

# HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICE UPDATE

## Uniformed Firefighters Association



The purpose of this newsletter is to provide UFA members with up-to-date information on the activities in the Health & Safety Office.

We will do our best to keep you up-to-date on current issues and provide answers to frequently asked questions. Please remember that by documenting your problems and complaints, we stand a much better chance of changing things for the future. Common firehouse issues will be addressed in this issue.

Another focus will be heat stress. This time of year prevention of heat stress on your body remains crucial. We urge you to follow the steps on page 4 & 5 to pre-hydrate, rehab and return home healthy.

July, 2017

### Have Questions? Contact us!

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**Not sure who to contact?**  
Just call 212-683-4832, 212-545-6965 or email [healthand-safety@ufanyc.org](mailto:healthand-safety@ufanyc.org)

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## **MESSAGES FROM SERGEANT-AT-ARMS/ HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICER, MICHAEL SCHREIBER :**

### **GRANT AWARD UPDATE**

Health and Safety Officer / Sergeant-At-Arms, Michael Schreiber is pleased to announce that the Health and Safety Office received a grant for **\$115,739** from the New York State Department of Labor. The grant period runs from August 1, 2017 to July 31, 2018. The money will be used for a variety of expenses. It is used to offset the salaries for the Grant Director and Field Safety Representative. Additionally, it covers training at the firehouses for the firefighters in a variety of topics including risk assessment, stress/PTSD, strains/sprains, burns, heat/cold stress, noise/vibration, back injuries, smoke inhalation, and wound/cut prevention. Health and Safety Field Representative Tony Caracciolo (*Ret Lad8*) brings this training to the firehouses. In addition, Lt. Rob Brown, a Physician Assistant offers training in cardiovascular issues related to firefighting. Kristen O'Hagan, a nurse practitioner, trains firefighters in cancer prevention, a significant concern for the firefighting community. And newly added this year is FF Francisco Cabrera (*Lad8*), a registered nurse, who will provide health information for issues such as COPD, and other lung related issues that are found prevalent in firefighters.

### **EAR PROTECTION**

Firefighters are exposed to many hazards as part of our job, including noise. Exposure to high noise levels among fire fighters is well documented and increases the risk for noise-induced hearing loss. Noise is unavoidable in this career. It is in just about every mechanical device that the fire service uses. Noise from chain saws, extrication equipment, sirens, air horns, and fire apparatus engines are all potential noise exposures for firefighters.

Hearing protection is a topic that is often not discussed. While we can't always avoid the high levels of noise our ears are exposed to there are some things we can do to protect ourselves when possible.

**Remember to wear your ear protection when checking the rig.**

There is no reason NOT to.

# FACTS ABOUT LEGIONNAIRES'

Man-made water sources become a health problem when small droplets of water that contain the bacteria *Legionella*, get into the air and people breathe them in. Sometimes the bacteria cause a serious type of pneumonia called Legionnaires' disease. You **can't** catch Legionnaires' disease from someone else, it is not contagious.

Most healthy people exposed to *Legionella* **do not get sick**. People at an increased risk of getting sick are:

- People 50 years or older
- Current or former smokers
- People with a chronic lung disease (like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or emphysema)
- People with weak immune systems or who take drugs that weaken the immune system (like after a transplant operation or chemotherapy)
- People with cancer
- People with underlying illnesses such as diabetes, kidney failure, or liver failure

Legionnaires' disease symptoms are similar to other types of pneumonia.

## Symptoms include:

Cough

Shortness of breath

Fever

Muscle aches

Headaches

Legionnaires' disease can also be associated with other symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, and confusion. Symptoms usually begin 2 to 10 days after being exposed to the bacteria, but it can take longer so people should watch for symptoms for about 2 weeks after exposure.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/legionella/index.html>

## BODY SCANS

Health & Safety Officer, Michael Schreiber wishes to remind members that the UFA has an agreement with Inner Imaging to provide a discounted rate to active and retired NYC Firefighters and their families for a body scan. The agreement provides a confidential screening which consists of comprehensive evaluation on the condition of your heart and lungs as well as other vital internal organs of the abdomen and pelvis. The scan is normally \$750 but is being offered to UFA members at a greatly reduced rate of \$375.

