above that of the awareness level has been optional.

Section Five of Part II of FFOSHA (2003) requires that:

The quality of the training and education programs for firefighters and officers shall be similar to the courses or curriculum of the Florida State Fire College or those which use national consensus curriculums as recognized by the Division, such as the International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA). The quality of the training for supervisory personnel shall generally conform to the standards enumerated in the NFPA standards in NFPA 1021, *Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*, for Fire Officer I, II, III, IV, as applicable, or similar or equivalent standards. (p. 20)

Historically, training provided within, or sanctioned by the BCFD has been approved and offered through the local community college by qualified training personnel. However, training personnel have not always used consensus curriculums or curriculums that conform to NFPA standards.

Sections Six and Seven of Part II of FFOSHA (2003) require that employing agencies have specific risk management plans that outline how employers will inform firefighters about special hazards, investigate accidents, and report accidents.

Part III of the Act defines the authority of the State Fire Marshall to enforce the Act. Part IV of the Act defines the employer's responsibility to create workplace safety committees as well as the committee's duties and functions.

The BCFD depends heavily on volunteer firefighters to deliver the type and level of service expected by the citizens of Bay County at the most affordable cost. The impacts of the implementation of the new Act were measured to define any potential obstacles that would result in a reduction of organizational effectiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed at the Bay County Emergency Operations Center in the preparation of this applied research project included published Bay County Fire Department Budgets, Florida State Statutes, Florida Administrative Acts, research reports, local risk management plans, BCFD Personnel Training Records, published texts, and official memorandums from the Florida Division of the State Fire Marshall regarding the problem researched.

The Florida *Fire Prevention and Control* Statute (2002) was reviewed. The researcher reviewed the statute for the purpose of becoming familiar with the intent of

the legislature and its creation of the research problem, to identify the role and authority of the State Fire Marshall, and to identify the role, responsibility, and duty of the BCFD as a firefighter employer. Specifically, the researcher focused on Sections 633.30 through 633.353 of the Statute. Section 633.31 establishes the Fire Marshall's authority to create the Firefighters Employment, Standards, and Training Council. F.S. 633.31 (2002) says:

The State Fire Marshal, in making her or his appointments, shall take into consideration representation by geography, population, and other relevant factors, in order that the membership on the council will be apportioned to give representation to the state at large rather than to a particular area. (p. 34)

The finding of this information in the statute caused the researcher to identify the makeup of the Council's membership at the time FFOSHA was drafted.

The *Florida Firefighter Occupational Safety and Health Act (2003) (FFOSHA)* was reviewed. The Act adopts uniform standards for firefighter workplace safety programs, firefighter safety and health compliance, and fire department workplace safety committees. To be recognized as a fire department an agency must meet four basic criteria. First, the agency must be established in accordance with NFPA 1201. Second, the agency must be capable of providing fire protection 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Third, the agency must be responsible for providing coverage in an area capable of being defined on a map. Fourth, the agency must have a staff of qualified firefighters who have successfully completed an approved basic firefighting course recognized by the State's Bureau of Fire Standards and Training. The requirements in the Act caused the researcher to complete a comparison between the definition in the

Act and the BCFD organization to determine if the BCFD met the definition of fire department. The results of the comparison revealed that the BCFD met all of the requirements with the exception of requirement number four.

The results of the comparison caused the researcher to review personnel training records from 2003 for the purpose of determining how many volunteer personnel had the required basic training. The results of the review defined the number of volunteer firefighters and fire officers that would be required to receive basic training to bring the BCFD into compliance with the Act and therefore defined a portion of the impact of FFOSHA on the BCFD.

Continued review of FFOSHA (2003) revealed the requirement of fire departments to have risk management plans and safety committees. FFOSHA (2003) states that “each firefighter employer shall issue and make available to all firefighter employees a safety policy” (p.19), and “their Firefighter Employer Comprehensive Safety and Health Program must be submitted to the Division for approval within 120 days after receipt of notice” (p. 22). The information found in the Act caused the researcher to conduct a comparison between the requirements of the Act defining the required contents of a risk management plan and the components of the existing Bay County Risk Management Plan to determine if the existing plan was in compliance with the Act. Additionally, FFOSHA states that firefighter employers with 20 or more firefighters shall “establish, maintain, and administer a safety committee in the workplace” (p.42) and that the makeup and duties of the committee must comply with the requirements of the Act. The identification of this information caused the researcher to conduct a comparison between the requirements of the Act and the composition, role,

and responsibilities of the Bay County Safety Committee for the purpose of identifying if the current committee is in compliance with the requirements of the Act.

