

Leadership Skills for New Supervisors in the South Euclid Fire Department

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that the following statements are true:

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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.

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ABSTRACT

The South Euclid Fire Dept. faces a loss of most of its officers due to retirement in the near future. In addition there are no formal training requirements for newly appointed officers in the S. Euclid Fire Dept. other than to spend a brief amount of time in fire prevention and obtain certification as a Fire Inspector. The purpose of this research was to determine what skills would be needed to replace those that are leaving, what programs are available and to what extent the prospective new lieutenants are prepared.

The procedures used included a literature review, survey of similar departments and interviews of potential new officers in the S. Euclid Fire Dept. A survey was sent to one hundred similar departments in Ohio. This survey was intended to find out what the other departments were doing and what requirements they use for promotion both prior to and after. S. Euclid members were polled to determine who would most likely be seeking promotion. From this group, interviews were conducted to find out their level of education, certifications and what they may be seeking in the future.

The survey found that there is no true consensus on what training should be done prior to or after promotion. Very few departments require college and less than half have additional certification requirements. The interviews of prospective officers revealed a group that has a good amount of training and eager for more.

Primary recommendation includes setting new pre-promotion requirements, specifically training to the level of Fire Officer II. Additionally require Fire Inspector certification and some college. Additional recommendations include training after promotion, a mentoring program and a career development plan. Finally a series of seminars is recommended that could be tailored to meet the needs of the department.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The South Euclid Fire Dept. has no development program for newly appointed lieutenants. Currently firefighters take a written exam, assessment center and then an oral interview. Upon selection, the new officer is sworn in and assigned duties. Other than a brief period of assignment to the fire prevention bureau, there is no training program. A recently promoted lieutenant struggled with the new workload and how to manage his assigned projects. Another recently promoted officer struggled with personnel issues. These are just two recent examples of deficits may occur because there is no training program for new officers. Other clear cut examples have not been as obvious, but a training program would be in the best interest of the department and community.

The South Euclid Fire Dept. is facing a large turnover in officers over the next few years. Some of the newly appointed lieutenants will rapidly move up the chain of command. This includes most of the senior staff. The quality of the personnel is not a concern, but making sure they have the right tools to maintain these high standards is.

When noted fire service leader, Chase Sargent was first promoted, he described as having common sense and experience as his only tools (Sargent 2006). Unfortunately his experience is not unique. Fire service promotions are typically based on some type of promotional exam and perhaps an interview. Whether this is the best method for choosing fire service leaders is left to be debated by others. Perhaps more important is how can we prepare the new supervisor for the many challenges he or she faces?

Developing leaders is not an easy task, evidenced by the scores of books on leadership. The fire service is a people business. As such supervision is critical in the delivery of services.

The role of the new supervisor has many challenges the newly promoted officer might never have had to deal with when he or she was a firefighter. If the new supervisor is a company officer, most likely his or her easiest jobs may be commanding emergencies. The challenges occur when he or she must motivate employees, deal with supervisors, manage programs or new jobs and deal with any number of problems as they arise.

The research method for this study will be descriptive. This will be used to determine what skill sets will be lost and what skill sets need to be replaced. The descriptive method will also be used to determine the level of training of potential new officers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine what skill sets are necessary to provide to new officers so that they have the tools and skills necessary to effectively lead and supervise. This study will serve as a base for developing a program to train new and recently promoted officers. The study attempted to identify training that is available to develop skills and traits important for new company officers. A training program for newly appointed officers will result in better prepared officers who are ready for the many challenges they face.

Research Questions

The following questions will be answered by this descriptive research:

1. How do other fire departments similar to South Euclid prepare new officers?
2. What is the current level of training of prospective new officers in the South Euclid Fire Dept?
3. What training programs and resources are available that can be used to meet the training requirements that will be needed to replace the skills that will be lost?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The South Euclid Fire Department has 34 line personnel and serves a population of 23,000 averaging around 3,200 alarms per year (South Euclid Fire Dept. 2008). The department has 8 line officers, 2 Chiefs and one in fire prevention. Of these 11 officers, 7 are likely to retire in the next few years. This will result in a large number of first time supervisors. In addition some of these newly appointed officers may spend only a short time at the junior officer level before moving up to captain and/or chief. A smooth transition may be best achieved with aggressive training and development of leadership skills of these newly appointed officers.

The South Euclid Fire Dept. has not developed an officer development program. Consideration is given during the promotion process for efforts in officer development such as courses taken and college degrees, but there are no existing prerequisites. New officers are expected to complete Fire Inspector certification if they have not already obtained it. Current conditions in the department are good with a positive attitude and a proactive approach to training and response. Development and implementation of a fire officer development program will continue the progressive and positive approach in the department. Skills of officers at all levels will be tested in the future as the community we serve continues to change demographics. As of this time this change has not had a negative impact, but this has not been the case in some neighboring communities and the leaders of the department which includes all officers need to be prepared for any change.

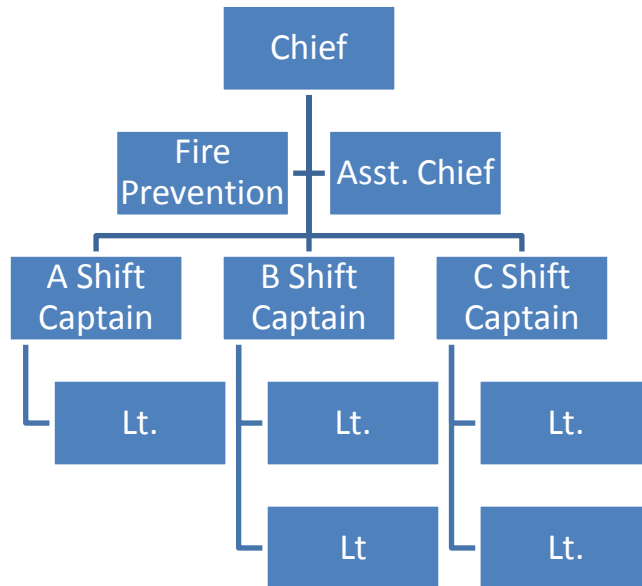
In small departments such as South Euclid, there are still major jobs or areas of responsibility. South Euclid has the following areas of responsibility; Operations, Safety, Dispatch, Equipment Maintenance, Training, Public Relations, EMS, Hydrants, Pre-Plans and Arson Investigation (South Euclid 2008). These duties along with other responsibilities are

divided among seven officers. Management of programs such as EMS, Operations or Training are not that much different between small and large departments. The officers in small departments must perform these duties in addition to the everyday duties of a company officer. Each officer must be prepared to act in the absence of one or both of the chiefs. The structure of each shift is one captain and one or two lieutenants. In the absence of the captain and chiefs, each lieutenant then acts in the capacity of chief at any significant emergency.

The South Euclid Fire Dept. has a recruit training program. This program provides training for the newly hired firefighter. Today's newly hired firefighters frequently have all of their training prior to being hired. In many cases the training was done several years ago. The recruit training program ensures that the newly hired recruit is current in their skills. It also serves as an opportunity to train the firefighter in various local aspects such as SOP's, vehicle inventories, and response area. A new officer training program would be consistent with the department's philosophy on training.

