



## Coffee Break Training - Training Programs and Tips

### Emergency Responder Training

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**Learning Objective:** The student shall be able to describe the importance of training, as well as the importance of training safely.

Each year, around 100 firefighters die, and tens of thousands are injured in the line of duty. Firefighters must receive training in order to learn how to do their jobs safely. Training should be considered a privilege, as it prepares firefighters to serve the public they protect and to protect each other from serious injury or death.

The most common areas of training for departments staffed with volunteers include new member orientation, basic firefighting training skills, and officer training. Firefighters may be required to obtain training in hazardous materials awareness and identification. Depending upon the services the fire department provides, recruits may be expected to complete some level of emergency medical training.

When new volunteers join a department, they should start with orientation and then participate in regular training to hone their skills. If they aspire to be leaders, they should complete officer training. It is imperative to keep your skills up to date — you can teach an old dog new tricks!

It is also important to make new members active as soon after joining as possible. While they await formal training opportunities to become available, they may lose interest and fade away from the organization. To ensure new members are not put in a dangerous situation, it is important to develop a training program that gives new members the information and skills they need to operate in a support role, safely allowing them to be on the fire ground early in their career so they can absorb the value and experience of the fire service.

Whatever training program you implement, make sure it meets the states' and localities' minimum standards before allowing new members to run their first call. Your state may require minimum performance standards in accordance with the National Fire Protection Association, the state fire service training organization, or the federal or state worker health and safety standards. Live fire training can be especially dangerous, so always follow recognized training and safety standards. Remember, Safety First and Everyone Goes Home!

For additional information, refer to the International Association of Fire Chiefs at [www.iafc.org](http://www.iafc.org) or the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation at [www.firehero.org](http://www.firehero.org).



Firefighters prepare for a live-burn training on fire behavior that stressed the importance of fire ground safety and accountability. *Photo courtesy of Tom Aurnhammer.*

**For archived downloads, go to:**

[www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/coffee-break/](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/coffee-break/)