

# Firefighter to Captain

*Are You Prepared?*

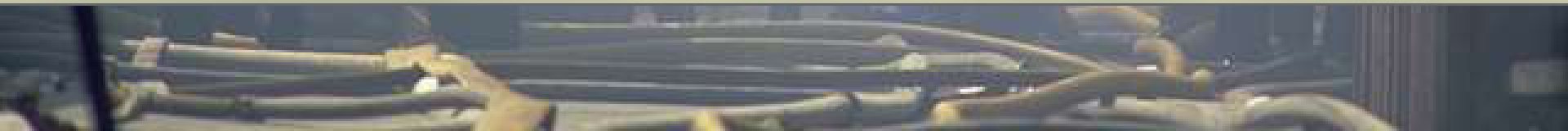
**Steve Prziborowski, Battalion Chief**



# Objectives

At the end of this session, you will be able to.....

- Define what to expect as a first year captain
- Determine how to set personnel expectations appropriate for your situation
- Identify techniques to successfully survive your first year as a captain

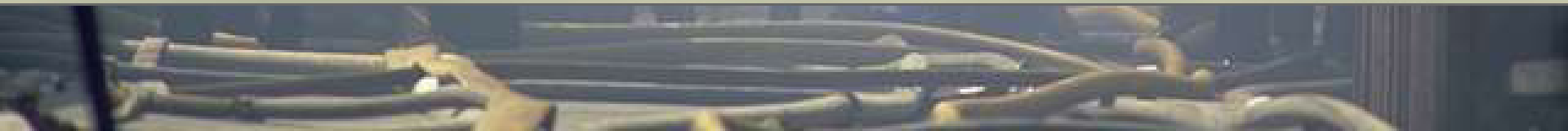


# What To Expect Your First Year As A Captain



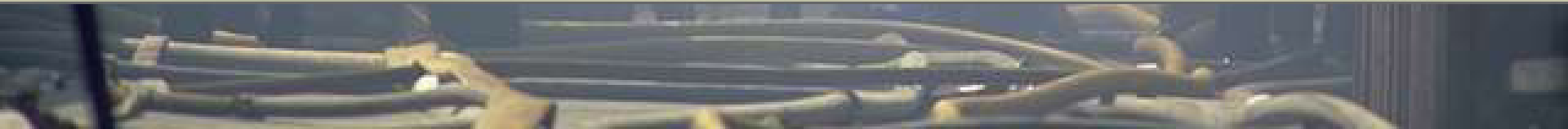
# Now You're Promoted.....

- You will probably have a probationary period
- You may have a project to complete
- You will be evaluated
- You will be under the microscope
- You will be tested continuously
- You will make decisions daily that could have serious long-term effects on your trust, credibility, and long-term success



# As a Captain.....

- You have one of the most influential positions in the fire department:
  - You're representing the F.D.
  - You're representing the Fire Chief
  - You're the conduit between the line personnel and administration
  - You're acting in the best interest of the public (our bosses)



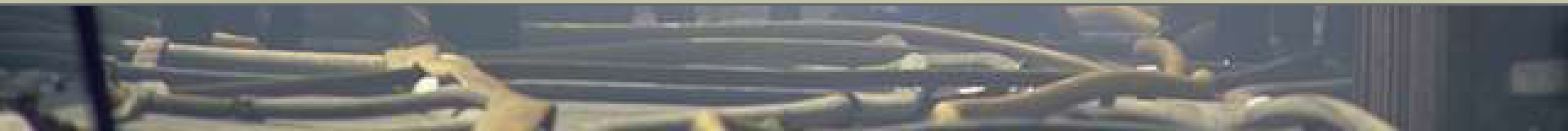
# Personnel Expectations

Either you set the stage for your personnel.....  
or they will set it for you!



# Expectations

- I encourage you to create your own to pass out and discuss with your crew
- Ensure they are realistic, measurable, obtainable, legal, ethical, within the expectations of your administration, etc.
- Do not forget to ask your crew what they expect of you! – It's a two-way street.



