

**QUALIFICATIONS TO RIDE THE RIGHT SEAT WITHIN
THE CARDINAL JOINT FIRE DISTRICT**

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A research project submitted to the Ohio Fire Executive Program

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that the following statements are true:

1. This paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

2. I have affirmed the use of proper spelling and grammar in this document by using the spell and grammar check functions of a word processing software program and correcting the errors as suggested by the program.

Signed: Don Hutchison

Printed Name: Don Hutchison

ABSTRACT

The Cardinal Joint Fire District (CJFD) has no line officers staffed across the three 24-hour platoon shifts, and the problem is CJFD is forced to assign an untrained fulltime or part-time firefighter to sit in the right seat. It is not advisable to place this responsibility upon staff without the proper training to prepare them to be successful in the role. The purpose of this project is to determine the appropriate training and educational requirements for firefighters to ride the right seat at CJFD. The following Research questions were considered: identification of appropriate control standards, proper officer training standards, suitable full time and part-time firefighter training standards, and available training methods. The procedures used in this project were published literature from research papers, fire training magazine, state fire department surveys, and interviews. The results identify the latest requirements both nationally and within the state of Ohio as well as examining practices in place at other combination departments of similar size. Both short-term and long-term recommendations will allow CJFD to achieve greater success in training and preparing firefighters to sit in the right seat located under recommendation within.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The Cardinal Joint Fire District (CJFD) has no line officers currently staffed across the three 24-hour platoon shifts, therefore making it extremely difficult to adequately staff to meet the supervisory and performance expectations imposed upon the person riding in the right seat during a twenty-four hour shift. Some shifts causes part-time firefighters ride the right seat thus as the Fire Chief I ask myself are these firefighters riding the right seat qualified .

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to provide research information to aid in determining the appropriate training and educational requirements for firefighters to ride the right seat at CJFD. To gain information that can be utilized to adequately train the staff members so they are able to perform their job proficiently.

Research Questions

This study will use the descriptive research method to answer the following research questions.

1. What is an appropriate standard to use for the ratio of supervisors to firefighters in the fire service community?
2. How do other Ohio departments train and prepare firefighters to ride in the right seat and become supervisors or officers?
3. What level of training is appropriate for fulltime and part-time firefighters to ride in the right seat?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Cardinal Joint Fire District (CJFD) is an amalgamated department located in northeast Ohio in the center of Mahoning County consisting of two stations staffed with fulltime and part-time employees. Shifts for full time members consist of 24 hours on duty and 48 hours off duty with no assigned line officers for the three 24-hour platoon shifts which results in lack of supervisory leadership to maintain discipline, training, and crew efficiency and safety.

The Fire Board of Trustees are a five member governing body for the fire district, the City Council of Canfield appoints a council representative, and a city citizen representative. Canfield Township Trustees appoints a Trustee representative and a township citizen representative. These four trustees appoint an at large member which completes the fire board members.

The Cardinal Joint Fire District (CJFD) was formed on January 1, 1990 by two area governmental entities the City of Canfield, a small suburban community, and Canfield Township, a rural area, of Mahoning County with a joint population of 16,100 according to the 2010 U.S. Census. Prior to the formation of the fire district, the City of Canfield had an all paid-on-call fire department that was under contract to Canfield Township to provide fire protection and rescue services. Upon the formation of the fire district a second station was built by Canfield Township.

Currently CJFD provides fire, rescue and first responder paramedics for more than 25 square miles with minimum staffing levels of five firefighters on duty manning two engines for the two stations. The entire fleet is comprised of the following: three engines, two truck

companies, a tanker, a brush unit, and one special operations unit with mass casualty capabilities which has an air rehab and decontamination component.

The current employee structure for the Cardinal Joint Fire District totals forty-five (45) active members including a fire chief, deputy chief, six fulltime firefighters / paramedics, and 23 part-time firefighter/paramedics, and 14 part-time firefighter/EMT's.

Initially, the fire chief position was the only fulltime position; all other firefighters and officers were paid-on-call positions. At the initial formation of the fire district there were five paid-on-call officers, one deputy chief, two assistant chief, two captains responding from one station. The number of officers has since been reduced to two: the chief and deputy chief. These positions are both forty-hour employees with on-call status. In 2008, the decision was made by the previous fire chief to delay the replacement of the three unfilled officer positions in order to evaluate and redesign the command structure of the CJFD. Over the last year or so there has been much discussion regarding what type of officer's positions are needed, how many and whether or not they should be in a union and/or which union, as well what their job descriptions should entail.

The CJFD operates under a set of standard operating guidelines (SOG's) that are a set of common work rules. Nowhere in the SOG's or the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) is it stated that a fulltime firefighter has authority over a part-time firefighter. Essentially, the two are ranked and treated equally; thus daily supervision of one group over the other does not exist, since no one firefighter is assigned as the "responsible officer."