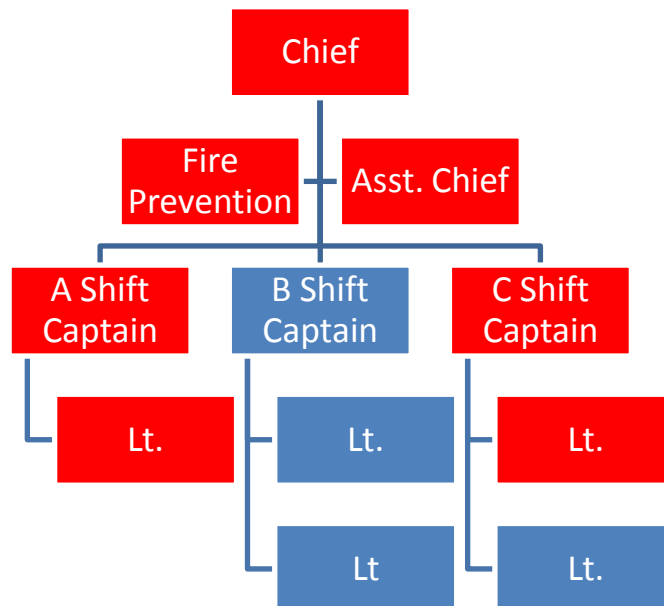
One thing is clear, in the South Euclid Fire Dept., every officer has major responsibilities. One area of concern is incident management. After a few months the newly appointed lieutenant will be in charge when the captain is on leave. The new lieutenant may be in charge of any type of emergency, with little training or experience. The new lieutenant will have to deal with; budgets, projects, personnel issues, evaluation of personnel and additional responsibilities they may never have had before. We look for enthusiasm and a fresh outlook from new officers. Without good training we risk losing that enthusiasm when the officer becomes frustrated. There are ample opportunities for the new lieutenant to seek additional training, but this is mostly up to the new officer. Today's fire service leaders face a wide variety of challenges. Without proper preparation, the new officer is on their own to figure out the best path.

Current Organization



After Retirements

(red boxes are positions needing to be replaced)



LITERATURE REVIEW

Spear (2004) reported on how Toyota trains its new leaders. Toyota has much of its success contributed to its Toyota Production System (TPS). Toyota believes its trainees must be totally immersed in the TPS. New trainees must spend week's just observing workers and must find ways to improve the system. They must find ways to improve the system and be able to predict the results. Trainees actually work on the production line and experiment with different techniques to improve the system. This type of training shows how important for TPS to work, several key factors are important. First, direct observation enabled the trainee to actually see problems and then start the process of correction. Second, proposed changes should be structured as experiments. However the new leader is expected to be able to predict the results. The third lesson learned is that managers and workers should experiment as frequently as possible to improve production. And finally, new managers are encouraged to coach workers and enable them to be creative and experimental.

Although the Toyota Production System might seem a far cry from the fire service many of their principles can be directly applied. The idea of a period of observation seems particularly interesting. Enabling or experimenting is not a new concept in the fire service but may not have gained widespread use. The TPS should be considered in the development of any officer training program.

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (2003) places a high value on training of executive officers. They consider it a never ending journey and officer development should be part of every departments plan. The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) notes that the practice of promoting and then training is not effective. They define professional development as the planned, progressive life-long process of education, training, self

development and experience. Based on this definition executive development must begin at the company officer level or even sooner. The IAFC Officer Development Handbook is a tool used to grant certification to chief officers. Its foundation though lies in the training at all levels. Credentials are important to the process. At times it may seem that there are a lot of certificates, but these certificates serve as proof of the training. The handbook mirrors standards found in the appropriate National Fire Protection Association Standards. This handbook provides a set of necessary training, education, experience and self development. These are very similar to Fire Officer I standards. In departments such as S. Euclid where first line supervisors are likely to be incident commanders and shift supervisors the skills and standards of Fire Officer II will also be necessary. In small departments such as S. Euclid where first line supervisors may also have major areas or responsibility, portions of the standards for Fire Officer III may even be appropriate.

Abrashoff (2002) tell us the story of how a commander in the US Navy made a difference with leadership. The USS Benfold perhaps could be best described as a mediocre or average ship. Abrashoff transformed the Benfold into one of the best ships in the Pacific Fleet by using innovative leadership. Abrashoff encouraged his sailors to take control and get the job done. By developing a team atmosphere, Abrashoff challenged his workers to achieve things they would not have previously been able to do. Abrashoff demonstrated in his book that to get the most out of your people, you need to effectively lead. Most of his methods revolved around finding a better way do things and allowing his workers to do so. Abrashoff also placed trust as being very important and worked to find ways to demonstrate this to his crew and his superiors. The Benfold succeeded because of its sailors who gave it their all. Abrashoff's leadership also

paid off in high retention rates, a serious problem in our military. This story serves as motivation on why good leadership is important.

There has been volumes of materials written on leadership and the fire service has its share. A series of articles (Emery 2008) helps us define the qualities we need in development of our future leaders. The series is based on the practices of famous basketball coach. Although this is another series of leadership material, the articles very clearly point out that you can't rely on books alone to guide you in leadership. Too often we simply throw a book at leadership, Emery calls it the "Organizational Thighmaster". This coach was very successful and used some very basic principles. He had a 95% graduation rate in addition to all of his national championships. This series illustrates that leadership skills are dependent on each other, much the same way as a pyramid. Thus if we want to build good leadership we first must start with the foundation or basics. Good leadership must avoid peaks and valleys and build consistency. This is truly one area where the fire service differs from the business world. It is critical for the fire service leader to control the adrenaline peaks that will occur when the emergency comes in. Not only is this key in the management of the event, but critical in the safety of the crew. The leader must work hard to develop the skills to lead. This will need encouragement and mentoring. After all, our ultimate goal is to build the best fire department possible. We can't build great chiefs without great senior officers and great senior officers without great junior officers. The fire service depends on its leaders perhaps more than most other occupations. This series can be used to evaluate and build any leadership program.

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA); Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications 1021(2003) lists and describes job performance standards for Fire Officer I through Fire Officer IV. The standards are considered minimum standards. The NFPA document

lists all the requirements described earlier. The list is extensive, although not described in detail, but ranges from budgeting, ethical practices, report writing all the way to emergency service delivery. Each successive level is expected to have the skills of the previous level. It is interesting to note that a new lieutenant in the South Euclid Fire Dept. is expected to perform at some of the Fire Officer III level. Specifically, the new officer would be expected to be skilled in; record keeping, inspection and investigation, building construction and emergency service delivery. This document could serve as a checklist for any officer development program.

S. Euclid is not the only department with this problem, where we find that the Bloomfield Fire Dept in Michigan had similar problems, Bertucci (2002). This research paper explores the problems with training new fire officers. The department is slightly larger than S. Euclid but for practical purposes may be considered in the same category. The issues Bertucci researches are almost identical to those being considered here. Bertucci has concerns with liability and legal issues. Michigan law expects those put in positions of authority to receive training prior to their being assigned responsibility. In Bloomfield a fire certificate is required before promotion. The fire certificate is the fire science portion of the two year associate degree. Bertucci found that most of the officers in the Bloomfield Fire Dept. were not adequately prepared for their new responsibilities. His recommendations include; training to Fire Officer II prior to promotion, an orientation program, a mentoring program and an evaluation program. Bertucci was very concerned with inconsistent and non-existent training for officers. Bertucci cites other cities that have developed some training for new officers.

A recent Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Applied Research Project, Paszczuk (2007) found that lack of a new officer training program affected performance of the new officers in the New Britain Fire Department. It indicated inconsistencies and that training are often left up to the

individual officer. The research indicated that both the private sector and the military value training of new supervisors and believe in continuous training. In the fire service, two fire departments were noted as having training programs, Philadelphia, PA and Houston, TE. Each of these departments has programs for those aspiring to be officers. These departments use NFPA 1021 as a guide for their programs. The research showed that those being promoted placed emergency scene activities as a high priority. The research found that the training should come from multiple sources such as; job training, planned experience, mentoring and off the job training. The paper concluded that an officer training program was vital to avoid inconsistencies and provide the necessary training to meet national standards.