# Expectations

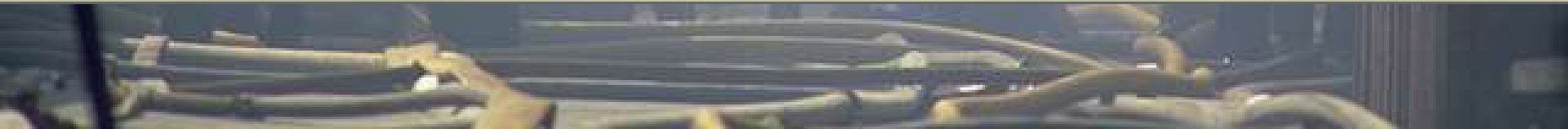
- Now that you have shared your expectations
  - make sure you hold your personnel accountable for their actions or non-actions!

# Techniques To Successfully Survive Your First Year As A Captain



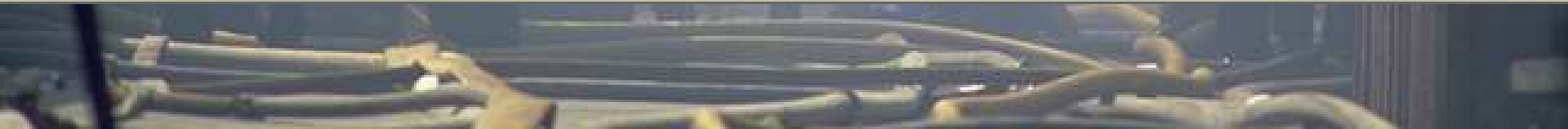
# Information You Should Know Inside and Out

- Department rules and regulations
- Department MOU / MOA
- Department policies and procedures
- Federal/State/Local laws relating to your job
- IFSTA Essentials of Firefighting (or whatever other book your department uses for probationary firefighters)
- Strategy/Tactics, Fire Behavior & Building Construction (the three big one's!!!)



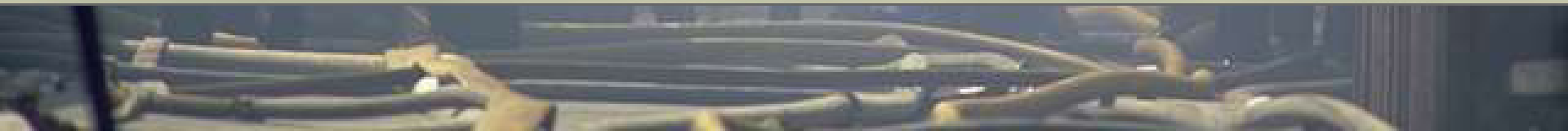
# Training

- A minimum of two hours per day
- Make every opportunity to train
- Be creative, know what you're teaching
- Don't rely on the Department Training Officer to provide you with all the tools to train you're personnel - you are a TO!



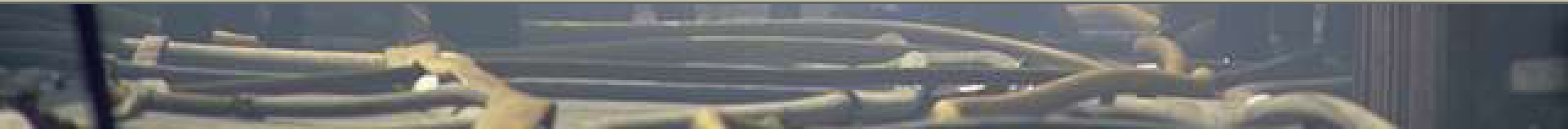
# Subject Areas Captains Need To Be Proficient In

- Management
- Fire Investigation
- Fire Prevention
- Fire Command
- Public Education
- Instructional Techniques
- Incident Command System
- Technical Rescue (Haz Mat, Confined Space, etc.)
- Leadership
- Supervision
- ????????



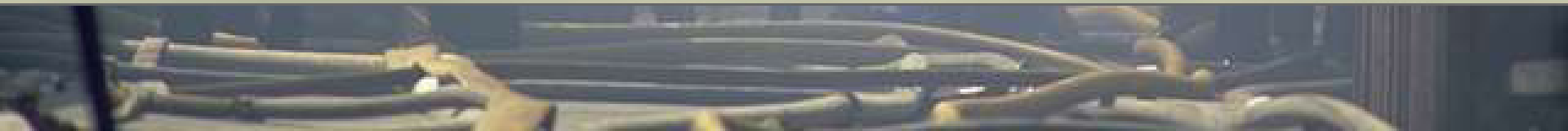
# Certifications All Captains should obtain

- Fire Officer
- Fire Instructor
- Fire Prevention Officer / Fire Inspector
- Public Education Officer
- Fire Investigator
- Chief Officer
- ????????