At present there are no officers working the daily 24 hour shift; therefore, individuals of the same rank often find themselves needing to make decisions and conduct day-to-day problem solving without officer involvement. Problems often arise if two or more opinions differ as to a prudent course of action on any given decision when the chief or deputy chief is not present. There is, at present, no simple way to resolve such conflict amongst firefighters.

The lack of mid-level management and leadership currently being experienced at CJFD has exacerbated numerous problems. One of these problems is that underqualified and underprepared right seat riders often neglect the duty to remind crew members to adhere to the standard operating procedures and policies. Knowledge of fire dynamics is of concerned.

Kerber (2010) research showed how the newer synthetic materials along with stronger windows in a home has created faster flashover times. Modern furnishings flash time is 4 minutes as compared to 29 minutes with legacy furnishings, with these results showing a substantial impact on occupant and firefighter safety (Underwriters Laboratory 2010 pp. 309). Keeping aware of these current dangers with modern construction and furniture is another of the responsibility of the firefighter riding the right seat. Under these conditions, the firefighter in the right seat who does not provide adequate supervision is in fact undermining the twin goals of training and safety. A recent example of this shortcoming occurred when a firefighter appointed to the right seat allowed the engineer to drive past the target address without mentioning it and afterwards the firefighter criticized the engineer for missing the address.

The existing CJFD work rules define the following positions: Company Officer: An individual who is in charge of the firefighters assigned to specific engine, ladder truck, or squad. Duty Crew: Those district members assigned to a specific shift and on duty at the time of reference. Officer's Seat: The seat or position located to the right or the passenger side or the

engineer's position (driver's seat) on any vehicle or apparatus. The individual occupying the officer's seat is generally in charge of the crew assigned to the specific apparatus.

Currently, the fulltime firefighters' CBA has a position called a Duty Crew Leader (DCL) and the firefighter assigned to this position must be a fulltime firefighter/paramedic. A DCL can be appointed by the fire chief for any 24 hour shift. The chief and deputy chief can make these appointments by selecting from any of the six fulltime members of the department. The responsibility of a DCL is to fill the shifts in the event of personnel call offs and to make sure that all personnel have reported for their assigned shifts. At current staffing levels, the daily shift has minimal staffing levels of five firefighters on duty at any time. The makeup of these duty crews are two fulltime firefighters / paramedics along with three part-time firefighters /EMT's or paramedics. There isn't any training or supervisory experience required for DCLs yet they are expected to do their best to make the fire district a safe place to work.

CJFD does promote continuing education, but there is currently no requirement for officer or supervisory training. The research of this paper will dictate which direction CJFD proposes to qualifying crew members riding the right seat.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review was undertaken to gather information from a variety of texts, magazine articles, and formal reports. Information was gathered via a series of internet searches of institutions that provide training needed for fire officers and their qualifications, articles in recent national publications along with an inter-departmental survey, a personal interview with a Chief of a local combination fire department, and an intra-departmental survey of CJFD staff members.

A search for “fire service officer requirements and riding the right seat” on the internet produced more than 770,000 unique results. This is a summarization of the literature review with regard to each of the four research questions previously enumerated in this paper.

1. What is an appropriate standard to use for the ratio of supervisors to firefighters in the fire service community?

By definition, from Wikipedia, “span of control” is the number of subordinates that a manager or supervisor can directly control. This number varies according to the type of work being contemplated and previously was 1 to 10. Complex or variable work (such as firefighting) reduces the maximum span of control allowance to 4. (2009)

Under the National Incident Management System (NIMS) the compliant courses are Incident Command System (ICS) 100-200-700-800 these command training units describe the ratio of individuals to the number of supervisors with regard to management span of control: an appropriate span of control ratio can only effectively lead or control three to seven personnel broken into divisions, groups, branches, or section at an emergency scene. (FEMA, ICS: A 2008; pp 2-27).

The International City Management Association conducted a study which found that at least four and often eight firefighters each under the supervision of an officer were the norm. The

study also concluded that at least one Chief Officer per twelve firefighters and officers on a small emergency scene was recommended (International City Management Association, 2012).

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1500 (2007) is the standard for minimum requirements for safety and health in the fire service. Emergency operations 8.1.8 (7) states that, “The incident commander shall develop effective incident organization by managing resources, maintaining an effective span of control, and maintaining direct supervision” (p. 22).

The Ohio doesn't have a required minimum number of fire officers per fire department, however it should be noted that Ohio does have regulations regarding the minimum number of EMT's and paramedics on medical emergencies. Ohio Department of Public Safety

Supervision as it relates to fire officers, they are to supervise other firefighters, maintain discipline, make schedules, and settle disputes. They are in charge of providing training for fires and emergency rescue operations, along with maintaining equipment on the fire apparatus in order to be in ready to respond mode. Fire officers are responsible to assure that the fire apparatus is in good working order ready for emergency runs.

