



Albany County Sheriff's Office Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

Critical Incident/Emergency Management Unit News Letter

If you have an article about your department such as a specialty you have that you would like included in the Newsletter please send it in to the Fire Coordinator's office.



Altamont Fair

In this issue:

Altamont Fair

Attic Fires

Changing Face of Volunteerism of the Fire Service

Becoming a Firefighter

Training

Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

The Fire coordinator's office will have a table at the Altamont Fair again this year. Stop by and see us just outside the Hometown Heroes building.



Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

Firehouse Magazine

An Alternative Attic Fire Tactic for Fire Departments

Daniel Burke explains why the Tucson, AZ, Fire Department developed a new tactic for fighting attic fires and the details of the operation.

[Daniel Burke](#)

July 7, 2026

Key Takeaways

- The challenges that firefighters face with the traditional tactics for an attic fire—delays in getting water on the fire, the demands of pulling interior ceiling, full ignition that can result from a roof ventilation hole and potential roof collapse—are minimized or eliminated when a piercing nozzle is pushed through a very small hole in the roof to flow 210 gpm of water in a sprinkler head-type pattern.
- Firefighters can deploy an attic reset nozzle to a location and leave it in place with the bail open and the water flow controlled from the ground/pumper.

Roof operation firefighters can position multiple attic reset nozzles across a large area for extinguishment or to act as a fire stop/barrier.

Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026



Concerns about delays in getting water on an attic fire, the demands of pulling interior ceiling, full ignition that can result from a roof ventilation hole and potential roof collapse motivated members of the Tucson, AZ, Fire Department (TFD) to develop its attic reset tactic. Once crewmembers sound the roof and locate the area of the attic fire, a very small hole is made in the roof with an axe or saw, and a piercing nozzle is inserted into the attic space. The very small hole/opening controls the flow path.

“Command from Engine 9. We completed the 360, and we have a working attic fire.” Upon hearing that transmission, what thoughts come to mind? Perhaps concern for the structural integrity of the roof and a collapse on interior crews? The tactics that are involved with extinguishment of an overhead/attic fire? The tactical decisions will be important to stop the fire from advancing and to keep crews safe.

In 2018, the Tucson, AZ, Fire Department deployed a new tactic: the attic reset. It calls for the deployment of a hoseline with a FlameFighter piercing nozzle to the roof to inject water into the attic space from above. This roof tactic is an alternative to the more traditional interior attic fire tactic that deploys a hoseline on the interior and attacks the fire from below, which can present challenges and dangers.

The TFD attic reset tactic evolved from National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and Underwriters Laboratories (UL) research that recommends fast water on the fire and controlling the flow path, which the TFD has practiced since 2013.



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

Air flow path control

In 2013, four TFD members traveled to Spartanburg, SC, to attend a NIST live burn research event where experiments were conducted in eight different houses to demonstrate firefighting methods—individually and in combinations—for strategically ventilating and isolating fires to prevent, or at least delay, flashover.

At the time of the event, the TFD, like many departments, used offensive fire tactics that, essentially, had firefighters deploy a hoseline to make an attack/approach from the “unburned side” to avoid pushing fire into unburned areas of the structure. Roof operations included an early vertical ventilation hole that was intended to release heat and smoke for the benefit of the crews that were entering the structure.

The NIST research confirmed that initial application of water from an exterior position didn't result in pushing fire into other areas of the structure and that any opening in the structure, whether natural or firefighter-produced (i.e., doors, windows and a roof ventilation hole), created an air flow path that feeds a ventilation-limited fire.

One of the more profound research burns that was observed tested the control of the air flow path of the fire. This research burn ignited a back bedroom to produce flames that shot out of the window on the Bravo side, as the fire had all of the air that it needed from an open front door. Then, the front door was closed, cutting off the air flow path. The fire intensity diminished, with the flames retreating back into the bedroom. The effects were similar to putting a lid on a burning candle.

The information that the TFD members gleaned from the Spartanburg research burns made it clear that the science supported getting fast water on a fire from an exterior position (don't walk past active fire with a hoseline) and controlling the flow path were tactics that should be incorporated into the TFD to improve the survivability profile for victims and, at same time, to create a safer environment for firefighters.

Following the Spartanburg trip, TFD members were trained on the NIST research, and the “exterior reset” tactic was implemented. The exterior reset consisted of rapidly deploying an attack line and applying water exteriorly onto the fire (via a window, door, garage, etc.) to begin cooling the environment, to make it more tenable for potential victims as well as firefighters. Additionally, controlling the air flow path by not breaking windows and by shutting open doors—including those that are forced open by fire personnel—and not cutting a vertical ventilation hole until water is on the fire became important pieces of the TFD fireground strategy.

The success of these research-driven tactics took the TFD down the path of using these same concepts on attic fires.

Office of Emergency
Management
P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026



The piercing nozzle that the TFD utilizes for its attic reset is capable of flowing 210 gpm in a sprinkler head-type pattern, with very little nozzle reaction.

Traditional attic fire tactic

TFD Chief James Kearney, who attended the Spartanburg burns, helped to teach the exterior reset technique to TFD members and has since retired, had the idea of deploying a hoseline to the roof and injecting water directly into the attic space prior to pulling ceiling or cutting a vent hole.