First In, Last Out, Salka (2004) is an interesting study of lessons for leadership. Salka, a noted FDNY fire officer and leader addresses leadership issues from the fire service side to be used in civilian use. Often the fire service cites business practices for leadership lessons and ideas. In this case Salka is using fire dept. practices as how to lead in the business world. Although Salka has many philosophical ideas, he has very specific lessons that can be used to find the appropriate training. Defining what is needed is half of the challenge. We can then find the appropriate training to meet the criteria. Salka discusses the importance of building teams, understanding your own strengths and staying on course. One point Salka makes is to treat your leaders as assets. You must develop and manage these assets and encourage them to grow. We can use the information from Salka to help define the objectives of a fire officer leadership program.

Sargent (2006) helps us learn what skills are necessary for fire leaders. The book has a practical side to the skills using real life examples and well thought out ideas. This book is very specific to the needs and obstacles a first time supervisor may face. With the examples and

experience of the author this book helps us put a real world importance to the lessons learned in the classrooms. Sargent like others emphasizes how important training is. He places importance on training, education and experience prior to acquiring the position. The book could serve as required reading for the new supervisor.

Shouldis (2005) describes the program the Philadelphia Fire Dept. (PFD) uses. The PFD has an in house training program for new officers. The program is divided in two parts one prior to promotion and one after. The pre-promotion program is simply a degree program where participants earn their associates degree. Pennsylvania also has a deferred retirement program and the PFD lost their first group of officers in 2003 and 2004. The post promotion program is run in house and breaks into the following subjects: management, prevention, operations, safety and fire cause determination. The class is 80 hours long. The PFD believes that training of officers is a must and cannot be considered a luxury. The department realizes that effective operations hinge on good leadership. This program can serve as a model for a fire officer leadership program.

Cunningham (2003) writes about how skills such as integrity are an important part of leadership, but are learned skills. We can easily generate a list of skills that are necessary for good leadership, but we must remember these skills are learned. Self respect, loyalty and trust are valued traits which all have a critical impact on the mission or vision of the organization. As they are learned skills, they then can be taught. This may seem difficult but if it were not true we would not have the volumes of material on how to accomplish this.

A post incident report following the tragedy in Charleston SC., City Of Charleston (2007) indicated the need for command training. The fire that occurred in Charleston can and will happen in any city or town. The report is phase one of the complete report, phase one addresses

immediate issues and recommendations. Although there were several factors that contributed to the tragedy, lack of training was one of the more important ones. The report cited specific areas where training should be conducted for officers, including; fireground operations, incident management procedures, strategy and tactics, company officer and chief officer development.. This report is further evidence that fire officer training should not wait until there are specific problems in any fire department. Many of the areas cited in the report were training specific to fire officers. One area of recommendation involves accreditation of the department. This will lead to improved officer skills. Another priority includes the development of a structured Career Development Program. This would include the training and requirements for each rank. The succession plan for Charleston should include specific requirements for promotion.

Conlow (2001) describes specific training objectives for the new supervisor. The book provides insight on specific skills and areas of training for the new supervisor. The book reviews, roles, responsibilities and communication skills. Conlow also provides self assessment work sheets and several ideas on instituting change in the workplace. These areas and skills will help provide a checklist for any training program that might be considered.

Sargent (2006) describes a situation where lack of training for officers had unnecessary consequences. The situation involved first line supervisors. The supervisors failed to take the required action and the problem only grew. The situation emphasizes how important it is to solve problems at the lowest level possible. This is not possible without proper training, mentoring and discipline of the first level supervisor. The supervisors took action the way they would want to be treated, like they were still one of the crew and failed to realize the importance of their responsibility.

Tepper (1994) provides another set of standards and skills necessary for the new supervisor. We often confuse leadership with management and the new supervisor is going to need expertise in both areas in a smaller department such as S. Euclid. This publication places more emphasis on management. The best leaders can find themselves in a bit of a dilemma if they fail to manage the everyday tasks the new supervisor has. The new supervisor is expected to evaluate, delegate and complete assigned tasks. In the business world time management is not as much of a problem. At S. Euclid, new supervisors must manage their time which is made more difficult by response to emergency runs. This book provides several templates that can be used to assess areas of need for the new supervisor.

Keeping those promoted on the right track is discussed by Gayk (Gayk 2009). Employees work very hard to get promoted and then when promoted usually go through a period of probation. It is important for them to keep on track and doing what they promised. This might best be done with good mentoring and training. High standards, setting a good example and good supervision may also help the slump that might occur once someone has been promoted.

Loss of many top supervisors and leaders is not unique to S. Euclid. The News-Herald of Lake County, Lea (2009) reports that departments in both fire and police can expect to lose a lot of top officers in the next few years specifically early 2011. Preparation for this varies from department to department. One police chief reports the projected loss of five supervisors who each have thirty two to thirty five years of experience. Some departments have already started promoting and others have plans in place. The retirements will have many ripple effects to other departments who may lose part time employees who replace those retiring.

PROCEDURES

The following will be used to answer the research questions:

How do other fire departments similar to South Euclid prepare new officers?

A survey will be used to assist answering the above question. To obtain a sample, the size range of the surveyed departments will be determined. Other characteristics such as run volume, budget, and department size will be defined to determine the criteria for the survey. A sample will be chosen from fire departments in Ohio. The survey will attempt to gather data on the following questions:

1. Background information about the department, to verify the department meets the criteria of the sample chosen.
2. Number of officers and structure of the organization
3. Requirements prior to promotion
4. Requirements after promotion
5. Presence of a new fire officer training program. The following further information shall be obtained from those with positive responses.
 - a. What programs or courses do they use.
 - b. Where did they get or obtain the courses they use.
 - c. How much time is allotted for completion of the program.
 - d. What are the requirements for completion.
 - e. Contact information if there are questions or a wish to discuss the program.

What is the current level of training of prospective new officers in the South Euclid Fire Dept.?

Interviews of all potential candidates in the South Euclid Fire Dept. will be conducted. Since this is a small population, the entire population can be interviewed. An initial simple poll will be used to determine who may seek promotion. Only those who definitely had already

determined they would not be seeking a position were eliminated from the population. The following information will be sought:

1. Background information such as years served and previous attempts.
2. Presence of formal education such as college degrees.
3. Presence of certified education such as fire instructor, fire inspector, etc.
4. Presence of courses at national or state sponsored schools.
5. Presence of other courses related to leadership in the fire service.
6. Presence of other courses related to leadership, not related to the fire service.

What training programs and resources are available that can be used to meet the training requirements that will be needed to replace the skills that will be lost?

Sources of training programs available will mostly be done on a research basis. Some information and leads to further information should be available from those who have answered the survey in the affirmative to having a training program. From research conducted thus far there is an abundance of leadership training available. The tough part might be finding programs that related to the fire department and within budget for both time and money. Many large fire departments have very structured training programs as found in research. A review of these programs can prove to be a valuable resource.

RESULTS

To answer the research questions, a survey was sent to area fire departments, an interview was conducted with prospective promotion candidates and a literature review was completed. Results for each question are as follows:

To answer the question, how do other fire departments similar to South Euclid prepare new officers, a survey was distributed. The survey was sent to one hundred similar size

departments in Ohio. The mailing list was obtained from the Ohio State Fire Marshal database.

Questions one through three were used to determine that the departments were in fact similar in

size. Eighty four departments responded of which 79% (66) were similar in size to S. Euclid.