2. How do other Ohio departments train and prepare firefighters to ride the right seat and become supervisors or officers?

Stratmoen (2010) wrote about how the limitations of leadership and officer classes did not address development of the officers for the specific day to day tasks. He reports of hearing from his own officers described their first assignments and the confusion that followed, with little idea of what to do next. Then came the criticism for the mistakes and analyses were made on how they were performing. Stratmoen goes on to suggest that there is a true “need” for in-house development training (Univ. Cin. pp. 12).

Currently the Ohio does not have a certification process or license for fire officers.

It does assign certifications for firefighters, fire safety inspectors, fire instructors, EMT's and paramedics and EMS instructors. (Ohio Department of Public Safety.)

NFPA 1021 (2008) established the accepted "Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications", delineating the four levels of fire officers and requirements for each to ensure fire officers are ready to take command. They are: Fire Officer I, Fire Officer II, Fire Officer III, and Fire Officer IV. Each successive officer position contains upgraded responsibilities and prerequisites of knowledge, and skill sets that must be met in order to qualify for each level. A supervising Fire Officer I would be a company officer with training as a Firefighter II, Fire Officer I, Incident Safety Officer and Hazardous Materials and Fire Instructor. There are four measured requirements included in each of the officer levels: training, education, experience, and self-development. Training in a broad range of subjects from engine company operations to human resources must be obtained to progress through the various fire officer qualification levels. Education, experience, self-development and higher formal education are the other components, which are measured and serve as considerations for advancement. The experience component focuses on opportunities to practice skills and gain experience in several areas. Self-development is accomplished through varied activities (NFPA, 2008 p. 15).

Several educational institutions within the State of Ohio provide classes to meet NFPA 1021. Upon completion of 80 hours of the required coursework, the firefighter receives a certificate for Fire Officer I. Upon the completion of an additional 40 hours of training a Fire Officer II certificate can be obtained with another 40 hours of training earning the individual a Fire Officer III certificate (NFPA 1021, 2008).

3. What level of training is appropriate for fulltime and part-time firefighters to ride the right seat?

Horist (2009) writes that the prerequisites for a line officer in the McHenry Twp. Fire Protection District included five years of combined service as a firefighter and Fire Officer I. He reports evaluating potential right seat candidates on eleven areas of responsibility, including: safety, incident command, training/instruction, tool and equipment maintenance, apparatus maintenance, station maintenance, discipline, projecting a positive image, attending officer meetings and training (NFA p. 22).

The Courage to be Safe Program is a program to train officers on the importance of keeping track of the firefighters in their charge. The program looks at four areas where firefighters generally must focus and improve themselves to become officers. These areas are: leadership, accountability, culture and knowledge. The course provides emphasis on the “16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives” for officers to follow while on the fire ground. The program calls out risk management as the priority for the officer to prevent injuries and deaths at the station and on the fire ground. It is a common theme in Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) investigative reports that one of the first requirements prior to initiating firefighting activities is to firmly establish the command structure and supervision of firefighters (NFFF, 2007).

Further reference to nationally accepted standards and training is found in the Officer Development Handbook put forth by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC, 2010). Its training program incorporates NFPA 1021, Fire Officer Professional Qualifications. The handbook outlines the training and developmental needs recommended for the four levels of Fire Officers mentioned above.

Turner (2014) wrote that Fire Department New York (FDNY) first line supervisor's preparation program includes a process to facilitate mentoring candidates AND they receive a book containing subjects which they are to become familiar with six months prior to their promotions. The book contains administrative duties and topics they will encounter as an officer on a daily basis as well as everything from fire, accident, and injury reports, timesheets, including a review of all assigned equipment and knowledge on how to use them to make critical decisions. Turner goes on to state that the mentoring of officers should not be left to chance; chiefs should encourage and support it (pp. 69-72).

Bosso (2007) writes that his department, which has both full time and part-time firefighters. Their training and educational requirements for acting officers is inconsistent and can lead to incompatible and unpredictable leadership practices. He goes on with the development of an of assessment center for candidates who have passed their written exams to work as acting officers (OFE pp. 33-35).

Certain states require certification for Fire Officers. California's 2013 standard sets strict requirements for state fire officer I, they are 10 total courses to be completed including three command classes, two fire instructor classes, one fire investigator class, two fire prevention class, one fire management training and preparation that is called the fire officer certification track (Cal Fire, 2013).

The State of Florida requires 328 hours of training prior to allowing a candidate to complete the Fire Officer I, certification test (Florida Division of State Fire Marshal Bureau of Fire Standards & Training, 2012) The State of Alaska sets additional Fire Officer I certification requirements, including all of the following to be completed within three years of initial

application date: Fire Instructor I course, Fire Officer I course, Fire Officer written examination, and Fire Officer practical skills course (Alaska Department of Public Safety, 2013).