The researcher reviewed *Risk Management Practices in the Fire Service* (1996). FEMA states that “the components of a fire department risk management plan required by NFPA 1500 are risk identification, risk evaluation, risk control techniques, program evaluation, and program review” (p.14). The findings in this review lead the researcher to compare the components of the existing *Bay County Risk Management Plan* to the to the required components of NFPA 1500 for the purpose of determining compliance with the NFPA standard.

An informational memorandum outlining training requirements for volunteer firefighters under FFOSHA sent to all Florida fire departments by the Division of the State Fire Marshall was reviewed. Gallahger (2003) defines mechanisms volunteer firefighters will have to use to come into compliance with the training criteria outlined in FFOSHA (p.1). The information found in the review of the memorandum caused the researcher to better refine the number of volunteer firefighters and fire officers who would not be in compliance with the Act. The information also allowed for the refinement of the definition of the impact to the BCFD that the implementation of FFOSHA would have.

The publication *Management in the Fire Service* (1999) was reviewed. Carter et al. (1999) addresses firefighter training as a management function and states that “professional qualification standards have been developed by NFPA to cover functional areas” (p. 400). The information found in the review of the publication caused the researcher to compare the recommendation that NFPA 1001 *Standard for Fire Fighter*

Professional Qualifications (2002) be utilized to define the requirements of basic firefighter training and the recommendation that NFPA 1021 *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2002) be utilized to define the requirements of fire officer training to the training requirements of FFOSHA.

The *Fire Suppression Rating Handbook* (2002) was reviewed. Hickey (2002) states that “training items reviewed by the Insurance Service Office (ISO) consider the percentage of firefighters completing prescribed training in relation to all fire department personnel that are certified for interior structural firefighting” (p. 128). Hickey (2002) goes on to say that “fire officers need to maintain their knowledge and skills in the specific areas and satisfactorily complete twelve hours of special training to earn fifteen points on the ISO grading schedule” (p. 133). The findings in the review of this publication lead the researcher to evaluate the beneficial impacts the implementation of mandatory training as required under FFOSHA could have on the BCFD resulting from a reduction in the departments fire service protection rating level.

The *Fire Protection Handbook* (2003) was reviewed. Cote et al. (2003) states that “entry-level training is generally a major commitment of time and/or funds to provide the basis for safe and effective functioning within the given local system” (p. 226). The findings from the review of this publication lead the researcher to evaluate and define the financial impact the implementation of FFOSHA would have on the BCFD.

The researcher reviewed *Managing Fire and Rescue Services* (2002). Granito (2002) states that “training is delivered through either traditional or non-traditional modalities by a broad spectrum of institutions and generally results in the achievement of a certain training objective” (p.267). The findings from the review of this publication

lead the researcher to identify the mechanisms the BCFD could utilize to provide mandatory training and certification to personnel and then identify the cost of those services.

PROCEDURES

The purpose of this applied research project was to evaluate the impact of implementing FFOSHA on the BCFD. The Evaluative Research method was employed to answer five research questions. First, written documents relating to the problem such as Florida Statutes, the *Florida Firefighter Occupational Safety and Health Act*, the *Bay County Risk Management Plan*, the *Bay County Fire Department Strategic Plan*, memos, correspondence, and personnel training records were gathered during a literature review conducted at the Bay County Emergency Operations Center. The data gathered from these sources was examined and the factors, effects, and causes related to the research problem were identified. The factors, effects, and causes were then analyzed, organized, and used to formulate the five specific research questions.

Second, the impact of implementing FFOSHA on the Bay County Fire Department was evaluated against four specific criteria. First, what was the number of qualified volunteer firefighters in the BCFD prior to versus after implementation of the Act? Second, what was the number of qualified volunteer fire officers in the BCFD prior to versus after implementation of the Act? Third, what was the historical amount of revenue expended on an annual basis to train volunteer firefighters and fire officers in the BCFD prior to versus after implementation of the Act? Fourth, what was the historical amount of revenue expended to compensate training personnel in the BCFD prior to versus after implementation of the Act? Each criterion was evaluated and

measured objectively and thoroughly through comparison with historical data. All data collected was evaluated, and analyzed to create a final evaluative conclusion.