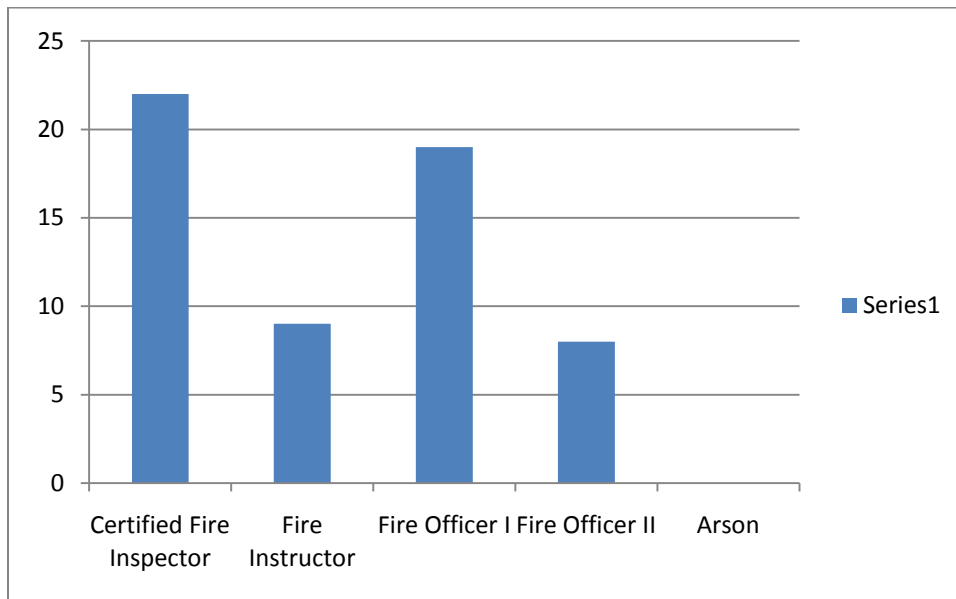
Data was used from all that responded.

Question 4 - How many years of college does your department require for promotion to Lieutenant or first time supervisor?

Only two departments (2.4%) required any college prior to promotion

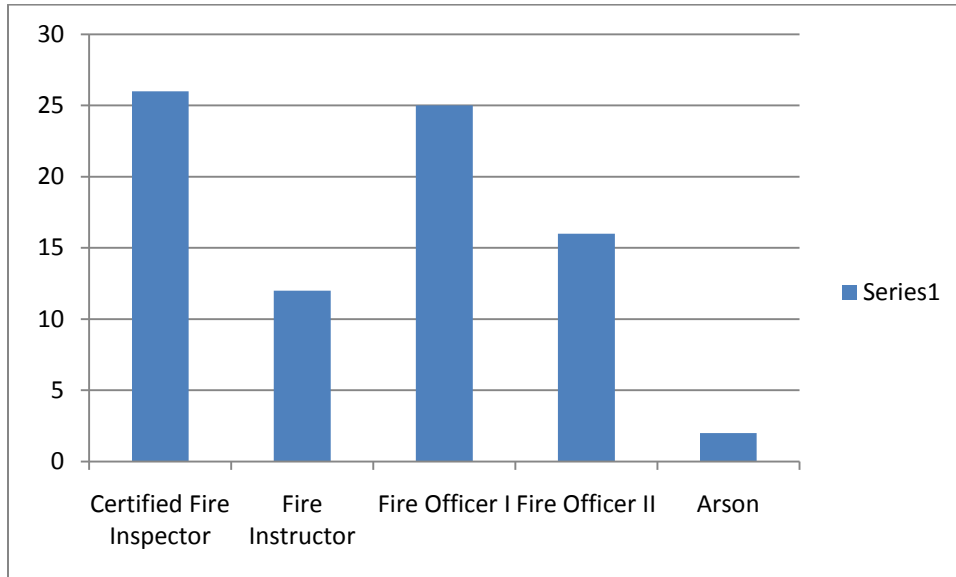
Question 5 - Which of the following certifications are required for lieutenants or first time supervisors prior to promotion?

The following illustrate which certifications are required prior to promotion. Total number of possible is eighty four.

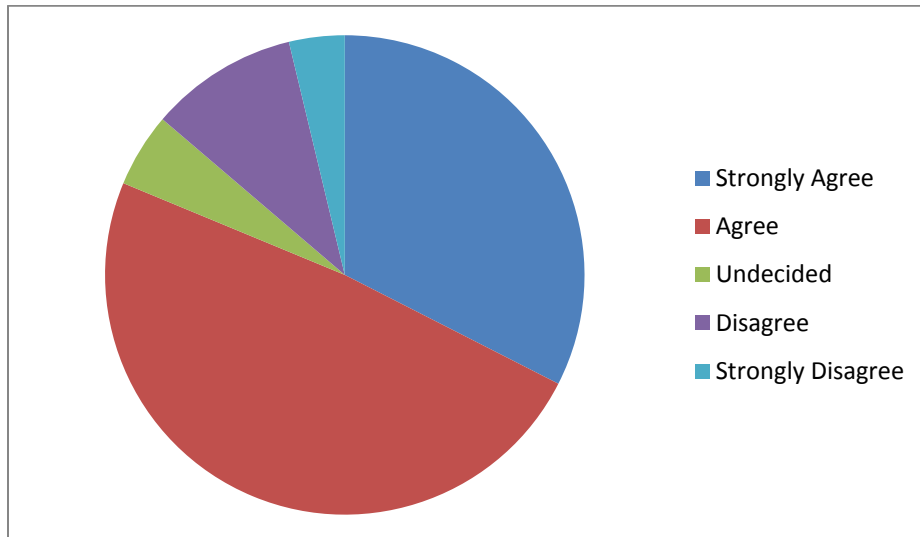


Question 6 - Which of the following certifications are required for lieutenants or first time supervisors after promotion?

The following illustrate which certifications are required after promotion. Total number of possible is eighty four.



Question 7 - Your department requires additional courses in leadership after promotion.

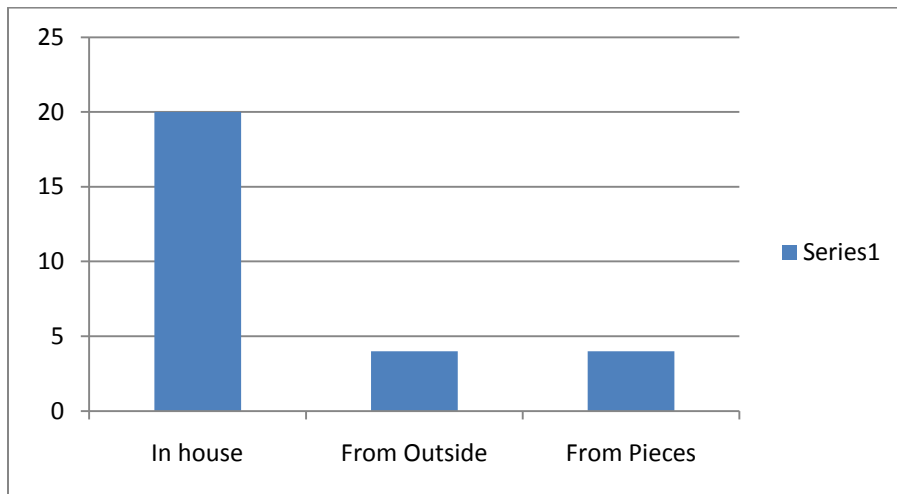


Question 8 - Does your department have a formal training program for newly appointed lieutenants or first time supervisors?

