



THE SECOND ALARM

A Department Without Limits

NOVEMBER 2019
THE SECOND ALARM

CHIEF'S TOPIC OF THE MONTH



Mental Health

Physical health has been accepted as a priority in the fire service. We see departments joining the masses by implementing annual physicals and physical fitness programs. It only makes sense when almost every department requires a physical agility test as part of their hiring process and as an annual evaluation. The need for physical wellness has been accepted in the fire service for many years; however, mental health has not been identified as a major concern in the fire service until recently.

The effects of answering calls day after day and experiencing tragic events have been proven to cause cumulative stress among fire service members. The *Ruderman White Paper on Mental Health and Suicide of First Responders* reported 103 firefighters took their own lives in 2017 and estimated that only 40% of the incidents were actually reported. We lost two fire service members in Georgia over the last two weeks. What can we do to fix the problem?

It is imperative that fire service members are informed about the signs of cumulative stress and educated on ways to manage their stress. The most impactful message to everyone is "it is ok to feel different after experiencing tragic events." We must learn to identify signs of cumulative stress and seek assistance. This is a concern that we all own and nobody should have to deal with it alone.

People deal with their stress in different ways. Some feel better talking with family members after returning to their stations, while others will seek solitude to process the event and how it has affected them. I encourage everyone to have a trusted friend that understands and has a willingness to listen.

Collectively, we have to get past the barriers of stigma that surround mental health. We do a good job checking on our members after they have experienced a tragic event and we must reassure them that it is normal to experience disrupted sleep patterns, mood changes, and sadness. It becomes a problem when this abnormal behavior does not subside within a couple of weeks. Resources that we have available to us are: the Employee Assistance Program, the Critical Incident Stress Management Team, and Chaplains.



Brian Boutwell

"It's up to you today to start making healthy choices. Not choices that are just healthy for your body, but healthy for your mind." - Steve Maraboli





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Open Letters to the Fire Dept.

During the shift of 10/11, EMS handled two code blues back to back with engine 6. Lt. Mercer was acting as battalion chief and responded with us when he could.

I've come to expect a great deal from all the Valdosta City Firefighters, I have always been able to call upon them for help and they answer ready to help and often with a smile. Engine 6 is especially true; LT Mercer, Gillard, Wright, and Cummings were a huge asset on both of these codes. The second code, we did get a pulse back in the field and a large part of that is from the help we received from the fire crew. Wright and Gillard had the chance to go above in both of these codes. EMS needed assistance with airway complications and they both stepped in to assist. Usually the crew ends up doing compressions, but neither hesitated at the opportunity to help, or to learn. They learned and asked questions. All of the crew were ready and prepared to do anything they could to help; from CPR to being the extra hands we needed.

EMS relies a great deal on VFD and while it's not always expressed, We truly appreciate it. I wanted to take the time to express our gratitude and appreciation for engine six on these calls (and every call). While I tried to make sure I told the crew thank you for all their help, I wanted to make sure I informed you as well.

Thank you.

Paramedic Martina Van Berkom

Martina Van Berkom
Paramedic
EMS



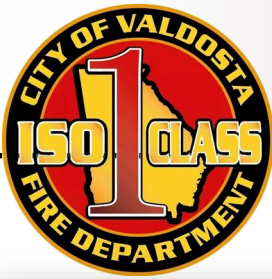
South Georgia Medical Center



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Valdosta Fire Department members visited the Humane Society again in October continuing our partnership to help pets find their forever homes.





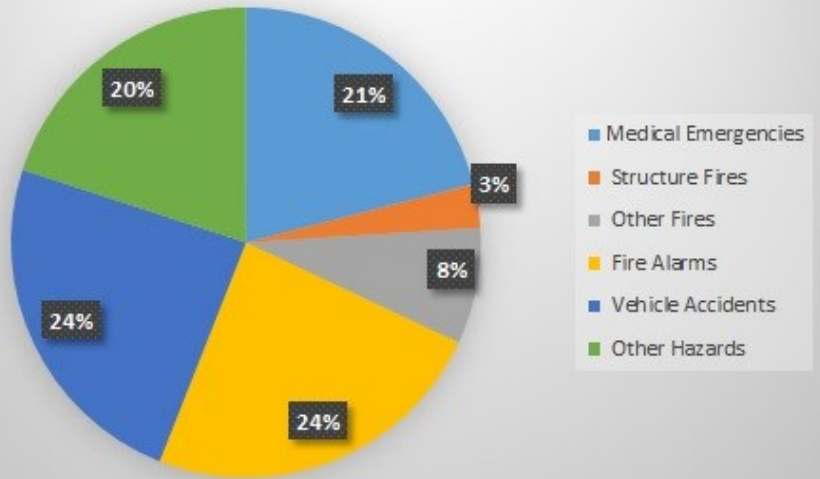
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Valdosta Fire Department conducted aerial training focused on rescues from a telescoping boom lift.



317 Incidents in October



Birthday Bulletin

John Herpin	11/10	Trey Cothron	11/22
Jimmie Bacon	11/11	Jeff Kraushaar	11/23
Chris Scott	11/13	Michael Penland	11/23
Seabron Williams	11/15	Michael Crump	11/28

Happy Birthday !

POINTS OF INTEREST

- Submission to the newsletter should occur before the 20th of each month
- Feel Free to submit photos with your submissions
- Have a strong opinion about a topic of concern to our fire department? Feel free to submit a piece for review and possible publication in the newsletter.



CFAA MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 1, Issue 11 November 2019

CFAA Reminders / Upcoming Events:

- ♦ CFAA General Meeting
Tuesday, November 19 @ Fire Station 1
(6:00 p.m.)

CFAA / Looking Ahead:

- ♦ Mayors Motorcade
December 4
- ♦ Christmas Parade theme:
"Christmas on Main Street"
December 7
- ♦ Shop with a Fire Fighter
December 10th

Events must be presented at general meetings and approved to be added to the calendar or by special request through the Chief and the VFD.

Our Mission

"Our mission is to contribute to the functions of the Valdosta Fire Department while supporting service projects and fostering positive relationships among the community."

Need the 411?

If you are not receiving updates and emails or if your contact information has change, make sure to send an email to: cfaavaldosta@gmail.com

Include your name, your contact information and CFA Class #.

You can also sign up for Remind 101 and receive text reminders by:

Texting this message

@vfdc

To this number:

81010

Also, if you have not connected on Facebook, visit here: <https://www.facebook.com/VFDCFA/>



If you missed the last CFAA newsletter, check the Group Facebook Page or send an email to: cfaavaldosta@gmail.com



The Citizens Fire Academy Alumni (CFAA) are citizens whom have completed the Citizens Fire Academy (CFA) through the Valdosta Fire Department. If you are interested in signing up for the next CFA course, please email Tangela Rowe with the Valdosta Fire Department at: TROWE@VALDOSTACITY.COM

If you have completed a CFA course and would like to receive more information on the alumni, email: CFAAVALDOSTA@GMAIL.COM

CFAA MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

**Congratulations to our newest CFA Graduates &
Welcome to the Citizens Fire Academy Alumni!**

