TAKE 5 FOR SAFETY

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTES

5-MINUTE SAFETY DRILL

Risk Management:Near Misses Can Save Lives!

FOCUS: Despite the increased focus on safety, there are still too many firefighters that are injured or die each year! We must continue to make firefighter safety a major departmental emphasis!

Date:_____

Shift:_____

Dept:_____

Station:_____

Training Code:_____

NOTES:

CHALLENGE

Throughout the history of the fire service, many have accepted that injuries to firefighters are an expected outcome of their dangerous jobs. In recent years, this acceptance of the eventuality of injuries has been challenged. The "culture" of the fire service is changing to create an environment where safer operations are now expected.

These changes are driven by the directions of regulatory agencies as well as the fire service itself. Increased training and better equipment also play a role to ensure the firefighters do not sustain needless injuries in the performance of duties. The firefighter Near Miss Program was instituted to address needed changes in the "culture" of the fire service. It is based on the concept that a near miss experienced by one firefighter shared with all firefighters can improve the knowledge, skill and abilities of everyone who utilizes the reports. The firefighter near miss program has been highly effective since inception and participation grows daily.

As with any accident analysis program, the key to success involves accurate, timely reporting; thorough analysis; trend identification and effective communication of issues that can improve the department's overall safety program. The larger question is why the program isn't used by a greater number of firefighters and departments. With the huge number of firefighters and the number of injuries that occur each year, the number of near miss reports should be greater. Every firefighter should utilize the system and each department should have a means of communicating "key' issues that affect its safety culture. Communication and personnel involvement are the key elements for success of this excellent program!!

DISCUSSION

- Have you had or witnessed a "Near Miss?"
- Did you report it internally or use the website, if not why not?
- How was the information used?
- Does the safety committee get involved in analysis of incidents and accidents?
- How does our department use the Near Miss data from the website?
- Has the department used near misses as a learning tool or a punishment device?
- How can near misses and accident reporting be improved?
- Have you seen an improvement in the safety culture of the department?

The greatest asset of the fire service is our people; protect them!

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