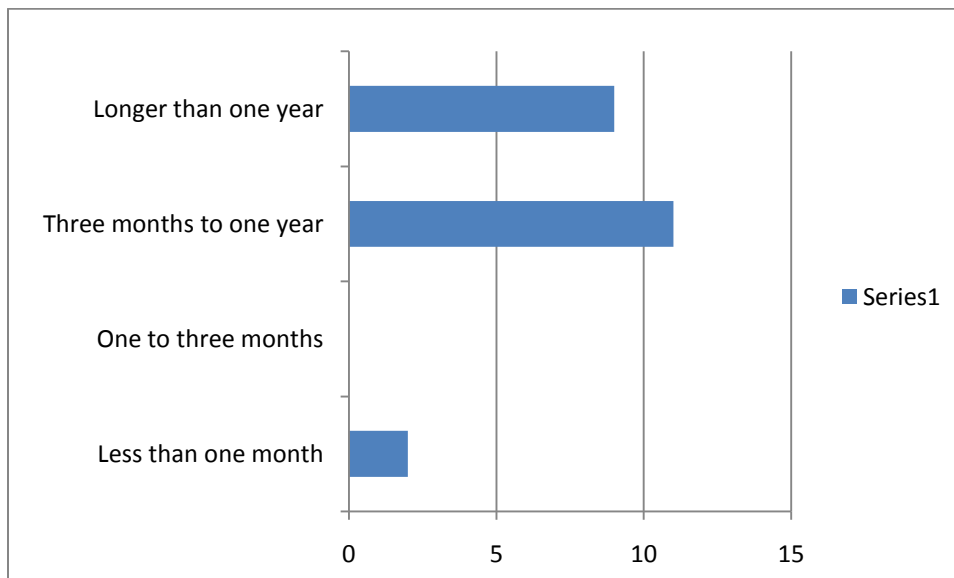
Eighteen of eighty four (21.4%) have formal training programs.

Question 9 - If your department does have a formal training program, how was the program developed?

Total number of departments with training programs is twenty eight.
(Some departments included information about their training who do not have formal training programs)



Question 10 - If your department does have a formal training program it lasts:



Some other items of note:

- Both of the departments that required some college were in the largest department size category.
- The larger the department, the more likely it was to have a formal training program.
- Seventy seven percent of the respondents are in favor of additional training after promotion.
- Certified Fire Inspector was the most required certification prior or after promotion.
- Arson certification requirements are almost non-existent.
- Requirements for degrees are very rare
- Only 28 of 84 have formal training programs for new officers.
- There still is a lack of requirements for basic certifications such as Fire Officer I or II

To Answer the next question; what is the current level of training of prospective new officers in the South Euclid Fire Dept, an interview was conducted with each potential new officer. An informal poll was first conducted to determine who would be likely to take subsequent promotion exams. Only those who were sure they would not be taking future promotional exams were excluded. The interviews were conducted in an informal setting with the author. Results are as follows:

Question One:

There were thirteen interviewed.

Twelve of thirteen (92%) potential candidates spent some time in college.

Amount of time in college:

One year3
Two to three years.....5
Three years or more2
Degree2

Fields of study:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Fire Science..... | 4 |
| Emergency medicine..... | 2 |
| Business | 2 |
| Environmental Science | 1 |
| Criminal Justice | 1 |
| Physical Education..... | 1 |
| Aviation..... | 1 |

Question Two:

Attended college since being hired at SEFD

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Yes | 4 |
| No | 9 |

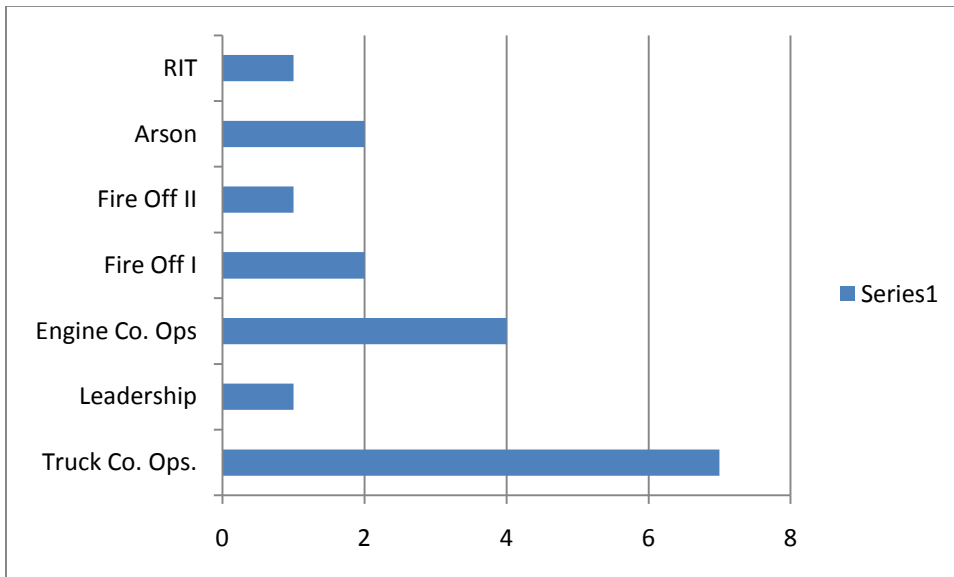
Two for less than one year

Two for two to three years

All were in fire science

Question Three:

State Sponsored Classes



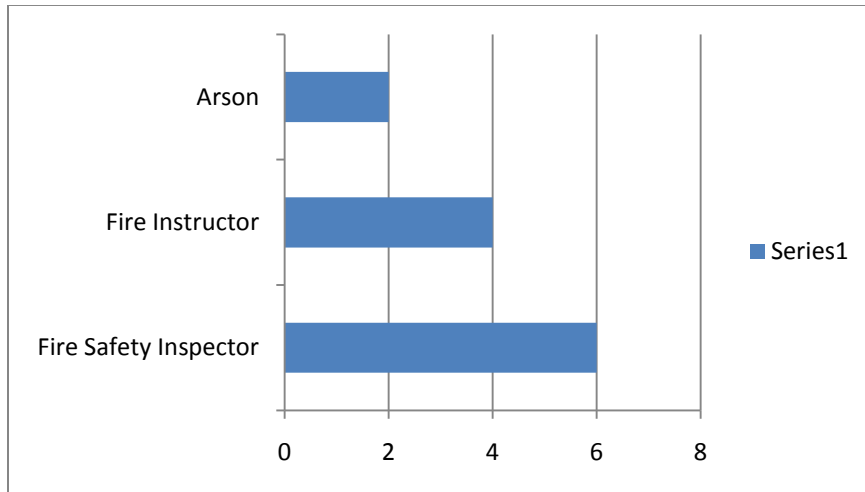
Question Four:

National Fire Academy courses taken:

None

Question Five:

Current State Certifications (In addition to required such as FFII or EMT)



Question Six:

Other courses taken

Various classes at Fire Dept. Instructors Conference – 3

Various classes at State Fire School in Bowling Green – 3

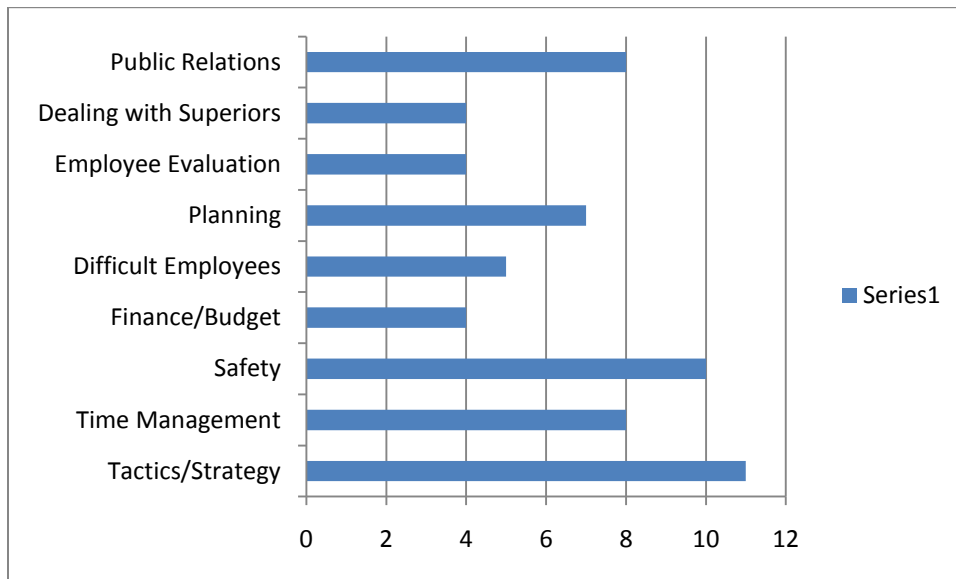
Question Seven:

