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BY: AB

Atkins City Council Meeting
May 21, 2024

I would like to share some recent information from the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC).

On February 5, 2024, the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) published the proposed new “Emergency Response Standard” which includes extensive new safety and health standards to replace the existing “Fire Brigades Standard.”

If adopted as is this proposed standard would bring immense challenges to volunteer departments, and some may even be forced to shut down.

The proposed standard is 608 pages. It includes fire and EMS services. A recent 90 day extension was granted until the first week of August for additional public comments.

I would seriously consider this matter **BEFORE** any funds are spent. The proposal **WILL** have an impact on the volunteer and paid fire services.

Additional Resources:

HERE IS THE OSHA/USFA VIDEO:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDcRd4_EODw

Here Are Some Thoughts From Fire Chief/Attorney Curt Varone:

<https://www.firelawblog.com/2024/02/15/osha-unveils-major-changes-it-proposes-for-the-fire-service/>

OSHA's Proposed Emergency Response Standard Presents Challenges to Fire Departments

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is proposing an extensive new safety and health standard, titled "Emergency Response," to replace the existing "Fire Brigades Standard." The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for the "Emergency Response Standard" was published in the Federal Register on Feb. 5, with the public comment period open until May 6.

This proposed updated standard would issue hundreds of new requirements that may be very burdensome, and in many cases impossible, for volunteer fire departments to comply with. The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) encourages volunteer departments and associations to submit comments on this proposed rule and request a public hearing so OSHA can have the best possible understanding

of how this proposed rule would impact volunteer departments. We also encourage you to send a letter to OSHA requesting a 90-day extension to the public comment period on this proposed rule.

Additionally, please fill out a survey to assist the NVFC in collecting department data as we formulate our own comments on the proposed rule.

To assist you in developing your comments and public comment period extension letters, the NVFC has put together this comment guide. This guide provides guidance on:

- Where to find the text of the proposed standard
- Where and how to submit your comments on the proposed standard
- How to evaluate if your department is covered by the proposed standard

- How to develop your comments

- What part of the proposed standard will impact volunteer departments the most

The NVFC's comment guide also links you to a map of states with OSHA plans, a template for your comment extension letter, and webinars to further assist you in understanding whether or how the proposed rule would impact your department.

The NVFC recently hosted a Roundtable Talk on this issue, which you can watch here. View some of the questions and answers resulting from the live discussion here.

The NVFC has also put together this outline of the proposed standard to further highlight important language and provide additional context to the comment guide.