At that time, the TFD, like the majority of U.S. departments, used the traditional attic fire tactics of deploying an attack line interior; attempting to locate the fire using a [thermal imaging camera \(TIC\)](#) and/or visually; pulling ceiling; and applying water from below. The challenges with this tactic can include:

Delay in getting to the correct interior position to effectively apply water on the attic fire. Interior fire conditions as well as physical obstacles/housekeeping might delay a crew in getting to an effective location below the attic fire. This is dangerous, because as NIST/UL research showed, fire can spread quickly (double every 100 seconds) and compromise the roof structure. TICs are helpful but might not give accurate assessment of conditions. For instance, a ventilation-limited fire can have heavy smoke (which is fuel) but no fire. It also can be difficult to see any changing conditions behind older lath and plaster, which could lead to a false sense of security.



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

Pulling interior ceiling. This can be a demanding task. The crew(s) must be in the correct room/position, and the appropriate tool must be brought inside initially. Many times, in older homes, the ceiling can be lath and plaster, which can be challenging to penetrate. Another problem can be the height of the ceiling. (The most common ceiling is 8 feet flat, but with modern residential construction, 10- and 12-foot ceilings are common. Commercial ceilings can be much taller.) Further, insulation or duct work might obstruct getting water on the correct location.

Ventilation on an attic fire. Attic fires often are time-confined and ventilation-limited. NIST showed that full ignition can result from a roof ventilation hole: The vent hole could provide the flow path that causes the attic fire to increase in intensity. The fire intensity also could be increased if an additional flow path is provided from the ceiling being pulled from below. A ventilation hole also could push wind into an attic space to potentially act as a bellow.

Roof Structure. The effects of fire on roof structures to cause collapses, particularly in lightweight construction, are a significant concern and unpredictable. Many years back, the Phoenix Fire Department conducted several test burns of single-family residences with four different burn scenarios of lightweight roof systems that were exposed to fire. The test house roofs were constructed of plywood and oriented strand board and exposed to fire.

The results were sobering. The makeshift weighted manikin firefighters that were positioned on the roof fell through at approximately 15 minutes after the start of the room-and-contents fire that spread into the attic space.

Utilizing the attic reset

The TFD attic reset tactic takes into consideration the above factors and the concerns for collapse on interior crews that are operating under a burning attic fire. It also combines the NIST/UL research of getting fast water onto the attic fire and controlling the air flow path. It targets the fire in the attic or void above the ceiling and looks to keep the fire in the compartment without a flow path. The tactic also can be supported by putting water into the gable end(s). The piercing nozzle can be used from a roof ladder or off the tip of an aerial if necessary.

To implement the TFD attic reset, one-foot piercing nozzles were purchased and added to every pumper on the 150-foot 1¾-inch front bumper line. The nozzle is capable of flowing 210 gpm in a sprinkler head-type pattern, with very little nozzle reaction.

Typically, the attic reset tactic is the function of a ladder crew that deploys to the roof with its normal ventilation equipment and the attic reset hoseline. Crewmembers sound



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

the roof as they exit the ladder and use the TIC—as well as support from personnel who are on the ground—to locate the area of the attic fire. Once the area is identified, a very small hole/breach is made in the roof with an axe or [saw](#), and the piercing nozzle is inserted into the attic space. The very small hole/opening controls the flow path.

The nozzle is opened for 20–30 seconds as means of performing the attic reset.

The water from the nozzle sprays water in every direction and provides the necessary cooling.

Additional flows can occur as needed in the original location, or the nozzle can be moved to a new location, depending on the change of conditions or information that's provided by command/crews.

After the initial attic reset, water application crews that are assigned interior coordinate their work from below to then pull ceiling, access remaining fire and perform the primary search.

Once some fire control is initiated, [vertical ventilation](#) holes then can be initiated if requested by command and interior crews.

Since the implementation of the attic reset tactic, the TFD has come to realize additional tactical benefits:

- The attic reset nozzle can be deployed to a location and left in place with the bail open and the water flow controlled from the ground/pumper.

Multiple attic reset nozzles can be deployed to a roof and positioned across a large area for extinguishment or to act as a fire stop/barrier, much like sprinklers that are positioned in a building. This is more effective than the trench cut roof opening, which as mentioned above, ultimately, creates a flow path.

Traditional nozzle for reset?

If the traditional combination nozzle is a department's only option, it can be used for an attic reset on the roof.

However, there are a multiple reasons why the TFD found the FlameFighter piercing nozzle to be the better option for the procedure.



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

On a 1¾-inch line, the piercing nozzle will flow 210 gpm and with little to no nozzle reaction.

The FlameFighter sprays water laterally in every direction and with extended reach, which is very effective in a compartment-type fire.

The piercing nozzle uses an impinging stream that produces solid water droplets that produce better steam conversion and very little air entrainment. A traditional fog nozzle draws/injects air, which is why this nozzle is used as an option for negative-pressure ventilation of smoke out of a window.



A preconnected front bumper line with the piercing nozzle attached.

Science-based evolution

The attic fire can be one of the most dangerous situations that structural firefighters face. The extinguishment tactics that are used should reflect what scientific research has provided to the fire service. The TFD attic reset tactic has become a very effective

Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

CAREERS & EDUCATION Firehouse Magazine

Changing Face of Volunteerism of the Fire Service

Sarah Lee explains how virtual opportunities, human connection, flexibility, purpose and collaboration are strategic for volunteer departments that are struggling to recruit.