The International City Management Association conducted a study which found that at least four and often eight firefighters each under the supervision of an officer were the norm. The study also concluded that at least one Chief Officer per twelve firefighters and officers on a small emergency scene was recommended (International City Management Association, 2012).

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1500 (2007) is the standard for minimum requirements for safety and health in the fire service. Emergency operations 8.1.8 (7) states that, “The incident commander shall develop effective incident organization by managing resources, maintaining an effective span of control, and maintaining direct supervision” (p. 22).

The Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) does not have a required minimum number of fire officers per fire department, however it should be noted that ODPS does have regulations regarding the minimum number of EMT’s and paramedics on medical emergencies.

The job of riding the right seat relates to the on duty fire officers, they are to supervise other firefighters, maintain discipline, make schedules, and settle disputes. They are in charge of providing training for fires and emergency rescue operations, along with maintaining equipment on the fire apparatus in order to be in ready to respond mode. Fire officers are responsible to assure that the fire apparatus is in good working order ready for emergency runs.

PROCEDURES

The audience selected for the survey population was comprised of three hundred of the four hundred members of the current Ohio Fire Chief’s Association course. These individuals represent a broad range of fire departments of various sizes across the state of Ohio. The

population was varied enough to represent a wide sub-set of levels of experience and opinions. The tool allows for anonymous delivery of the survey to the population, as well as anonymous response. It also allowed for monitoring of survey completion rates during the time that the survey remained active and open for participants. The first survey component undertaken as part of this study was a survey of seventy-two Fire Departments located in Ohio. Forty of those represented combination fire departments in northeast Ohio. The survey was designed primarily with two goals in mind. The first of these was to gather sufficient demographic data from each respondent to allow classification as to what type department he or she came from and what training level their officers currently have. The second goal was to provide insight on the three key research questions. This was a voluntary survey executed via email utilizing the web based survey tool, Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com.) The survey was distributed in June 2013 to 300 Fire Chiefs and contained a total of six questions.

The second survey component of the research consisted of a personal interviews with area fire Chief, The purpose in this interviews was to gather comparison data and feedback from department leadership. Austintown Fire Department is a combination with a similar staffing with multiple stations. Although his department is slightly larger than the CJFD, it is run similarly. The interview questions were based around the key research questions, with particular focus on areas concerning officer training for both fulltime and their part-time.

The third component of research was a voluntary anonymous intra-departmental survey of CJFD staff members for the purpose of gaining insider viewpoints. This survey was comprised of a total of 10 questions, and was focused on obtaining a viewpoint on the temperament of CJFD staff members, as well as the departments' collective input regarding the most productive methods for the training of their supervisors. This survey included every one of

the 45 active staff members of the CJFD. It was made clear that participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, that responses were 100% anonymous, and that the only purpose of the data collection was to gather opinions about the collective opinions of the best course of action for the department to pursue on this topic.

For the design of the questions of this survey, it was important that the questions would allow for objectivity and anonymity while remaining focused on the key research questions. Because of the close physical proximity of all survey respondents and due to potential technology limitations, the decision was made to execute this survey in an on-line and paper format. Protecting anonymity was especially important since this survey was executed in a paper-based format and since respondents were submitting feedback to their own supervisory chain. Twenty-nine completed surveys were received in response to this survey, and results were tabulated by hand for this survey effort.

Definition of Terms

<u>CBA:</u>	Collective Bargaining Agreement
<u>EFO:</u>	Executive Fire Officer class (National Fire Academy)
<u>IAFC:</u>	International Association of Fire Chiefs
<u>ICMA:</u>	International City Management Association
<u>ICS:</u>	Incident Command System Chapters 100-200-300-400-700-800
<u>NFFF:</u>	National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
<u>NFPA 1021:</u>	National Fire Protection Agency Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications
<u>NFPA 1500:</u>	National Fire Protection Agency Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Programs

<u>NFPA 1561:</u>	National Fire Protection Agency Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management Systems
<u>NIOSH:</u>	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (under Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
<u>OFCA:</u>	Ohio Fire Chiefs Association (a foundation which provides classes needed for all officer levels)
<u>Survey Monkey:</u>	an independent internet based web survey tool that was used to design and deliver surveys, obtain data anonymously and tabulate responses

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations to the research in support of this paper. Not all fire departments surveyed were combination fire departments; additionally some survey respondents were all-volunteer fire departments. The Ohio fire department survey was limited by the membership of the Ohio Fire Chiefs Association, as not all Chiefs in Ohio are members. Some responders chose to skip questions for unknown reasons. Any data that was submitted was counted, however, not every survey can be considered to have been 100% complete due to twenty-four percent response.

Total of four combination fire departments were interviewed on their training of officers and what training does their department provide for acting officers. The limiting factor in being only one other Fire Department is a combination department within our county and a total of 6 within the Tri-county area are combination Fire Departments to interview.