Other classes taken related to leadership, but not fire service specific

None reported

Question Eight:

Leadership skills learned in various classes:



Question Nine:

Classes participants are planning to take

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Four year degree | 2 |
| Associate Degree | 7 |
| Fire Officer I & II | 2 |
| Fire Inspector | 2 |
| Fire Instructor..... | 2 |
| OFE..... | 1 |

Question Ten:

Years in fire service.

The average number of years in the fire service of the participants is 11.53 years.

Other points or considerations for the interviews:

- One participant is an OFE Graduate
- SEFD has tuition reimbursement for A.A.S and B. S. in Fire Science
- Most participants were enthusiastic about education

- Most participants questioned the author on what they should be working on.

A literature review was used to answer the third question, what training programs and resources are available that can be used to meet the training requirements that will be needed to replace the skills that will be lost. No one course that can be used for training new lieutenants could be found. There are courses available that use Fire Officer I & II as a foundation for the class. Two large departments Houston and Philadelphia have in house programs. There are also parts of programs offered at both the state and local level.

DISCUSSION

This research has identified many factors that should be considered when promoting new lieutenants or first time supervisors. Many factors are clearly evident. First in the S. Euclid Fire Dept. there will be a significant amount of retirement from the officer and senior ranks. This will occur over the next five years, resulting in sixty four percent of the current officers being replaced. The total number of experience years retiring will leave the department with almost an entire new set of officers. A significant or big fire can occur at any time and the department must be prepared for it. Lack of training and experience were critical factors in Charleston (2007) and every jurisdiction must be prepared for these events. Even with adequate training, new officers will need time to absorb the new training and new roles (Charleston 2007).

Effective officer training is necessary to keep newly appointed officers on track and working toward the departments mission (Gayk 2009). Without the tools necessary this can become a tough assignment. Training and experience are commonly understood fundamentals of supervision. Experience will come with time. We must discontinue the practice of promote and then train (IAFC 2003). The department will also be better served when problems are solved at

the lowest level (Sargent 2006). In the SEFD junior officers will often serve as the senior fire officer on scene or working on shift. The skills they need will be quickly tested and without preparation the department has set up these officers for tough times or failure. In addition, officers serve as filters solving problems at the lowest level, improving the performance of the organization. Without training, these problems are likely to be pushed up the chain of command and bogging down the organization.

We must treat our officers as assets (Salka 2004). The department has a considerable investment in time and money in these officers. Lack of training will impact performance of both the officer and then the organization. Leadership can and is a learned skill. Leadership is also an ongoing process where we should never stop looking for ways to improve.

There can be no question that training our new leaders is the right thing to do. Not only is not training the officers wrong, it puts the organization at risk legally and morally. In addition there are standards that need to be met. Many of these standards are not law, as there is very little required training for fire department officers. These standards are used to compare the departments against the fire industry. NFPA 1021 and 1500 have very clear requirements for all levels of fire officer. Michigan has very specific laws on the requirements for fire officers (Bertucci 2002). Although Ohio laws are not as specific, the standards are out there and may be used to measure a department. There are other standards from which the officer may be held accountable, including OSHA and general workplace standards such as human resource requirements, discipline procedures and hiring practices. Finally we must look beyond the minimum standards. Training to the minimum standards was cited in Charleston (2007). If we want the organization to grow and prosper, then we must use the available tools to fertilize the very basics, our officer core.

We learned from John Wooden how successful a pyramid approach to leadership can be (Emery 2008). At S. Euclid some or all of the new senior officers will have little experience as officers. This makes their experience there even more critical. The IAFC (2003) also uses this pyramid principle in the development of senior officers. As we have recently witnessed all around Ohio, fire departments are being asked to do more with less. This added pressure and expectations makes the job of senior officers even more challenging. Without a strong pyramid base, we may have unpredictable results. Another important aspect of officer development is the mentoring process (Sargent 2006). With officers moving quickly through the ranks, we may have some mentoring done by those with little more experience than the ones they are mentoring. If we foster a good training foundation and continuous development our chances for success are likely to increase. We need officers with new ideas and new energy. Without proper training, they may not understand how to use their new ideas or understand how to make things happen. Certainly in small departments like S. Euclid we need to empower our officers. This should not just happen without some training, or we may get unexpected results (Abrashoff 2002). Training will also help us with consistency.

The argument for training new officers is very strong and no evidence could be found against it. Then, what should we train our new officers to? In Charleston (2007), strategy and tactics were cited as needing improvement. Most of the S. Euclid firefighters interviewed had some further education in strategy and tactics. Most however, have little or no experience in this area. The fireground can be a very chaotic place and decisions must be made in a timely manner, often with lives or property and the safety of crew members at stake. Firefighters prior to being promoted have been part of the action plan, not making the plan. They have been on a hoseline

or searching as part of a ladder crew. Most have received incident training, and may have some experience, but today there are fewer fires than before where experience is gained.

Safety is now a priority in the fire service. In the last few years, we have not only changed the way we fight fires, but have placed a greater emphasis on safety. In many ways safety ties directly in with strategy and tactics and should be part of the learning. Safety is also a mindset or philosophy that officers need to have. Safety can and should be learned. The new officer has to understand the consequences of actions and how to keep his or her people safe. Safety in the company officer development was cited as lacking in Charleston (2007). Safety is truly one area where we need our new officers to lead. They should be doing this by setting the example and not accepting unsafe practices. The new officer needs to be supportive of safety SOP's and make sure they are enforced. All of this can be achieved by presenting informative and well prepared training.

The new officer will need many administrative skills never before used. These skills will include: time management, record keeping, report writing, and other miscellaneous paperwork. The new officer will need to learn all the factors and methods in employee evaluation and review. Bertucci (2002) found that this was one area where new officers often struggled. Fair and effective employee evaluation may be critical in development of fire department members. At S. Euclid, lieutenant input is expected in annual employee evaluations and evaluations of probationary firefighters. The new officer will need to be very knowledgeable on employee discipline. Again, the officer needs to understand his responsibility and be able to administer discipline appropriately. Lack of administering discipline or done in the wrong manner will create more problems for the department and may require legal help or expertise. The first line

supervisor is responsible for taking care of its members (Sargent 2006). How this is accomplished requires some training and insight from others.

In the S. Euclid Fire Dept. each officer is required to become a fire safety inspector. The course work here only gets the inspector started in the right direction, more training should be done. Officers must conduct fire safety inspections in their district. Officers may also be called on to conduct fire safety education or may have to witness fire protection inspections.

Officers may also need skills in government relations. They need to understand the budget process, the legislative process and should have some understanding of the bargaining process.