To make an appointment, or for further information, you can reach Inner Imaging at 212-777-8900 or check out their website <http://www.innerimagingnyc.com>.

## SUMMER HEAT STRESS

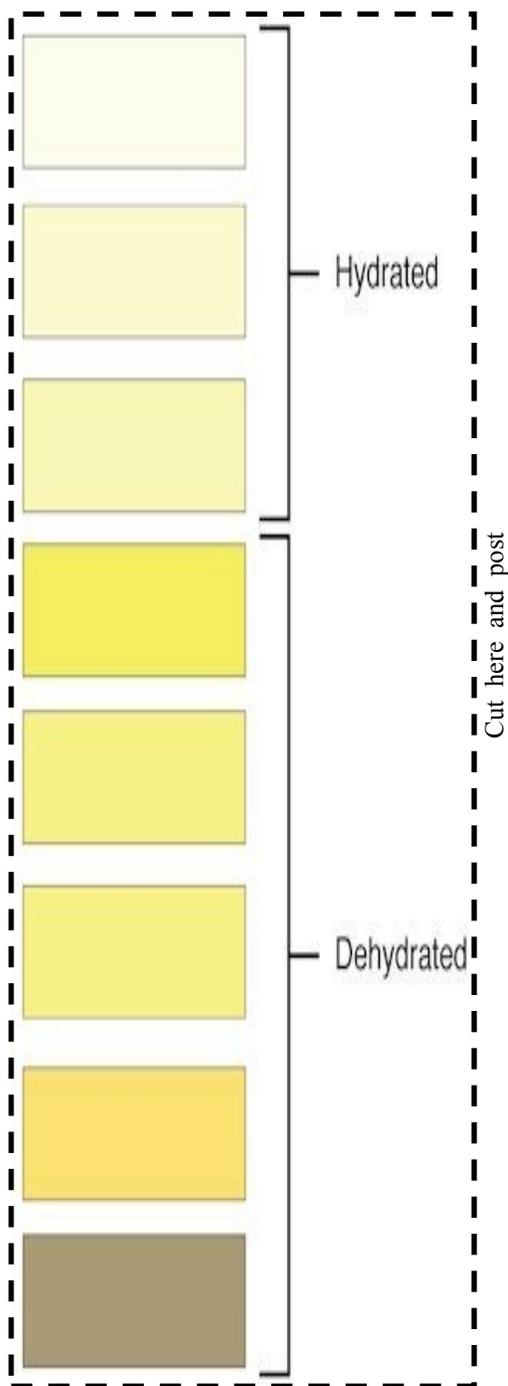
This time of year the summer heat adds more stress on your heart. Follow these steps to reduce your risk of **heat stress**.

- Members should remove their helmets, hoods and coats, and open up the front flap of their pants as soon as operations safely permit to remove pent up heat and humidity within Bunker Gear.
- Members should drink cold water or diluted “replacement” beverages (20 oz. initially and 6 – 8 oz. every 15 minutes thereafter). Avoid concentrated “sports” drinks and hot drinks.
- Members should seek cool, shady areas. Casually moving about will enhance rehydration due to increased blood circulation. Make use of the RAC unit’s equipment and supplies (ice, water, drinks, cold towels and misting fans).
- No member should be alone during any phase of the recuperation process; maintain the “buddy system” for the duration of R&R. Take time as needed at the firehouse to shower, hydrate and decon to allow your body temperature to normalize.
- Any member exhibiting any signs or symptoms of heat stress related illness should seek medical attention.

# SUMMER HEAT STRESS

When the body is unable to cool itself by sweating, several heat-induced illnesses such as heat stress or heat exhaustion and the more severe heat stroke can occur, and can result in death.

Dehydration Urine Color Chart:



Prevention of heat stress remains crucial. Proper hydration prior to any emergency responses is required to ensure that the body has enough fluids. All members should be drinking ample amounts of water. Caffeinated beverages dehydrate the body and should be avoided. Do not wait until you are thirsty! By the time you are thirsty, you are already dehydrated.

**One of the best indicators of your hydration status is your urine color;** it should be pale yellow to clear. During emergency responses and training, ensure that you replace as much fluid as you are losing. On average, firefighters can lose 1½ to 2 quarts of fluid in 45 minutes. Dehydration impairs the body’s ability to fight heat stress, decreases strength and increases stress on the cardiovascular system.