Limitations

The research conducted and the literature reviewed for this applied research project was specific to the Bay County Fire Department with the exception of Florida State Statutes, Florida Administrative Act, NFPA Standards and memorandum from the State Fire Marshall. Such limitation may prevent independent replication of this research project without access to the Department specific materials outlined in the literature review.

Definitions

Combination Fire Service Agency- A fire service organization comprised of both paid and volunteer personnel.

Organizational Culture- The sociological aspects of an organization that give the organization it's identity.

Organizational Effectiveness- Effectiveness of an organization measured against a given set of evaluation criteria usually defined in a strategic plan.

Risk Management Plan- A local plan adopted and approved by the local authority having jurisdiction outlining the employers plan to provide for employee safety in the workplace.

RESULTS

The author of the applied research project compared the current number of qualified volunteer firefighters, the current number of qualified volunteer fire officers, the current amount of revenue expended by the BCFD for training, and the current amount

of revenue expended to compensate training personnel against historical data from 2003. The researcher used four criteria to evaluate the impact of implementing FFOSHA on the BCFD.

The researcher found through comparing fire department personnel training records from 2003 against the training criteria defined in the new Act that there would be a reduction in force of 69.91% in the total number of volunteer firefighters within the Bay County Fire Department directly attributed to the implementation of FFOSHA. Firefighters who prior to the implementation of FFOSHA were defined as qualified by the BCFD would be restricted from operating at the scenes of emergencies until such time as they are certified by the State at the level of Firefighter I. Only 30.09%, or 34 out of 113 volunteer firefighters have training compliant with the Act. The findings answer the researcher's question, how many BCFD volunteer firefighters meet the requirements of FFOSHA?

The researcher found through comparing fire department personnel training records from 2003 against the training criteria defined in the new Act that there would be a reduction in force of 88.88% in the total number of volunteer fire officers within the Bay County Fire Department directly attributed to the implementation of FFOSHA. Volunteer fire officers prior to the implementation of FFOSHA who were defined as qualified by the BCFD would be restricted from managing the scenes of emergencies until such time as they are trained as Fire Officer One or Fire Officer Two. Only 11.12%, or four of 36 volunteer fire officers have training compliant with the Act. The findings answer the researcher's question, how many BCFD volunteer fire officers meet the training requirements of FFOSHA?

The researcher found through comparison of the components of the *Bay County Risk Management Plan* to the requirements of Part II Section 69A-62.021 *General Guidelines for Firefighter Employer Comprehensive Safety and Health Programs* of FFOSHA (2003) that the existing plan is in compliance with the new Act. The findings answer the researcher's question, is the existing Bay County Risk Management Plan in compliance with FFOSHA?

The researcher found through comparison of Section Nine of the *Bay County Risk Management Plan*, to the requirements of Part IV Section 96A-62.042 *Duties and Functions of the Safety Committee and the Workplace Safety Coordinator* of FFOSHA (2003) that the existing Bay County Safety Committee is in compliance with the new Act. The findings answer the researcher's question, are the duties and functions of the existing Bay County Safety Committee in compliance with FFOSHA?

The researcher found by reviewing memorandum published by the Florida Division of the State Fire Marshall that volunteer firefighter and volunteer fire officer training may be conducted in house by State certified instructors. Furthermore, the researcher found that there will be no registration or testing fees charged by the State to the BCFD for Firefighter I courses or Firefighter I certification examinations for volunteer firefighters. Additionally, a review of the research results by the State Fire Marshall resulted in the creation of a two year grace period for departments to complete the training and certification of volunteers before the State Fire Marshall will begin enforcing the training requirements in the Act.

The researcher found by evaluating the recommended training curriculum for Firefighter I, Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II, that an estimated 104 hours of overtime

wages will have to be paid to instructional personnel for providing Firefighter I training. The researcher also found that 96 hours of overtime wages will have to be paid to instructional personnel for providing Fire Officer I training, and 69 hours of overtime wages will have to be paid to instructional personnel for providing Fire Officer II training. The researcher estimates that the total cost to the BCFD to come into compliance with the new Act through training existing volunteers will not exceed \$4,415 annually. In the event the requirement of training in itself results in a significant reduction in the number of volunteer firefighters or fire officers, the employment of additional career personnel to offset the loss of volunteers would be required at a far greater cost not yet determined. The findings answer the researcher's question, what financial impact will there be on the BCFD to come into compliance with FFOSHA?