Another limitation to this study could be inherent in the CJFD internal survey forty-two requests for responses were placed with twenty-nine were received by the author, equaling sixty-nine percent responding.

RESULTS

A total of three hundred surveys were sent and a total of seventy-two, surveys were returned. Of those responding, forty represented combination-type departments. The survey results indicated that seventy-nine percent of firefighters at responding departments have achieved firefighter level II certification. As pertains to required Fire Officer training, the responses indicated the following: only twenty-two percent responding departments reported that no training is required for Fire Officers and seventeen percent with in-house only training required. Twenty-one percent reported that they require fire officers to have obtained a minimum of Fire Officer I certification, along with thirty-seven percent requiring Fire Officer II certification, and three percent requiring Fire Officer III level.

Ohio Fire Departments Survey

Survey question #1 Type of Fire Department Reporting?

	Type of FD	
	<i>N</i>	%
Fulltime Paid	32	44
Combination	40	55
Volunteer	1	1
TOTAL	72	100

Survey question #2 Training Level FD Required?

	Training Level Required	
	<i>N</i>	%
FF - 36 Hour	1	1
FF - level 1	11	16
FF - level II	56	79
Any level FF	3	4
TOTAL	72	100

Survey question #3 Training Required for Officers?

	Training for Officers	
	<i>N</i>	%
Fire Officer I	15	21
Fire Officer II	27	37
Fire Officer III	2	3
In House Officer Classes	12	17
None	16	22
TOTAL	72	100

Another question asked (investigated as part of the survey concerned) whether a difference existed in the level or types of training offered to full-time versus part-time officers. Of the survey respondents reporting, fifty-two percent stating no difference in the types of training offered to these two groups. Of the survey respondents who answered, seventeen percent did indicate a difference in the level of training they offered depending on the full-time or part-time classification of the staff member. The remaining thirty-one percent of responses reported that their situation fell into the category of "other." When looking closely at these "other" responses, it can be determined that some FDs have removed part-time officers from their staffing mix and some FDs simply have no part-time officers at all.

Ohio Fire Departments Survey - continued

Survey question #4

Does FD Have Different Training Requirements for Fulltime vs Part-time Officers?

	Training Requirements FT. vs PT.	
	<i>N</i>	%
No Difference in training	25	52
Yes Difference in training	8	17
Other	18	31
TOTAL	51	100

Another question asked on the survey was about providing training prior to taking promotional exams. Forty-eight percent of the survey respondents provided training to their future officer candidates prior to their promotional examinations while forty-two percent of

responding department provided no formal training prior to promotional testing. Lastly, ten percent of the survey respondents offered alternative training for officer candidates outside of the options specified in the survey

Ohio Fire Departments Survey – continued			
Survey question #5			
Does Your FD Provide Officer Training Prior to Promotional Exam?			
	FD. Provide Training		
	<i>N</i>	%	
Yes	34	48	
No	31	42	
Other	7	10	
TOTAL	72	100	

The Ohio F.D. survey question number six dealt with friction between groups of firefighters. The survey showed that more than thirty-five percent of departments acknowledged some type friction for both full-time and part-time supervisors and between part-time officers and full-time firefighters.

Ohio Fire Departments Survey – continued

Survey question #6

Having Fulltime and Part-time Officers Cause Friction between Groups?

		Friction between groups	
		<i>N</i>	%
Yes	12	35	
No		23	65
TOTAL		35	100

A personal in-depth interview with a colleagues from several nearby communities Fire Departments produced key findings from that interview include the following facts. The Austintown Township Fire Department, (Ohio) is a combination department that currently has four stations: two staffed daily with a combination of full-time and part-time firefighters along and the remaining two staffed with paid-on-call firefighters. This department maintains a ratio of 5:1 firefighter to supervising officers, according to the Chief. He further stated that their “System works well. When on shift, a full-time officer is in charge at the two manned stations one Captain and one Lieutenant. There are also two part-time officers in charge at each of the two non-manned stations. Training for fulltime officers is Fire Officer I and acting officers is a training program from within and only to senior firefighters.

Bazetta Fire Department is a combination Fire Department working from one station and has a Chief, a Deputy Chief and 3 Captains for officers, with the Captains and a fulltime firefighter/medic on duty for each shift. Each fulltime can act in the right seat in the absent of the

Captain. To ride the right seat they must be a senior firefighter and the training received from inter-department training.

Brookfield Fire Department is a similar combination department and also has 2 stations. Officer line up is Chief, and 3 shift Captains that run each shift. Main station is manned by the Captain and a fulltime firefighter /paramedics and a part-time firefighter. Second station has a total of 2 firefighters/ EMT's and Paramedics both being part-time. Training for the on duty Captain's required training is Fire Officer I & II and the part-time training is only on duty training within to ride the right seat.