Heat stress can occur quickly and may result in a severe and even fatal reaction. It is important for all members to recognize the signs and symptoms of heat stress. These include dizziness and confusion, muscle cramps, nausea and vomiting, fatigue and extreme weakness, and fast and shallow breathing. Altered mental status, the inability to sweat and hot, dry skin should be considered life-threatening emergencies.

## FIREHOUSE REPAIR ISSUES

Anytime there is an issue related to the firehouse you must first inform the Officer on duty. The Officer will then call the Resource Center (Phone 917-722-3251, Monday to Friday 8 AM - 4 PM, after hours for emergency only) where the Officer will be given a work order number. After allowing a reasonable amount of time to address the situation, your Officer can then call up to see when the situation will be addressed or what more has to be done.

Should you feel the situation is of immediate concern, please make sure the above procedures have been followed, obtain the work order number and date it was called in, and then notify the Sergeant-At-Arms / Health and Safety Officer, Michael Schreiber. (212 683-4832)

If your firehouse needs a new appliance, you should follow the directions above, and have your Officer contact Joe Yung in Buildings (718-389-1968 or email [yungj@fdny.nyc.gov](mailto:yungj@fdny.nyc.gov)).

## LINE OF DUTY INJURY MEDICAL BILLING

When a Line of Duty Injury occurs and the firefighter is taken to an emergency room, please provide the medical provider or hospital the following information:

Headquarters address as a main address:

9 Metro Tech Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Brooklyn, NY 11201

FDNY workers compensation contact phone number 718-999-1838/1839

If you received a bill from the hospital, please follow these instructions:

Fax bill to 718-999-1392

Address fax to Tanisha Griffith

Faxed bill should have all pages included (front and back)

Call 718-999-1839 to confirm fax was received

If you have any problems contact the H&S Office. 212-545-6965

\* Once a claim is received from the hospital a copy of the Explanation of Benefits (EOB) will be mailed to you as proof of payment.

\* Do **NOT** discard bills from a LODI incident. Please forward as per the procedures given above.

July, 2017

PLEASE POST

## UFA CENTENNIAL GALA

The UFA Centennial Gala is September 5th at Chelsea Piers, New York City from 6:30 PM-11:30 PM. If members wish to attend, the discounted member rate is \$150 per ticket / \$1500 for a table of 10. Civilian ticket rate is \$250. We would also like to offer each firehouse the opportunity to take a page in our Journal:

### All ads are full page Color:

Full Page: \$300

Copper Ad: \$500, center of book

Silver Ad: \$1000, comes with 2 additional tickets

Gold Ad: \$5,000, comes with table for 10

Front/Back inside cover: \$10,000, comes with table for 10

All proceeds go to the UFA Scholarship fund.  
Please make checks payable to the UFA Scholarship Fund:

ATTN: Sheila Pettit  
204 East 23<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10010

Ads and RSVP can be emailed to [UFACentennial@gmail.com](mailto:UFACentennial@gmail.com) by no later than August 10.  
Contact Kathleen Ryan at (646)839-6541 or [UFACentennial@gmail.com](mailto:UFACentennial@gmail.com) with any questions.

Pier 60 at Chelsea Piers located at  
23rd Street and West Side Highway  
New York, NY 10011

Class A's or Business Attire is required  
We would be honored if you could attend.



Gerard Fitzgerald  
President

## Decon Support Unit (DSU)

Members are reminded to utilize the “SOC laundry” as needed. The service is not only for emergency decon cleaning but can be utilized by members as needed. HazMat Operations runs a laundry facility in Corona Queens. If you need them to clean your gear for any reason, have the officer fill out and fax an EDR-1. The gear will be picked and usually returned in 48 hrs. Include your hood and gloves. Any questions give them a call (718) 478-3150.

### **You Do Not Need To Wait For Your Scheduled Cleaning**

Summer months brings the heat and humidity. If you find that your gear is beginning to smell like a dirty diaper it’s time to do something about it. Gear cleaning is not only for carcinogen removal but is useful after a heatwave, train operations, or the suspected presence of mold. Clean gear while being less offensive is safer, it allows the gear to function as it was designed to do.

## Stay Well and Stay Safe!

### Uniformed Firefighters Association

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