[Sarah Lee](#) June 15, 2026



Key Takeaways

- What one generation might want or expect out of volunteering, including for the fire service, might look a lot different than that of the next or previous generation.
- Some positions with a volunteer fire department can be done remotely. This provides opportunities to attract younger people who want to volunteer but aren't interested in being located on site.

Volunteer fire departments that are struggling to connect with young people should showcase the personal connections, camaraderie and strong bonds that are inherent in the fire service. Many young people want human connections.

If your department struggles to recruit and retain volunteers, you're far from alone. Volunteerism today doesn't look like it did even five years ago. Cultural, demographic, sociological and technological changes influence how people volunteer and what they expect out of volunteer opportunities. [Departments must be curious, flexible and innovative.](#)

Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

Not right or wrong

Different generations have different lived experiences. Some grew up with no technology; others have been digital natives since birth. Generations have experienced different cultural events and shifting cultural norms that shape how they view, experience and behave.

These differences don't make one generation right and another wrong; they just make them different. This means that what one generation might want or expect out of volunteering might look a little different than that of the next generation and the generation after that.

What are differences that can make your department more appealing to the younger generations?

Virtual volunteering

With changes in technology, more people are volunteering online rather than in person. Whether managing social media for a nonprofit, helping to fundraise or tutoring, numerous needs can be met online and don't require a volunteer to physically be in any one location.

This isn't necessarily bad news for the fire service. How many jobs exist in your department that can be done remotely? With today's digital tools, it even is possible to pay bills and manage finances online, so even a treasurer position can be mostly virtual.

Not every volunteer must be operational. Nonoperational volunteers help shoulder the load of running a department and lighten the work of those who are training and responding to calls.

Desire for human connection

Typically, members of Generation Z want opportunities to network with colleagues and to feel less lonely. This is prime opportunity for fire departments to meet this need through volunteerism.

The younger generation is seeking balance. In addition to virtual work, these people want human connections and opportunities to increase their skills.

Further, many realize the downside of too much time spent on technology.



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

How are you communicating your volunteer needs? When you put out your call for volunteers, consider how you can tap into this need for balance by showcasing the personal connections, camaraderie and strong bonds that are unique to the fire service. Images, words and even inviting people into your station for a visit or ride-along can go a long way toward demonstrating how you can help them to meet this need.

Flexibility

Younger generations look for flexibility and to make the most of the only nonrenewable resource that they have: time. Unforgiving schedules and forced in-person learning can deter a generation that already is very skilled at learning through digital media and collaborating online.

How much of Firefighter I/Firefighter II and other core skills can be delivered online or via flexible, self-paced learning, with cohorts meeting periodically for focused review and hands-on training?

Unlike older generations that didn't grow up with a digital world at their fingertips, younger generations are accustomed to researching topics, locations and brands before they even show up, and they're coming in with some level of existing knowledge. (Go out to dinner with nearly any younger person and chances are they already examined the menu and know what they want.)

Further, starting and ending on time and providing flexibility in how/when training occurs shows respect for time, allows people to work around busy schedules and can go a long way in meeting evolving needs.

Purpose and collaboration

Younger generations show a strong desire for leadership and ownership, with an emphasis on purpose, collaboration, diversity and inclusivity. These people want to know how what they are doing has an effect, and they value teamwork, wanting to work with, rather than for, a manager/leader.

This doesn't mean that there isn't a place for clear roles and leadership, but departments that want to appeal more to younger generations can provide opportunities for growth and leadership now rather than in years to earn that privilege. For example, if your department will host an open house, put a younger member in charge of creating signage and social media content/promotional plans or of designing and implementing activities for young children. Provide a clear path for volunteers to follow to obtain that coveted officer level or to meet other personal goals to gain knowledge and skills.

Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

When recruiting, communicate with existing members to identify and quantify how their service helps the community. Share this in recruitment messaging.

Cite the number of calls handled, publicize personal stories or calculate cost savings that volunteers bring to the community.

Although the fireground calls for a strict hierarchy and command infrastructure, seek opportunities outside of the fireground to emphasize mentorship and coaching. Create opportunities for teamwork and collaboration to balance out the more hierarchical nature of the fire service.

Recruitment practices

Older generations might have started to volunteer because they saw a sign outside of the station or a flyer or because of family connections to the service. These methods still can be part of a recruitment plan, but younger generations look online for volunteer opportunities. A digital presence will speak volumes to them about what a department can offer while streamlining onboarding and helping to target recruitment messages within your community.

Younger generations are accustomed to researching topics online, so make sure that your digital presence is welcoming and informative. Younger generations are used to online forms (rather than paper applications) and using social media to engage and learn. If your department isn't up to speed in these areas, this is an opportune time to bring in a younger member who can take ownership over the project to see the immediate effect of their efforts.

Willingness to learn

It bears repeating: Different generations have different expectations and needs. What's noted above are just a handful of ideas to help your department to appeal to a broader audience without losing the wisdom and expertise that you have on hand. The first step is a willingness to learn what these differences are. If you read this far, you have a head start. Get curious, be willing to evolve, and be willing to learn.

This is an incredible time to be part of the fire service. Seasoned veterans can pass their wisdom and skills to those who follow in their footsteps while gaining insight from a whole cohort of digital natives who know how to leverage technology to streamline processes, expand outreach and set up the fire service.