Howland Fire Department is a combination with 3 stations; all are manned twenty-four hour with both full and part-time firefighters. Currently Howland has one Chief and three Captains who act as the officer on duty for each shift, if one the Captains reports off a replacement Captain must fill in for that Captain. To ride the right seat in Howland that person must be a senior firefighter and be trained by the departments own system of on time experience.

The final research component involved an anonymous intra-departmental survey of the CJFD staff members. The CJFD internal survey was distributed to 42 individuals and received 29 responses were received for a sixty-nine percent return. The questions in the survey focused on training for full-time and part-time firefighters that feel is appropriate training to ride the right seat. The survey asked if supervisory training should be required, and which staff members should be required to have such training. The respondents had an average of 9.4 years in the fire service; fifty-five percent of them having at one time in their careers been assigned to the right seat. Would CJFD benefit of a right seat supervisors training and position? Response was ninety percent for the benefits of training. Respondents to this survey made the following observations: sixty-nine percent of respondents felt that training should be mandatory for any

firefighter prior to assignment to sit in the right seat. When questioned on what training methods should be used, the method garnering the highest response was practical training such as ride-along, and shadowing. Online training was the second most popular choice as to training method for these right seat candidates, followed by attendance at Fire Officer I class, with mentoring being the least chosen training method selected. Questioned with regard to which topics should be included in the training curriculum, the respondents indicated that preferred topics would include incident command, leadership, communications and situational awareness. Responders were asked if they would be interested in participating in the training themselves and seventy-six percent responded in the affirmative. The crews were surveyed on what training schedule along with ride-a-long and shadowing would work best for their availability, and a forty percent responded that nights and weekends were the most preferred. Lastly, several respondents offered a comment stating their preference that an officer (either Captain or Lieutenant) consistently be assigned the position of riding of the right seat.

DISCUSSION

There are many documented fire services as well as literature sources that emphasizes the vital importance of the first-level supervisor. There are increasing levels of responsibility being placed upon the right-seat supervisors due to fewer fires providing firefighters with less experience and a change of fire behavior. Kerber's research for (UL_{TM}) found the involvement of highly combustible products used in modern building construction today decreases time to flashover to 3min.30sec.with modern products verses legacy products from forty years ago time to a flashover was 29min.30sec. These newer types of fire results in a different fire behavior and a higher risk of injuries on fire scenes (2014)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention NIOSH firefighter fatalities report in 2013 showed that there were 24 firefighter fatalities that occurred while firefighters were advancing a hose line. This equates to 22% of the years' total fatalities. Another six percent of the years' fatalities can be attributed to actions while providing support on a fire scene. These two areas combined tally to 28%. The line officer is a critical position and the individual performing the role must be aware of hidden dangers that pose threats to the firefighting crews on the scene of emergencies.

National span-of-control recommendations for firefighters are one officer per every 4-7 firefighters. This recommendation was further validated by an International City Managers Association study which recommended 4-8 firefighters for every supervisor (International City Management Association, 2012). FEMA recommends 1 officer to supervise or command at an emergency scene per 3-7 firefighters. They take the position that the span of control is out of balance anytime more than 7 firefighters are supervised by 1 officer (NIMS, 2007). NFPA mandates that the Command Structure system provide for a routine process of escalation as additional resources are utilized; thus allowing the span of control to be continuously maintained at no more than 3-7 firefighters per officer (NFPA 1561, 2001, p 8.)

The span of control ratio currently in place at CJFD is 24 firefighters supervised by 1 officer. There is no source in literature or analyses that supports this as a sustainable ratio. The obvious conclusion is that a change must be made to bring the span of control ratio at CJFD into better alignment with state and national norms.

The employment of part-time officers introduces the challenge of having to supervise crew that will potentially change with every alarm. Part-time officers need to be qualified to lead all manner of crews comprised of fulltime and part-time firefighters. In the intra-departmental

survey, the firefighters noted their desire that CJFD should allow training on specific topics offered during specific hours. To attend an approved Fire Officer I class, only online training programs would provide the flexibility required to allow part-time fire officer candidates to continue to work their normal job as well as their part-time job while attending classes in their spare time. To attend a two-week 80 hour program to complete Fire Officer I certification would obviously present challenges for many (if not most) individuals in pursuit of the goal. However, one viable option may be to hold weekend classes of Fire Officer I. It would take the majority of a month of weekends for the part-time firefighters to complete the requirements; however, this would allow them to continue attending to other employment as well as their home lives and time with family. Another option for some candidates would be to take time off from normal work schedules in order to focus to obtaining Fire Officer I certification. For part-time firefighters it will be more difficult in securing a seat in a weekday conduct of Fire Officer I and II classes. The final option is to enroll into an online class that may have a minimal number of days where one's physical presence is required in a classroom; but will have many hours of online and studying required.

