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EMS INSIDER provides the most up-to-date and relevant information available for health-care professionals who administer, plan or deliver emergency medical services, but especially for EMS managers. We welcome comments and contributions.

EMS INSIDER (ISSN: 1081-4507) is published monthly by Elsevier Public Safety, 525 B Street, Ste. 1900, San Diego, CA 92101-4495. Annual subscription price: \$215 per year, \$295 for two years. Canada add \$24. Foreign addresses add \$40 for surface mail, \$50 for air mail.

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WHAT'S THE IAFC'S EMS SECTION UP TO?

The International Association of Fire Chiefs EMS Section boasts some 1,300 members, many of whom convene in Las Vegas each spring for the section's Fire-Rescue Med conference (May 4-6 this year). But what does the section do between conferences?

The EMS Section functions as a forum to address fire-service EMS issues, provides guidance and direction to the IAFC board and membership on fire-service EMS issues and represents fire-based EMS issues to the federal government and in work with other EMS organizations. Members work on nine section committees, review applications for federal FIRE and SAFER grants and serve as section liaisons to more than a dozen organizations.

EMS Section Chair Gary Ludwig, deputy fire chief, Memphis Fire Department, said the section's executive board holds monthly conference calls to discuss, decide on and respond to issues and proposals; report on projects and meetings; and plan for projects and events. The minutes from each board meeting are posted on the section's Web page.

In December, the board considered and rejected a request to endorse the National EMS Management Association's EMS management and leadership agenda. "One reason we won't support this is a major concern about the lack of recognition for the [Commission on Fire Accreditation International] chief medical officer credential and the creation of a new credential," Ludwig said, adding that the board also felt NEMSMA is "recreating the wheel that's already been created by the fire service" because the FESHE (for Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education) model curriculum, which is designed for both fire and EMS, has been out for several years.

According to Ludwig, the EMS section "prompted" the National Fire Protection Association to begin work on an ambulance design standard "because we were alarmed about the safety of our EMS people and didn't think enough attention was being paid to the safety of ambulances and how they're designed. Former Seattle Fire Chief Gary Morris, a board member of the IAFC Safety & Health Section, will represent IAFC on the NFPA ambulance-standard committee; that section's secre-

tary, David Fischler, former commissioner of the Suffolk County (N.Y.) Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services will chair that NFPA committee.

Ludwig said the EMS section worked extensively with U.S. Fire Administrator Greg Cade's office to rewrite a section of the U.S. Fire Administration reauthorization bill to ensure the USFA and National Fire Academy specifically include EMS. "The problem was that USFA didn't have EMS in its mission," Ludwig said.

The EMS Section also worked with the IAFC Volunteer & Combination Officers Section to create a new "Orange Ribbon Report" on "Leading and Managing EMS in Volunteer and Combination Fire Departments." EMS Section Treasurer J. Robert Brown, Jr., chief of Stafford County (Va.) Fire & Rescue Department, co-authored that report, which came out in December.

Brown also chairs the IAFC Economic Challenge Task Force, which just released a new 22-page document "Weathering the Economic Storm: Fiscal Challenges in Fire and Emergency Medical Services."

The EMS Section is now working with Masimo Corp. and EMS physician Bryan Bledsoe, DO, on an implementation guide for NFPA 1584 Standard for the Rehabilitation Process for Members During Emergency Operations and Training Exercises. "It's in the final draft, and Masimo is paying to distribute 13,000 hard copies to all IAFC members," Ludwig said.

The EMS Section will hold its annual membership meeting in Las Vegas on Sunday, May 3 from 4:45-6:30 p.m. The next evening, Fire-Rescue Med will feature a two-hour presentation on the response to the Sept. 12, 2008, train crash in Los Angeles that killed 25 people and injured 135 more. ■

For more information on the EMS Section or Fire-Rescue Med, visit www.iafc.org/emsSection. Download "Weathering the Economic Storm" at www.iafc.org. Download the "Orange Report" at www.vcos.org/online-resources.html.