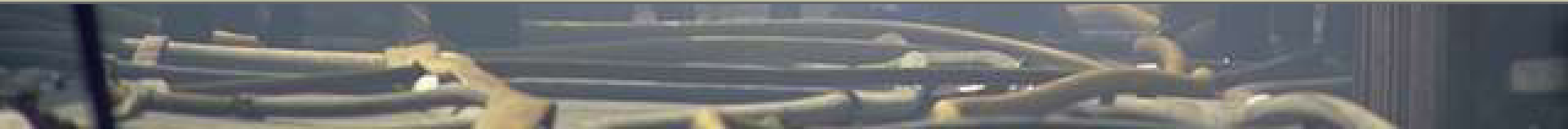
# Continuing Education

- If you think the previous information was too much, maybe reconsider being an officer.....
- Complete your two year or four degree
- Attend at least one conference per year
- Attend at least two seminars per year
- If you are going to train your personnel daily, you better know what you're doing!!!
- Subscribe/read fire service publications



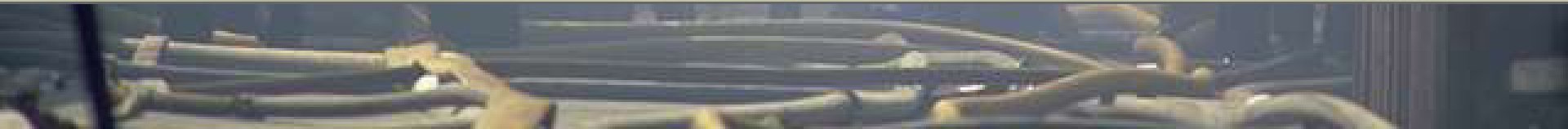
# Time Management

- One of the biggest problems facing society and the fire service today
- Learn time management skills
- 24 hours per day you're getting paid for
- Telling your supervisor "I didn't get to it is unacceptable"
- Make things happen, be proactive/creative



# Buddy to Boss

- Don't forget where you came from.....but don't forget you're now getting paid to be a supervisor!
- Very tough for many folks to do
- Your job is not to selectively enforce the rules and regulations
- Be firm, fair and impartial, and do your job!

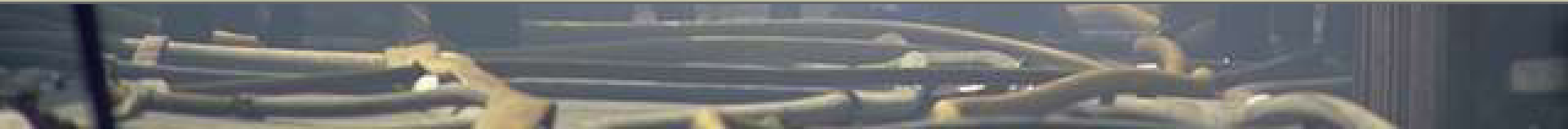


# Decision Making

- Most importantly - make decisions!
- Utilize the “**Headline Test**” whenever possible:
  - Is it the right thing for the department?
  - Is it the right thing for our personnel?
  - Is it the right thing for our community?
  - Would you mind reading about it in the morning newspaper?
  - If you can answer yes to all four - GO FOR IT!!!

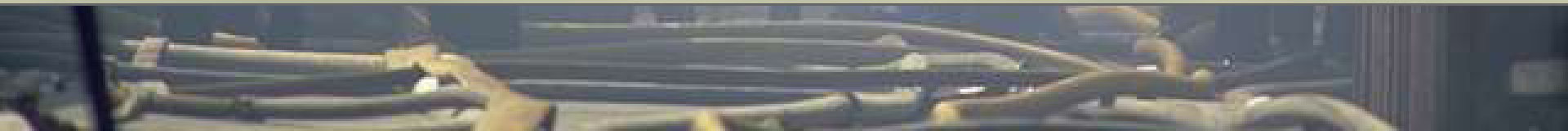
# Closing Thoughts For The Newly Promoted Captains