A new officer training program may also have a section on career development. Emery (2008) discusses how important career development is in building a leadership pyramid. The IAFC and the NFPA have already done much to let us know what is required. The IAFC (2003) is encouraging chief officers to become accredited. A training program can allow those who have gone through the education to provide feedback and guidance. The program should also serve as a tool to motivate and instill the qualities that are expected. Experiences of senior officers can help offset the resistance to change that occurs with those newly promoted. The mentoring process can also help create the commitment necessary to become an effective fire officer (Salka 2004). A function of any training program should be to encourage officers to become excited about their careers and new responsibilities and to instill a desire for additional learning and advancement.

Following the lead of other departments in the training of new officers is not as clear as originally planned. Very few departments have structured training programs for new officers. Some large departments such as Houston, Philadelphia and Phoenix place a large emphasis on training of new officers and have structured programs. In the survey, the departments that did

have formal training programs developed them in house. This would make sense as they would be able to tailor the course to the needs and constraints of their department. Many departments required certification either prior or after promotion. Slightly more than half required Fire Officer I either before promotion or after promotion and only slightly more than one quarter of those responding required Fire Officer II before or after promotion. Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II have the requisite skills set forth in NFPA 1021. Since officers in S. Euclid may spend as much as one third of their time in charge of the department in the absence of the platoon captain, they should be trained to a least Fire Officer III. Officers in S. Euclid also have major areas of responsibility and should have corresponding training in program management. The feeling one must get after reviewing the results of the survey is that most departments rely on courses such as Fire Officer I and II and then add in some of their own materials. There are very little college requirements. Even Michigan (Bertucci 2002) require their firefighters to have some college in the form of the fire science certifications. It appears that a large amount of departments promote and then train, which can have some negative consequences (IAFC 2003).

One encouraging result is the level of training of prospective officers in the S. Euclid Fire Dept. Twelve of thirteen had some college before entering the fire service and the lone person who did not attend prior to entry is now enrolled in college. Nine of the thirteen plan on finishing either their two year degree or four year degree. Two have already completed their associate degree in Fire Science. Their course selection in non-college courses also indicates a desire to prepare for a possible promotion. Most have completed Fire Inspector, a requirement, and most have taken classes in truck company operations. A new lieutenant is assigned to the truck company. Those interviewed seemed to have a positive attitude toward training and gaining the necessary certifications toward becoming a proficient fire officer. The culture of the S. Euclid

Fire Department also has a favorable approach to training. Four current or former members of the department are graduates of Executive Fire Officer and three are graduates of Ohio Fire Executive. College tuition is reimbursed for both the associate and undergraduate level. Four members are currently taking advantage of this assistance.

Other considerations that may need further study include the cost of any programs and labor objections to changes in the current requirements. Time to develop any program is also at a premium and new promotions are likely with two years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The impending retirement of most of the officers of the S. Euclid Fire Dept. requires action that should be planned and implemented. In the fire world today, staying pat is equivalent to going backward. S. Euclid Fire Dept prides itself in being progressive and community oriented. To sustain this level of service the department must plan for the next group of officers. Standards today may place liability on the city if proven that the department failed to properly prepare its officers. The department has a very good group of officers and an excellent group of prospective officers. This foundation should be used to propel the department forward. Time is also a factor as the retirements will be here before we know it. The following recommendations should be considered:

Increase pre-promotion requirements

Changing and specifically increasing requirements for promotions may be a significant challenge. The challenge will come from the union and civil service. Like any challenge, this will require good dialogue and careful planning. Waiting for these requirements to be instituted until after promotion places the department in an awkward position while it awaits the fulfillment

of these requirements. First should be requiring Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II. These courses are routinely offered at community colleges and through state classes. They do not represent a large commitment of time or money and specifically address NFPA 1021 requirements. Require Fire Inspector certification. All fire officers are required by job description to have this certification. Requiring it prior to promotion, lessens the burden of work after promotion and further demonstrates the commitment by the individual. Require some college. All of the current potential candidates have some college. This is an excellent opportunity to formalize this as a requirement and serve as a foundation for future requirements. It is not suggested here that a degree be a requirement, but this should be a goal worked toward. This requirement can be phased in by increasing the number of fire science credits.

Increase post promotion requirements

Once a firefighter is promoted to officer their world changes. Even if they have diligently prepared they will be faced with significant challenges. To ease this transition, a mentor should be assigned. The mentor will have gone through some of the same situations and can offer valuable insight. The assignment of a mentor was consistent through many of the programs reviewed. There should be clear roles and responsibilities for the mentor.

The new officer should spend more time with fire prevention and the administration. Currently new officers spend less than a month in fire prevention. A lot can be learned about the city and the role of fire prevention. The hardship for the new officer is the change in work schedule. This is an important task and should be completed thoroughly, not just muddled through. The requirements for college should be increased at this point. Time will be necessary for the new officer to complete these requirements, but they should serve as a building block for

the next level. Every officer is responsible for cause and origin at structure fires. Certification of at least the lowest level in arson should be considered.

Each officer should be required to write a career development plan. It may be difficult to have the new officer working on requirements for the next level if they have no interest in further advancing. This may be because the new lieutenant is further along in their career or is not sure of his or her future. A career development plan would allow flexibility and also gain support from superiors and the mentor. Furthering their education through various means including, college classes, National Fire Academy courses and Ohio Fire Executive courses should be encouraged.

Increase requirements for Acting Lieutenants

Currently acting lieutenants are only required to pass a basic department test and have Fire Safety Inspector certification. Two additional requirements could be phased in, Truck Company Operations and Fire Officer I. Both courses are readily available and neither presents a significant challenge.

Initiate a pre-promotion seminar series

There are a wide variety of topics that can be taught and reviewed in house with a simple seminar series. The seminars could last as little as two to three hours and cover a wide variety of topics. The seminars could use available resources and personnel. An example might be a three hour seminar on budgeting and city finances conducted by the city finance department. Another example might have a city attorney speaking on issues that he covers. The advantages to this type of in house education are that they can be cost effective, tailored to department needs and flexible. In addition there are numerous resources available on line that could be used. This type of seminar series if done over a couple of years also has the advantage of being able to get off to

an early start. The whole series does not need to be completely planned out before portions are started. This might not be the best approach, but time is a factor. The seminars could include the following topics, budgeting and finance of the city, discipline, report writing, command and control, dealing with difficult employees, history of the city and department and communication skills.

There are plenty of options for the S. Euclid Fire Dept to consider when taking a proactive approach to training its new officers. This is a serious matter that warrants immediate attention.

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APPENDIX 1 – SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Ohio Fire Executive Program

Research Paper – Leadership Skills for New Supervisors in the South Euclid Fire Department

- 1) How many lieutenants or first time supervisors has your department promoted in the last five years?
 - None
 - One
 - Two
 - Three
 - Four or more

- 2) How many firefighters and officers does your department have?
 - 0 – 10
 - 11 – 30
 - 31 – 50
 - 50 or more

- 3) What size population does your department serve?
 - Under 10,000
 - 10,001 – 25,000
 - 25,001 – 50,000
 - 50,001 or more

- 4) How many years of college does your department require for promotion to Lieutenant or first time supervisor?
 - None
 - One
 - Two
 - Three
 - Four or more

- 5) Which of the following certifications are required for lieutenants or first time supervisors prior to promotion?
- Certified Fire Safety Inspector
 - Fire Instructor
 - Fire Officer I
 - Fire Officer II
 - Arson
- 6) Which of the following certifications are required for lieutenants or first time supervisors after promotion?
- Certified Fire Safety Inspector
 - Fire Instructor
 - Fire Officer I
 - Fire Officer II
 - Arson
- 7) Your department requires additional courses in leadership after promotion.
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Undecided
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 8) Does your department have a formal training program for newly appointed lieutenants or first time supervisors?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
- 9) If your department does have a formal training program, how was the program developed?
- In house by your department
 - Purchased from on outside organization
 - Pieces of other programs
 - Not sure

10) If your department does have a formal training program it lasts:

- Less than one month
- One to three months
- Three months to a year
- Longer than a year

11) If there are any components of a new lieutenant or first time supervisor training program the you would like to share please comment below.