The friction that often exists within fire departments comprised of both fulltime and part-time firefighters must not be allowed to affect the department's effectiveness and safety on the fire ground. The survey within Ohio FDs showed that more than thirty-three percent of departments acknowledged some type friction for both full-time and part-time supervisors and between part-time officers and full-time firefighters. Staffing part-time officers can prove to be time consuming due to repetitive training requirements, persistent breaks in continuity, and high turn-over that occurs when members of the group move on to full-time jobs or other careers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this applied research paper was to describe what level of training (if any) is needed for the supervisors riding the right seat on emergency calls. The research that has been completed shows that most fire departments contacted place staff officers in the right seat positions, some with a title of Lieutenant, or Captain, and some listed as company officer. However, a company officer without focused training cannot be successful at commanding, training, supervising, and correcting problems that occur at fire and emergencies and day to day within the firehouse. In order to make CJFD successful in its goal of staffing line officers into right seat positions consistently, it is necessary to act quickly on certain recommendations, while simultaneously take steps to instill certain longer-term solutions that may take years to come to fruition. When considering the best course of action for establishing the most effective officer core for CJFD, it is clear that the priority and weight should be given to the fulltime firefighters who already have Fire Officer I and II training and are qualified as supervisors to ride the right seat. Currently there are not enough firefighters trained to cover both stations during the normal the three 24-hour platoon shifts.

Fire Officer Level I & II should apply to the assignment of a supervisor for CJFD (NFPA 1021). This standard makes no differentiation between part-time and fulltime personnel. “ A fire department member can be a full-time or part-time employee or a paid or unpaid volunteer, can occupy any position or rank with the fire department and engage in emergency operation” (NFPA, 2009, p. 21). The model program detailed in IAFC Officer Development Handbook provides a translation of the NFPA standard into a program for company officer development. (*Appendix C*) Classes are taught in northeast Ohio institutions and programs to prepare individuals for Fire Officer I, II, and III positions. This training would require two to three

weeks of dedicated schooling for fulltime firefighters to complete, and several weekends for part-time firefighters to complete.

Short-term recommendations:

1. Develop a Acting Officer training program- write criteria for to be eligible for training program needed for the right front seat who will supervise and maintain control and safety of CJFD employees.
2. Develop Training Modules for an Acting Officer training program. (Appendix D)

Long-term recommendations:

1. Promote Captain positions for fulltime supervision on all three shifts.
2. Promote Lieutenant for positions for fulltime supervision on all three shifts
3. Partner with automatic mutual-aid departments to develop an area-wide officer training and developmental program with flexible course offerings to meet the needs of potential enrollees.

By listening to the recommendations and feedback of its internal resources and by following the NFPA 1021, the CJFD can evolve to meet the nationally recognized program and standard for fire officer training programs. Using the methods recommended both by other Ohio FDs as well as by following the International Fire Chief Handbook recommendations on fire officer training (Appendix 3) future CJFD fire officer candidates will be provided adequate guidance on professional development, enabling them to become the best officer they can become. All of this will serve to make the CJFD a more highly functioning, efficient, and safe public servant for its surrounding communities.

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APPENDIX A – FIRE DEPARTMENTS CONTRIBUTED

Departments contracted through E-mail, direct phone contact, and who provided information and related to qualifications riding the right seat.

74 surveyed Fire Departments through Ohio Fire Chiefs Asso.

