



Information Bulletin

NFPA's "Needs Assessment Survey of the U.S. Fire Service" report cites extensive needs and challenges facing today's fire service

November 9, 2016 – Fire service needs are extensive for fire departments of all sizes and in every area, including staffing, training, facilities, apparatus, personal protective equipment (PPE); and health and wellness. Overall, the smaller the community protected, the greater the need. These findings are the results of the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) 2015 "U.S. Needs Assessment Survey of the U.S. Fire Service," which was officially released today.

"Today's fire departments are being called upon to protect communities from much more than fire, commonly responsible for additional areas such as emergency medical services (EMS), hazardous materials (Hazmat) response, active shooters, enhanced technical rescue and wildland-urban interface firefighting and other emerging challenges," said Jim Pauley, NFPA president and CEO. "As fire departments work hard to meet the many needs of their communities, we need to ensure that they have the resources to do their jobs safely and effectively."

In September 2015, the Needs Assessment survey was sent out to all U.S. fire departments. The intent of the survey was to capture the level of fire department resources and staffing, identify where fire departments have the resources to meet the needs of their communities and identify gaps.

"This survey represents the most comprehensive look at the needs of U.S. fire departments, and whether those needs are greater than they were five years ago," said Pauley. NFPA has been conducting this study every five years since 2001.

Following are key findings from the report:

- Forty-nine percent of all fire departments have not formally trained all of their personnel involved in structural firefighting, up from 46 percent in 2010.
- Sixty-nine percent of departments reported that some of their self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) equipment is at least 10 years old, up from 55 percent in 2010.
- More than two-thirds (72 percent) of departments reported that some of their personal protective clothing is at least 10 years old, up from 63 percent in 2010.
- Two out of five (43 percent) fire stations are at least 40 years old, up from 32 percent in 2001, when the initial needs assessment survey was conducted.
- Forty-three percent of all fire department engines and pumpers are at least 15 years old, down from 51 percent in 2001.
- Only one quarter (27 percent) of fire departments have a basic firefighter fitness and health program, slightly down from 30 percent in 2010.

The full 2015 "Needs Assessment of the U.S. Fire Service" report is available online. For this release and other announcements about NFPA initiatives, research and resources please visit the NFPA press room: www.nfpa.org/news-and-research/news-and-media/press-room