Office of Emergency
Management
P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

Fire Rescue 1 by Lexipol

Education & Training

11 requirements to become a firefighter

The firefighting career field is very competitive; here's a quick breakdown of what you should and should not do as you prepare to join the fire service

March 05, 2025 07:24 PM •

Sarah Calams

For those of you considering a career in the fire service, the following information and resources will help you learn how to become a firefighter. But first things first: It's important to recognize that becoming a firefighter is no easy task. It requires hard work, long hours of training, dedication to the profession, and a sincere desire to help others. The firefighting career field is very competitive, too. You'll be up against hundreds, possibly thousands, of applicants depending on the department. How will you stand out and where do you start?

Here's a quick breakdown of what you need to do to become a firefighter — often called **"the best job in the world."**

1. Meet basic requirements to become a firefighter

In order to become a firefighter, you will need a valid driver's license and meet the age requirement of 18 years old. For those younger than 18, you can look into limited involvement as a junior firefighter. There also will likely be a maximum age, usually between 28 and 35 years old, depending on the department to which you apply.



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

2. Meet (and exceed) education requirements

At a minimum, you'll need to obtain a high school diploma or GED. Many firefighters earn a degree in fire science to advance their career. It's also wise to become an EMT. Having both a fire and EMS background will improve your odds of being hired. Some departments might even require an EMT certification; larger departments may require a paramedic's license.

3. Get in good physical condition

Becoming a firefighter requires passing a physical ability test. The CPAT events are stair climb, hose drag, equipment carry, ladder raise and extension, forcible entry, search, rescue, ceiling breach and pull. Prepare yourself for the physical nature of the job as well as the demands of the test.

4. Stay out of trouble

At one point in your life, you've probably done something you're not proud of. How you've acted to rectify your mistakes will be important when applying to become a firefighter. FireRescue1 columnist Mike Pertz, who founded a website aimed at helping others become firefighters, tackled this topic in his article **"Do fire departments hire those with a criminal record?"**

If you are asked about your past record during an interview, do not lie. Instead, take ownership for your mistakes. Explain to the hiring panel how you've changed and what you've done to change. Also, be upfront about your driving record – include dates, locations and outcomes of tickets and accidents.

5. Keep your social media nose clean

If you use Facebook or other social media platforms, **be mindful of what you post**, repost, comment on and like. Expect all potential employers to scan your social media presence. If there are embarrassing, immature, risqué or



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

otherwise inappropriate posts on your pages, remove them. Ask your friends to remove any such posts involving you from their pages. In some cases, it might make sense to close your accounts.

6. Prove your fiscal responsibility

This is often overlooked, but the required background check covers credit score. Bad credit will hurt you. Be disciplined about improving your score if necessary. You can check your credit report for free once per year at **AnnualCreditReport.com**.

7. Get involved in your community

Working in public safety is all about community service. Volunteering your time for a great cause is one way to prove you're ready to serve your community. And it doesn't matter if it's fire-related or non-fire-related. There's a lot of great opportunities out there for you to make a difference. The **American Red Cross** or **Habitat for Humanity** are two excellent options.

8. Pass the written exam

Study, study, study — then study some more. The written exam consists of multiple-choice questions and is divided into categories

9. Prepare for a psychological evaluation

You can't study for this one. This evaluation will look at your mental and emotional stability to withstand the stresses associated with firefighting.

10. Graduate from a fire academy

Getting your state entry-level firefighter certifications, such as Firefighter I and II, is a great move. You'll still need to attend a department's academy once hired, but this gives you a leg up and helps you learn the book and

Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

practical skills of the job. Joining a volunteer fire department is one way to get into an academy.

11. Ace the interview

Why do you want to be a firefighter? Cliché, we know. But you better prepare for this question. Here are **four additional questions** you'll be sure to get in a firefighter interview – how you answer will influence a panel's hiring decision. This is your time to shine and stand out



Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

4 types of questions you'll get in a firefighter job interview

When you make it to the panel interview, how you answer these types of questions will influence their hiring decision

September 29, 2016 12:33 PM •

Mike Pertz



The "who" questions are a great opportunity to let the interviewers hear your story, your achievements and your beliefs.

Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

Photo/Getty

Unless you've been interviewed by a panel of officers before, you're probably wondering what you will be asked during an interview to be a firefighter. Chances are, any question you receive can fall into one of four categories.

1. Who are you?

The first category includes the "who" questions. A question I can almost guarantee you will get at some point during your interview (usually at the beginning) is something to the effect of, "So _____, what can you tell us about yourself?"

Sure, they've run a **criminal background check** and have probably talked to your references; they know the basics. But what they really want to know is, in your words, what kind of person you are, what makes you tick, how do you spend your time, what have you achieved, and what are you proud of.

This is important information for them to know. After all, they may be inviting you to be a part of their family. They want to know as much information as they possibly can before they offer you the job.

When answering a who question, it's important to be honest. This is a prime opportunity to let them hear your story, your achievements and your beliefs. This is where you will be able to tell them some sort of unique and memorable story about yourself.

2. What do you know?

The next category is the "what" questions. If you are a lateral hire or have experience in the fire service, don't be surprised if they ask you some scenario-based questions. This is your time to shine.

Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

A word of caution: There's a good chance that there are people on that panel who have been fighting fires longer than you've been alive. You're not going to blow them away with your knowledge, so keep it simple and show them that you are an intelligent, competent firefighter.