Austintown Fire Department, Ohio

Bazetta Fire Department, Ohio

Brookfield Fire Department, Ohio

Howland Fire Department, Ohio

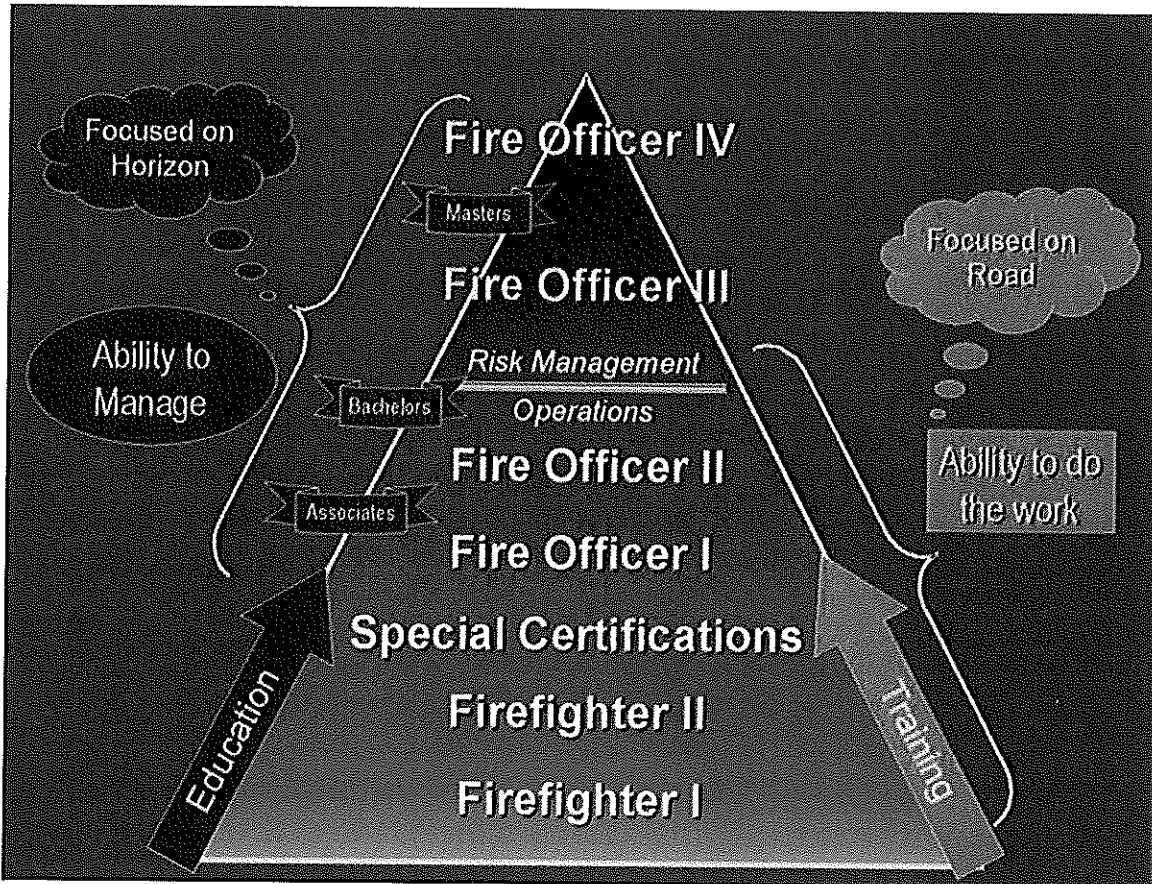
Cardinal Joint Fire District, Ohio

APPENDIX B – CJFD INTRA-DEPARTMENTAL SURVEY

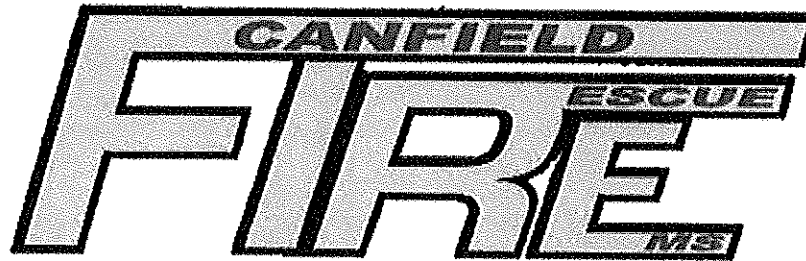
1. How many years in the fire service? Mean average - 9.4 yrs.
2. Have you ever been assigned the right seat? 1. Yes 55% 2. No 45%
3. In your opinion would CJFD benefit from a training program for right seat riders supervisors?
 1. Yes 92% 2. No 8%
4. If yes should the training be voluntary or mandatory?
 1. Yes 69% 2. No 31%
5. Which type of training methods should be used to training right seat supervisors?
 1. Practical training – 92%
Ride-a-long – 92%
On line training -92%
 2. Fire Officer I class - 80%
 3. Mentoring – 70%
6. What topics should be included in the training?
 1. Size up – 80%
Incident Command – 80%
 2. Leadership – 74%
 3. Communications – 60%
 4. Situational Awareness – 56%
7. How many hours should the right seat supervisors training class be?
 1. 40 hours - 62%
 2. 90 hours - 20%
 3. 20 hours - 13%
 4. Unlimited- 5%
8. If a training program developed would you be interested in participating?
 1. Yes 76% 2. No 24%
9. If yes what schedule would work the best for your schedule?
 1. Nights and weekends - 40%
 2. Anytime - 35%
 3. During on duty hours - 25%
10. Additional comments -
 1. Right hand seat should be a ranked position, Captain or Lieutenant.
 2. Tailored to CJFD – address the needs of the job.
 3. If no ranked firefighter available to fill, then a qualified person only to work the seat.

APPENDIX C – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR OFFICERS

IAFC Officer Development Handbook TM.



APPENDIX D – Proposed Acting Officer Training



Cardinal Joint Fire District

Acting Officer Training Program

<u>Modules</u>	<u>Hours</u>
1. Orientation / duties of a acting officer	3
2. Policy & Procedures, Reports	3
3. Developing Leadership & Crews	6
4. Incident Management / Size up	6
5. Building Construction / Fire Behavior	3
6. Fire Alarm & Sprinklers	3
7. Operations / Engine & Truck / EMS	9
8. Field Tactics and testing	<u>3</u>
Total Hours	<u>36</u>