If you would be interested in the results of the survey, please leave your department name below and I will forward you a copy.

APPENDIX 2 – SURVEY SPREADSHEET

| Leadership Skills for New Supervisors in the South Euclid Fire Department | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|-------|
| Rick Huston - South Euclid Fire Department | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Departments are categorized by total number of firefighters | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Question One | | | | | |
| Number of promotions in last five years | | | | | |
| | 0-10 FF's | 11-30 FF's | 31-50 FF's | > 50 FF's | Total |
| NONE | 2 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 15 |
| ONE | 1 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 11 |
| TWO | 1 | 10 | 8 | 6 | 25 |
| THREE | 1 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 11 |
| FOUR OR MORE | 0 | 3 | 10 | 9 | 22 |
| | | | | | |
| Question Two | | | | | |
| Number of firefighters and officers on the department | | | | | |
| | 0-10 FF's | 11-30 FF's | 31-50 FF's | > 50 FF's | Total |
| | 5 | 28 | 31 | 20 | 84 |
| | | | | | |
| Question Three | | | | | |
| Size of population served by FD | | | | | |
| | 0-10 FF's | 11-30 FF's | 31-50 FF's | > 50 FF's | Total |
| Less than 10,000 | 3 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| 10,001 - 25,000 | 2 | 17 | 19 | 7 | 45 |
| 25,001 - 50,000 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 8 | 21 |
| More than 50,000 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 6 |
| | | | | | |

| Question Four | | | | | |
|--|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|-------|
| Years of college prior to promotion | | | | | |
| | 0-10 FF's | 11-30 FF's | 31-50 FF's | > 50 FF's | Total |
| NONE | 5 | 28 | 31 | 18 | 82 |
| ONE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| TWO | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| THREE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| FOUR OR MORE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | | | |
| Question Five | | | | | |
| Certifications required prior to promotion | | | | | |
| | 0-10 FF's | 11-30 FF's | 31-50 FF's | > 50 FF's | Total |
| Certified Fire Inspector | 1 | 10 | 6 | 5 | 22 |
| Fire Instructor | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| Fire Officer I | 1 | 3 | 10 | 5 | 19 |
| Fire Officer II | 0 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 8 |
| Arson | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | | | |
| Question Six | | | | | |
| Certifications required prior to promotion | | | | | |
| | 0-10 FF's | 11-30 FF's | 31-50 FF's | > 50 FF's | Total |
| Certified Fire Inspector | 1 | 12 | 6 | 7 | 26 |
| Fire Instructor | 0 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 12 |
| Fire Officer I | 1 | 9 | 11 | 4 | 25 |
| Fire Officer II | 2 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 16 |
| Arson | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| | | | | | |

| Question Seven | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|-------|
| Additional courses should be required after promotion | | | | | |
| | 0-10 FF's | 11-30 FF's | 31-50 FF's | > 50 FF's | Total |
| Strongly Agree | 2 | 6 | 10 | 8 | 26 |
| Agree | 2 | 15 | 15 | 7 | 39 |
| Undecided | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| Disagree | 0 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 8 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| | | | | | |
| Question Eight | | | | | |
| Does the department have a formal training program | | | | | |
| | 0-10 FF's | 11-30 FF's | 31-50 FF's | > 50 FF's | Total |
| YES | 1 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 18 |
| NO | 4 | 23 | 24 | 13 | 64 |
| | | | | | |
| Question Nine | | | | | |
| How was training program developed | | | | | |
| | 0-10 FF's | 11-30 FF's | 31-50 FF's | > 50 FF's | Total |
| In house | 1 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 20 |
| From Outside | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| From Pieces | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| | | | | | |
| Question Ten | | | | | |
| Length of formal program | | | | | |
| | 0-10 FF's | 11-30 FF's | 31-50 FF's | > 50 FF's | Total |
| Less than one month | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| One to three months | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Three months to one year | 0 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 11 |
| Longer than one year | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| | | | | | |

APPENDIX 3 – INTERVIEW

Ohio Fire Executive Program

**Research Paper – Leadership Skills for New Supervisors in the South Euclid
Fire Department**

- 1) Did you attend college prior to entry in SEFD?

Yes No
- 1a) If so how much?

Less than one year
Two to three years
Three years or more
Degrees
- 1b) Field of study
- 2) Have you attended college since getting hired?

Yes No
- 2a) If so how much?

Less than one year
Two to three years
Three years or more
Degrees
- 2b) Field of study
- 2c) Were any of the courses in leadership? Preparation for officers?
- 3) What state sponsored classes have you taken?
- 4) What national or NFA courses have you taken?

- 5) What are your current certifications?
- Fire Safety Inspector
Fire Instructor
Arson
- 6) What other courses have you taken? Where?
- 7) Have you taken other courses related to leadership skills that were not fire service specific?
- 8) In the courses you have taken, list leadership skills you have learned.
- Tactics/Strategy
 - Time Management
 - Safety
 - Finance/Budget
 - Difficult Employees
 - Planning
 - Employee Evaluation
 - Dealing with superiors
 - Public Relations
 - Other
- 9) Are there any courses or classes you are planning to take?
- 10) How many years in the fire service?
- 4)
- None
 - One
 - Two
 - Three
 - Four or more
- 5) How many firefighters and officers does your department have?
- 0 – 10
 - 11 – 30
 - 31 – 50
 - 50 or more

APPENDIX 4 – INTERVIEW SPREADSHEET

| | | | | |
|---|----|--|--|--|
| Leadership Skills for New Supervisors in the South Euclid Fire Department | | | | |
| Rick Huston - South Euclid Fire Department | | | | |
| Interview Spreadsheet | | | | |
| Question One | | | | |
| College prior to entry into SEFD | | | | |
| YES | 12 | | | |
| NO | 1 | | | |
| LESS THAN 1 YEAR | 3 | | | |
| 2 - 3 YEARS | 5 | | | |
| 3 YEARS OR MORE | 2 | | | |
| DEGREE | 2 | | | |
| FIELDS OF STUDY | | | | |
| Fire Science | 4 | | | |
| Emergency Medicine | 2 | | | |
| Business | 2 | | | |
| Environmental Science | 1 | | | |
| Criminal Justice | 1 | | | |
| Physical Education | 1 | | | |
| Avaiation | 1 | | | |
| Question Two | | | | |
| College since getting hired | | | | |
| YES | 4 | | | |
| NO | 9 | | | |
| LESS THAN 1 YEAR | 2 | | | |
| 2 - 3 YEARS | 2 | | | |
| 3 YEARS OR MORE | | | | |
| DEGREE | | | | |
| FIELD OF STUDY | | | | |
| Fire Science | 4 | | | |

| Question Three | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| State Sponsored Classes | | | | | |
| Truck Co. Ops | 7 | | | | |
| Leadership | 1 | | | | |
| Engine Co. Ops | 4 | | | | |
| Fire Off I | 2 | | | | |
| Fire Off II | 1 | | | | |
| Arson | 2 | | | | |
| RIT | 1 | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Question Four | | | | | |
| National or NFA Courses | | | | | |
| Exclusive of NIMS, none | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Question Five | | | | | |
| Current Certifications | | | | | |
| Fire Safety Inspector | 6 | | | | |
| Fire Instructor | 4 | | | | |
| Arson | 2 | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Question Six | | | | | |
| Other Courses | | | | | |
| FDIC | 3 | | | | |
| BGSU | 3 | | | | |
| | | | | | |