If you're a new firefighter, the panel is going to ask you questions geared more toward a different set of knowledge. They're going to ask you questions to get at do you know the basic duties and functions of the job. What do you know about the particular city or district to which you are applying, and do you know the number one responsibility of the fire department?

Do your research on the city before the interview. It may not ruin your chances at getting hired, but if you are asked a basic question about the jurisdiction and you don't know, it certainly won't look good for you.

3. Why are you here?

The third category is the "why" questions. Don't get me wrong, being a career firefighter comes with a lot of perks — great pay, lots of time off, pension, benefits and the list goes on. However, if this is your only reason for wanting to get into the fire service, the interview is not the time to bring that up.

A lot of candidates email me asking if their reasons for getting into the fire service are "good enough." As long as your reasons aren't illegal, immoral or an attempt to hurt anyone or anything, don't let anyone tell you your reasons aren't good enough or aren't the right reasons. We all arrived to this profession for different reasons and on different paths, and your reasons are exclusively yours.

An easier way to approach why questions is to think about what in the fire service initially attracted you to it.

Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

For some people, it's the constant change of never knowing what's going to happen that day. For others, it's a specific event or person in their life that affected them so much that from that point on they knew the fire service was for them.

For me, I had a background in soccer and played in the pros for a couple years. When I stopped, I realized what I missed the most wasn't necessarily the game, but the camaraderie of being part of a team. The fire service was the closest thing that I knew of that matched what I was looking for.

4. How would you react?

Then comes the dreaded situational or "how" questions. These typically present some kind of moral, safety or ethical dilemma that leaves you wondering exactly how to answer the question.

Yes, there is a right way to answer these questions, and yes if you don't answer them correctly it will reflect very poorly for you.

As with the what questions, if you don't have any actual fire service experience they probably won't be asking you questions directly involving fire tactics. However, they will want to know that you are able to think through situations in a logical way, and make the right decision in a given situation.

If a fellow firefighter does something illegal or immoral would you look the other way and cover for them, or would you report it to the appropriate authority? You will undoubtedly receive questions along these lines at some point during your interview.

Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



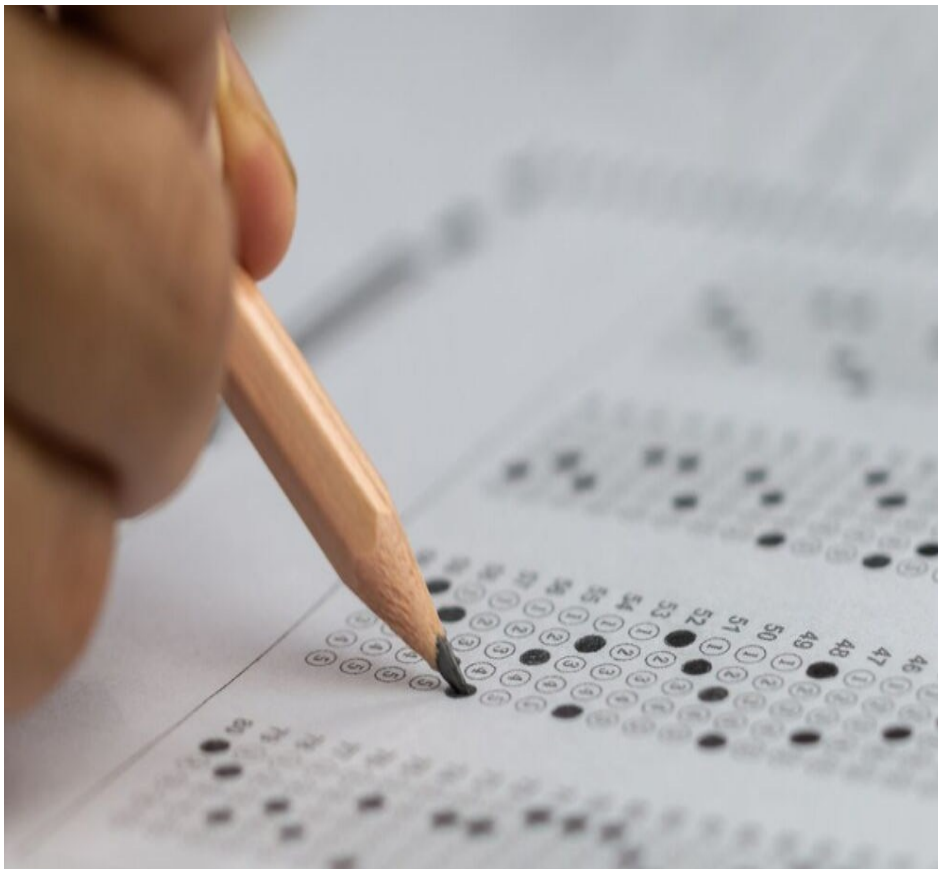
Albany County Sheriff's Office Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

The written test: Get a better score

Have these test-taking basics down pat to give yourself the best chance at a high score and a job offer

August 26, 2020 03:10 PM



The written exam often consists of 100 to 150 multiple-choice questions.

Photo/Getty

This article, originally published in 2013, has been updated and now includes a firefighter test prep video below.

Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

Keep in mind that the testing process varies from region to region and the following is generalized information on the written exam that applies to most departments throughout the United States, but not necessarily all.

After your application has been filed and accepted, the next step in the selection process is usually a written exam.

