

Emergency Services Training Complex Safety Subcommittee

December Meeting & Safety Report

December 29, 2022

Attendance – An in-person location for this meeting was provided at the Vermont Fire Academy, 93 Davison Drive, Pittsford. All attendees listed below joined the meeting virtual via Microsoft Teams.

Safety Sub-Committee Members

- Lindsey Thivierge – Vermont Police Academy
- Michael Skaza – Vermont Fire Academy
- Rebecca White – Office of Risk Management
- Dan Whipple – Vermont Occupation Safety and Health Administration

Others

- Michael Desrochers, Division of Fire Safety, Governance Committee Chair
- Christopher Brickell, - Vermont Police Academy, Deputy Director

Minutes:

1. Called to Order at 10:00 a.m.
2. Subcommittee Chair – Pete Lynch was previously serving as the Safety Subcommittee Chair, but has left his position at the Fire Academy. The Subcommittee appointed Michael Skaza to serve as the Chair.
3. Safety Report of the Police Academy – Lindsay Thivierge presented an overview of the injuries that had occurred within Police Academy training in 2022, all of which as included in the draft of the safety report.
 - a. A detail of the impact of COVID on the recruit classes was provided. Mitigation efforts were able to keep the impacts as minimal as possible, which is difficult given the residential nature of the training program.
 - b. A discussion took place surrounding the eye injuries that are incurred during OC training. Lindsay explained that two of the injuries were a result of a reaction to the OC where the swelling did not subside in a timely manner on its own. The third injury was the result of a fall during the training after the trainee was sprayed and fell while maneuvering toward the end of the evolution.
4. Safety Report of the Fire Academy – Michael Skaza presented an overview of the injuries that had occurred within Fire Academy training in 2022.
 - a. COVID statistics were kept for the first 6 months of the year and ceased when the Department of Health relaxed community restrictions. There were 15 cases of COVID reported within Fire Academy training programs, 80% of those resulted in potential

exposure of other participants, only two instances of participant transmission were reported within training programs.

- b. The Fire Academy's blood pressure screening program continues to identify students with hypertension and has resulted in dozens of referrals to primary care. In most cases, these students can get control of their blood pressure and continue on to become certified firefighters.
 - c. With the increased demands for training, we are seeking an expanded training calendar. This is forcing us to do live fire training in the warmer months of the year. We credit our rehabilitation program for allowing this training to be conducted safely without incidence of heat related injuries.
5. Subcommittee recommendations – The subcommittee members had the opportunity to review the draft of the safety report prior to the meeting. Overall, there were no comments or recommendations for editing the report. The following goals were established for the 2023 report:
 - a. In many instances, immediate measures are taken to mitigate reoccurrence of injuries or illness as soon as they occur. The report should provide information on those immediate mitigation actions as those are important details to demonstrate the level of responsiveness that both training academies have.
 - b. It seems that there is a developing trend of fewer injuries occurring during use of force training at the Police Academy. Data analysis should be performed to see if we can conclude a quantifiable improvement in this area of training and highlight that in the next report. Anecdotally, it seems that the police academy has made great improvements in injury prevention during this high-risk training.
6. Approval of the 2022 Safety Report – A motion was made by Dan Whipple and seconded by Rebecca White to accept the draft of the 2022 Safety Report as written. No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.
7. Set Next Meeting – The subcommittee feels that it would be beneficial to meet again in late June to “check-in” on safety related events. A meeting invitation will go out to serve as a placeholder on the subcommittee members calendars.
8. Adjourn – With no other business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 10:52 a.m.