- Set expectations
- Hold your personnel accountable
- Lead by example
- Enforce the rules and regulations
- Do not tolerate inappropriate behavior, incompetence, or mediocrity



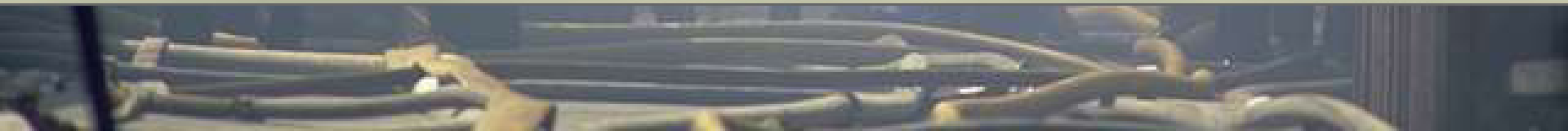
# Closing Thoughts For The Newly Promoted Captains

- Practice Management-By-Walking-Around
- Praise in public, coach/counsel in private
- Take care of your personnel
- Have a daily plan, every day
- Start every shift with a roll call/meeting



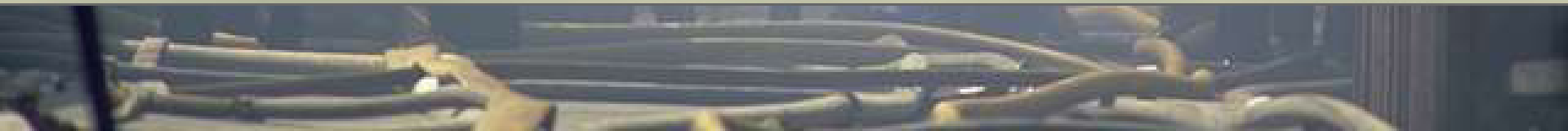
# Closing Thoughts For The Newly Promoted Captain


- Do a transfer of command briefing every morning
- Come up with solutions, not problems
- Prepare each of your personnel to do your job (now and in the future)
- Empower and delegate tasks to your personnel
- Keep your supervisor in the loop but don't dump decisions on their plate (there is a difference)



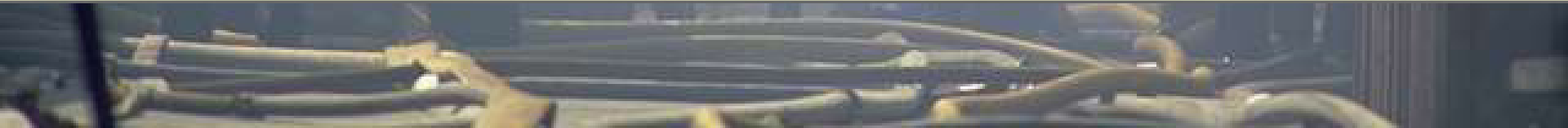
# Closing Thoughts For The Newly Promoted Captain

- Learn to determine the difference between technical and behavior problems
  - 95% of your personnel problems will be behavior related
  - 5% of your personnel problems will be technical related
- If you won't be the designated adult – who will?





Remember –  
you don't get a second chance to  
make a first impression!!!!



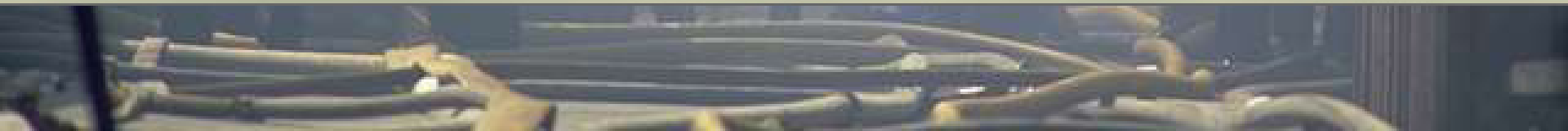
Last, But Not Least.....

If you remember nothing else,  
remember this:

Prepare for your future position -  
not for the test

# Why?

If you prepare for the position,  
you should be able to handle  
anything thrown at you during  
the test!



Questions?



Thank you very much for your  
time and good luck as a  
Captain!



# Contact Information

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