The written exam often consists of 100 to 150 multiple-choice questions. The exam is usually divided into several categories and almost always has a time limit.

Categories may include reading comprehension, math, mechanical aptitude, verbal comprehension and memorization, spatial relations, map reading, logic and problem solving, and human relations.

Most exams are strictly made up of general-aptitude questions and contain no fire or EMS related portions. However, if the department is requiring an EMT or firefighter certificate, the test may also include questions on basic firefighting principles such as fire behavior and emergency medical questions.

These questions will usually be taken from a particular published resource and the name of that resource should be provided to candidates prior to the test. Asking fire and EMS questions is not a common practice, but may be the case with some exams.

Grading system

The written exam may be pass or fail, or it may be graded. If graded, your score may count towards a certain percentage of your overall placement on the eligibility list. Some departments will instead create a cut-off score.

Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

This cut off score may be established prior to the exam, or it may be set after the exam based on a curve. In these cases, only those who score above that cut off move on to the next step in the selection process.

This is why it is important to master these exams and be able to score consistently in the upper percentile in order to get hired. Simply passing the test is usually not enough.

Often, departments will provide candidates with a study guide. If a study guide is provided, study it thoroughly. As much as 25 percent of the exam may have questions taken directly from the study guide.

Before the exam it is important to get plenty of rest, eat a good breakfast and bring snacks and water. Also, always make sure you have your identification and any registration paperwork and wear a watch. You want to wear a watch because you may need to turn off your cell phone during the test and will want to be able to track the time during the exam.

Bring cash in case you need to pay for parking. In metropolitan areas written exams are usually done at large venues that accommodate hundreds of candidates and parking can be an issue. You will be expected to arrive early to register and you can expect to spend several hours at the test site so paying a parking meter is not a good option. Having cash to pay for long-term parking is always a good safeguard.

Know the rules

Prior to the test make, carefully read the instructions provided in the application packet or study guide. Each test is different. Most do not allow things such as calculators or scratch paper for notes during the oral passage, but I have seen cases where they do. Know what is allowed to maximize your advantages while working within the confines of the examination rules.

Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

Prior to taking the test, they will often inform candidates of the rules and expectations during the exam as well as any disqualifiers. Pay close attention to the instructions given. For example, use of the bathroom may require raising permission from a proctor and an escort to make sure candidates are not mingling during the exam.

Before beginning the exam itself you will often need to fill in a form on your answer sheet. Make sure this form is filled out properly, (according to the instructions given) and completely. Not doing so may mean having your test rejected by the machine or person processing the exam.

Time management

Once the test is underway make the most of your time. If you are too worried about the time limit you may end up rushing through the test, making simple errors, which can be the difference between a pass and fail.

However, if you are too time complacent, you may run out of time and force yourself to guess in order to complete the test. Calculate your time accordingly and check your watch every once in a while. This is why a watch is important. The venue may or may not have a clock available.

Remember there is no penalty for guessing. A blank answer is always wrong. If you guess you may guess right, if not, you are no worse off than having left it blank.

If you are a slow test taker and have trouble in a particular area such as math it may be a good idea to do that section last. It is best to answer the questions you know first and spend time on the more difficult ones at the end. That way if time is running short and you're forced to guess on any questions you'll be guessing on the ones you weren't sure of.

Overcome weakness

Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

If you skip a question or section, be sure that you mark your answer sheet incorrect correspondence with the question that you skip to — if you skip to question 20, mark 20 and leave the ones you skipped unmarked.

Moving around the test in such a manner without paying close attention to the corresponding numbers can throw off your answer sheet and present big problems. It may sound like a silly mistake, but it happens frequently.

Make notes on scratch paper of any questions you either skipped or were unsure of. Always review your entire test if time permits. Go back and rethink trouble questions. Review questions for oversights or tricks and scan your answer sheet before handing it in to make sure you didn't leave any blanks.

Take notes on difficult questions on scratch paper and take them home with you. You may encounter that same question or one very similar to it on your next exam. If you are not permitted to leave with such notes, take mental notes and immediately write them down as soon as you get out of the test.

After taking a few tests you'll learn your strengths and weaknesses. Improve your weak areas by visiting your local library. Most people don't realize that many public libraries have a large selection of test preparation books and materials specifically for fire service examinations.

Get sharp

Other helpful resources may be basic math books to refresh some of the math questions that often found on these tests. These basic math concepts are commonly taught in elementary and middle school, but not used in everyday life and commonly forgotten. Before purchasing any test preparation books, check local public libraries first.

Take as many tests as possible. Don't wait for the ideal department to test before applying. The best way to improve your score and feel comfortable with these exams is by taking them. Travel as far as feasible to take any test, even if you don't want the job. Each test will better prepare you for the next one.