The researcher found by evaluating the last grading results prepared by ISO on the BCFD that receiving 15 points of credit for having all firefighters and fire officers certified in accordance with the ISO rating schedule would reduce the departments fire service protection rating from a six to a five. While the reduction will not result in any direct monetary savings for the BCFD, it may result in monetary savings for individual residents and businesses.

DISCUSSION

The researcher believes that if the Firefighters Employment, Standards, and Training Council had included at least one member representing a fire service agency utilizing volunteer firefighters the negative impacts to the BCFD identified by the research could have been identified prior to drafting FFOSHA (2003). Subsequently, the final draft of FFOSHA (2003) could have included mechanisms to eliminate the impacts.

The results compiled by the researcher during the review of personnel training records from 2003 indicate a 69.91% drop in the number of volunteer firefighters and a 88.88% drop in the number of volunteer fire officers in the BCFD who would be defined as trained commensurate to duty as defined by FFOSHA if the Act were implemented as originally drafted.

The results of the comparison between the required criteria in FFOSHA for risk management plans and the components of the Bay County Risk Management Plan indicate that the Bay County Plan is compliant with the criteria. Furthermore, the comparison between the plan and the required criteria found in NFPA 1500 indicates that the plan meets the criteria of the national standard as well.

The results of the comparison between the required makeup and duties of safety committees and the makeup and duties of the Bay County Safety Committee indicate that the Bay County Safety Committee is compliant with the criteria.

The information obtained through the review of information from the State Fire Marshall indicates that volunteer firefighters will be able to obtain certification as Firefighter I in three ways. First, volunteers with documented training certificates will be grandfathered in. Second, volunteers who do not have training certificates, but who can document training will be allowed to challenge the State's certification exam. Third, volunteers can take a 160- hour Firefighter I course offered by a State certified instructor, and then take the State's certification exam.

Overall it is the researcher's interpretation of the study results that the implementation of FFOSHA will have an adverse effect on the Bay County Fire Department's organizational effectiveness if compliance with the Act is not obtained

within the two year grace period. The Department can still meet the needs of the public in a manner consistent with the goals and objectives of the *Bay County Strategic Plan for Fire Services*. The expenditures for overtime while increased, will not have a negative impact on the Departments revenue budgeted for expenditures in other areas. The continued use of FFOSHA by the State will achieve the goal of reducing firefighter injuries. However, any reduction in the total number of volunteer firefighters in the BCFD as a result of FFOSHA will have a negative impact on the organizational culture of the Bay County Fire Department. Volunteer firefighters will not admit that FFOSHA (2003) provides for a safer operating environment. Instead, firefighters view achieving this goal as an unnecessary regulatory hurdle that has been placed in front of them for the purpose of reducing the number of volunteers.

The implications on the organization resulting from the findings of this research will be positive. The availability of data supporting the position that FFOSHA will benefit the County and the firefighters will help the department to educate its volunteers about the importance of training and safety programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the findings of the research, the researcher recommends three courses of action. First, that the Bay County Fire Department immediately begin providing Firefighter I, Fire Officer I, and Fire Officer II training to volunteer firefighters and fire officers who do not meet the trained commensurate to duty requirements of FFOSHA. Second, that the County's Risk Management Division be directed to regularly compare the components of the County's risk management plan to the requirements of FFOSHA governing fire department risk management plans and safety committees to

insure continued compliance with the Act. Third, that the State Legislature amend Section 633.31 of the *Fire Prevention and Control Statute* (2002) to require the inclusion of one fire chief from a volunteer fire service agency and one fire chief from a combination fire service agency on the Firefighters Employment, Standards, and Training Council. The recommendations are supported by the research findings reflecting that a reduction in the number of qualified volunteer firefighters and fire officers could result if issues under the jurisdiction of the Council are not objectively reviewed by all effected stakeholders and the phenomenon of Group think is allowed to influence decision making.

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