

Press Release: February 6, 2006

## **Mountain View Fire Helps Establish National Firefighter Near-Miss Reporting System**

News 4 Video Link: <http://cbs4denver.com/video/?id=16390@kcnc.dayport.com>

As Firefighter deaths occurs almost daily across the U.S. and injuries occur at a rate of over 100,000 per year. Armed with that knowledge, firefighters are determined to do something about it themselves. Now a national on-line pilot program called, The National Firefighter Near-Miss Reporting System, will help them do just that.

This program was initiated in August of last year and was created as a way for firefighters, in a voluntary, confidential, and non-punitive way, to describe an incident that would be defined as an unintentional, unsafe occurrence that could have resulted in an injury, fatality, or property damage. Only a fortunate break in the chain of events prevented a serious result.

The system is secure; meaning that the department's name and the reporter, is kept guarded. The goal is to improve firefighter safety by collecting and analyzing information on near-miss events. With this knowledge, it is anticipated that improvements can be made in areas such as command, operations, education and training. Monitored by the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the analyzed data is currently used to identify trends when formulating strategies to reduce firefighter injuries and death.

The system is funded by a grant from the U.S. Fire Administration and is endorsed by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), The International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) and the Volunteer and Combination Officers Section of the IAFC.

"Training and awareness is extremely important. We've been coming up with ways to be safer for years; all we needed was some way to share the same information to departments across the country and this system does just that," said Jesse Hodgson, spokesman for the Mountain View Fire Protection District. "Now we can stop re-inventing the wheel in the way of information sharing," Hodgson continued.

In August, Mountain View Fire joined thirty-two departments across the nation to report incidents involving near-miss occurrences either on the road with apparatus, on an emergency call, or in the firehouse.

But, Mountain View didn't just join the program. Fire Chief John Devlin and Deputy Chief Steve Pischke were instrumental in designing and bringing the program to local departments. Both spent many hours last year sharing the purpose and details of the program to help make it as successful as anticipated. They've not been disappointed and hope its success continues.

Chief Devlin's hope is that by listening to each other, departments can prevent repeating mistakes by putting preventive measures in place. "Severe consequences can be avoided and someone's life saved," Devlin said.

The fire service is responsible for the lives of millions across the country, as well as taking care of their own. Until now, there had not been any system in place to show trends that would help prevent serious injury or loss of life to firefighters, and to the public as well.

The questions asked on the report include information about the reporter such as their title, years of service and asks them to describe the incident in detail.

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