Office of Emergency
Management

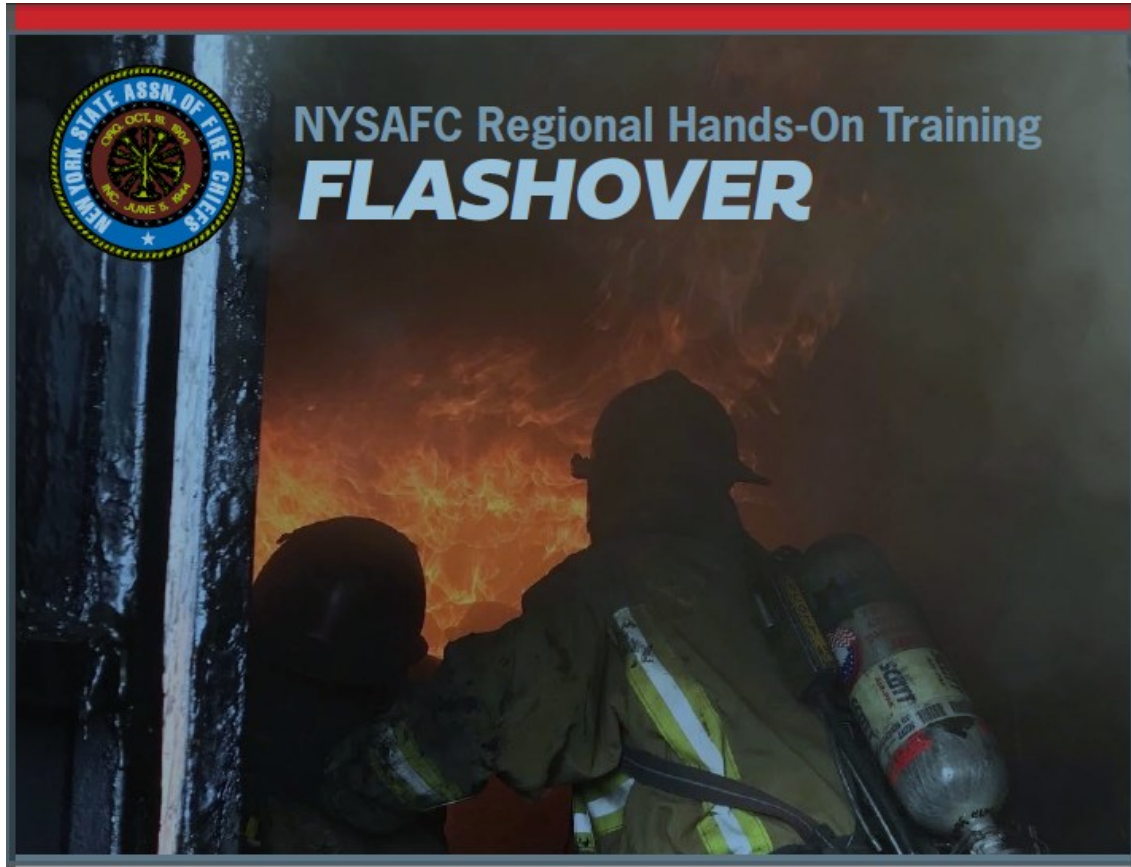
P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026



Host: East Berne Volunteer Fire Company

Albany County • September 26-27, 2026

@ Peter M. Becker Hilltown Regional Training Facility

792 Helderberg Trail • East Berne, NY 12059

It is said that if you're more than five feet from the doorway, your chance of survival in a flashover is minimal. Working in this program, you'll experience fire development from the incipient stage all the way to flashover. You'll be able to identify the signs of the event before you're part of the flashover. If you've never been in a flashover container, - on training evolutions in NYSAFC's mobile flashover simulator.

Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

2027 LONG ISLAND METRO FIRE/EMS EXPO



FEBRUARY 4-7, 2027
NASSAU COLISEUM • UNIONDALE, NY

The **New York State Association of Fire Chiefs** and the **Islip Town Fire/EMS Museum Educational Center** partner to deliver this annual emergency services exposition and educational event on Long Island. In addition to vendors, the event includes seminars, Hands-On Training, accredited codes and EMS programs, and activities for junior firefighters. It benefits the [association](#) and the [museum](#), supporting their shared mission to serve the fire and emergency medical services personnel of Long Island and New York state.

Office of Emergency
Management
P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



Albany County Sheriff's Office

Critical Incident Emergency Management Unit

August 2026

Be sure to visit the NYS DHSES OFPC website for additional public education resources!

<https://www.dhses.ny.gov/general-public-resources>

ALBANY COUNTY FIRE TRAINING SCHEDULE #9-2026 is attached.

There is now a link on our website with instructions on how to get an LMS sign-on ID . We recommend that all new members should register as soon as they join so they have access to training opportunities.



Office of Emergency
Management

P.O. Box A
58 Verda Ave.
Clarksville, NY
12041

Ph: (518) 720-8025
Fax: (518) 720-8031



ALBANY COUNTY FIRE TRAINING SCHEDULE #9 2026

Pre-Registration Required: Students may register by clicking on the Learning Management System link on the NYS OPFC Home Page ([NYS Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services - OPFC](#))

Registration opens 45 days before the first class

COURSE	LOCATION	DATE	INSTRUCTOR	PREREQUISITES
--------	----------	------	------------	---------------

Please Note that a training authorization letter is now required for all courses offered by the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control

Apparatus Aerial Operator IN PROGRESS	Guilderland FD	July 7, 9, 16, 21,23, 28, 30, August 4, 6, 13 1830-2130	Paiko	BEFO or Equivalent
Rescue Technician Basic IN PROGRESS	East Berne	July 27, 29, August 3, 5, 15, 22 Weeknights 1830-2130 Saturdays: 0830-1430	Clawson	None
Firefighter 2 Module 2 Risk Reduction NEW TO SCHEDULE	Midway	August 18, 19, 20 1830-2130	Molesky	BEFO or Equivalent New York's Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend \$500 Available for completion of all Fire Fighter II modules

Firefighter 2 Module 2 Risk Reduction	Slingerlands	August 18, 19, 20 1830-2130	Gill	BEFO or Equivalent New York's Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend \$500 Available for completion of all Fire Fighter II modules
Firefighter 2 - Module 4 IMAT NEW TO SCHEDULE IMAT Subject matter based on Chapter 5 of NFPA 1001, Standard for Firefighting Professional Qualifications. Educational Topics include investigation, maintenance, assisting technical rescue. Skills training include documenting evidence of fire origin and cause, inspecting and maintaining tools and equipment and assisting technical rescue operations.	Midway	August 24, 26, 27 1830-2130	Molesky	Firefighter I or Equivalent New York's Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend \$500 Available for completion of all Fire Fighter II modules
Firefighter 2 - Module 4 IMAT	Slingerlands	September 1, 2, 3 1830-2130	M. DeGroff	Firefighter I or Equivalent New York's Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend \$500 Available for completion of all Fire Fighter II modules IMAT Subject matter based on Chapter 5 of NFPA 1001, Standard for Firefighting Professional Qualifications. Educational Topics include investigation, maintenance, assisting technical rescue. Skills training include documenting evidence of fire origin and cause, inspecting and maintaining tools and equipment and assisting technical rescue operations.
Basic Exterior Firefighting Operations w/Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations NEW TO SCHEDULE	East Berne	September 1, 15, 16, 22, 23, 29, 30, October 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28, November 3, 4, 10, 12, 19, 19, 21, December 5 Weeknights 1830- 2130 11/21 & 12/5 0800-1600	Dolan	None New York's Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend \$750

Fire Officer 1 Module Series: Firefighter Health & Safety	Slingerlands Location Change	September 8, 10, 15, 17 1830-2130	S. DeGroff	BEFO or Equivalent New York's Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend \$1000 Available for completion of all Fire Office I modules
Firefighter 2 Module 1A - Crew Leadership w/Structural Live Fire	Elsmere/ Colonie & Guilderland Towers	September 10, 15, 17, 19, 21, 24 1830-2130 9/19: 0800-1500	M. DeGroff	Firefighter I or Equivalent New York's Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend \$500 Available for completion of all Fire Fighter II modules
Apparatus Aerial Operator	Fuller Road	September 10, 15, 22, 24 October 3, 17, 24 Weeknights 1830-2130 Saturdays 0800-1400	C. VanBuskirk	BEFO or Equivalent
Apparatus Operator-Pump-Basic	North Bethlehem	September 28, October 5, 12, 19, 24, Weeknights 1830-2130 Saturday 0800-1600	S. DeGroff	BEFO or Equivalent Note: New Course Curriculum
Fire and Emergency Service Instructor I (2019 Ed.)	Saratoga Public Safety Building - 6010 County Farm Road, Ballston Spa	September 18th thru 20th and 26th thru 27th 8am - 5pm	OFPC	All registrations are done through our learning management system which can be found at: https://lmsportal-dhSES.ny.gov/ New York's Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend \$500
Fire Officer 1 Module Series: Leadership & Supervision NEW TO SCHEDULE	Slingerlands	September 29, October 1, 3, 6 Weeknights 1930-2130 Saturday 0800-1400	S. DeGroff	BEFO or Equivalent New York's Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend \$1000 Available for completion of all Fire Office I modules
Firefighter 2 Module 3-Foam & Flammable Gas	Elsmere/ Colonie MTB	September 29, 30, October 1 1830-2130	M. DeGroff	Firefighter I or Equivalent

				New York's Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend \$500 Available for completion of all Fire Fighter II modules
Fire and Emergency Service Instructor I (2019 Ed.)	Harriman Campus - 1220 Washington Ave, Albany	October 16th thru 20th 8am - 5pm	OFPC	All registrations are done through our learning management system which can be found at: https://lmsportal-dhSES.ny.gov/ New York's Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend \$500
Fire Officer II (NFPA 1021- 2020 Ed)	Harriman Campus - 1220 Washington Ave, Albany	October 19th thru 23rd 8am - 5pm	OFPC	Officer I Nat Cert: FFII Nat Cert and Inst I Nat Cert and FOI course completion OR; FFI course completion and FFII course completion and Inst I course completion All registrations are done through our learning management system which can be found at: https://lmsportal-dhSES.ny.gov/ New York's Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend \$500 Available for completion of all Fire Officer II modules
Principals of Instruction	Shaker Road	October 22, 29, November 5, 12, 18 1830-2130	Clawson	None
Fire Officer 1 Module Series: Fireground Strategies and Tactics for First Arriving Companies	Slingerlands Location Change	October 27, 29, November 5 1830-2130 November 7: 0800-1400	S. DeGroff	BEFO or Equivalent New York's Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend \$1000 Available for completion of all Fire Office I modules
Water Supply Operations	North Bethlehem	November 2, 9, 12, 14, 16, 19, 21 Weeknights 1830-2130 Saturdays 0800-1400	S. DeGroff	Scene Support Operations/Basic Exterior Firefighter Operations or Equivalent

**Unless changed by instructor or noted above:
All evening classes will be held from 19:00-22:00 hours.**

**All Saturday and Sunday classes will be held from 09:00-12:00
hours and 13:00-16:00 hours**



Fire Coordinator Gerald Paris

