



FIRE & ARSON INVESTIGATOR

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What's Inside:

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A practitioner's perspective involving the stress and mental health issues of a first responder.

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INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CONFERENCE
APRIL 7-12, 2024
LAS VEGAS

The Next Step...

This article is from a practitioner's perspective involving the stress and mental health issues of a first responder. The writing serves as a perspective on the need for recognition and attention by the first responder in order to better understand mental health issues involving first responders.

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Health and Safety Committee Member, Florida Fire Investigators, Florida Chapter of the IAAI, Vice President

When I began my career fresh out of high school, I had no idea or care where my career/life would take me. I just knew what I wanted to go and do. I have been a first responder since 1984, when I joined the United States Army as a military policeman (MP). I did not just walk into this blindly, as my father and his friends were police officers. As an MP, I was exposed to the same effects of daily life as any police officer would be, such as traffic crashes, homicides, suicides, and, of course, war. On my very first night as a basic recruit, we had to meet our drill sergeant. While standing in the alcove, I heard a window open and observed something that would stay with me forever. A young recruit (who had been there just two weeks) jumped headfirst from the window and

happened. When we speak of what happened, there is much in the way of sadness, trauma, or heartbreak. But we did not get into this profession for those things. We went into it because it was cool, noble, and exciting. In other words, we got into this profession because we have superhuman capabilities to deal with the trauma, the victimization, and the worst of society. WRONG! We may think we are superhuman, but the reality is we are all humans with emotions and difficulties adjusting, just like everyone else. This is why I am writing this article. For years, I was told, trained, and mentored to be a hero. In fact, as

paramedics in a community not far from where I live committed suicide. There were four separate suicides that occurred within these two departments. So where is this all going? For 39-plus years, I have been superman, at least in my mind. I kept everything away from my family and friends. I discussed anything except with my former zoology partner. He and I experienced a lot in a short amount of time. This is likely why he is one of my closest friends. One morning, I got multiple calls and messages. Shortly after trying to get back to them, my friend called. "Hey, I am making my rounds. A friend of mine died of what is believed to be a heart attack. I realize I have three of us had a great relationship. I realize I don't know the full effect of life, but what caught my attention was that he had me prior to the funeral."

beating 130 beats per minute, or if you cannot unsee the three two-and-a-half-year-olds who died as a result of different fires, then you need to hear me loud and clear. You need to seek help and reach out to someone who knows how to talk with you about your situation. Talk to your family and let them know how you feel inside. Do not wait for a politician to tell you that you are allowed to be a hero. You are allowed to be a human.

global member news



IAAI-Idaho Chapter November 15, 2023

Craig Etherton, chapter Treasurer) and presented the Idaho award to Glen F. investigator for

Photo credit: Juliana Anderson of Cloud Dragon Arts

Students left to right: Aaron Miller, Brian Schield, Scott Lerman, Karen Corwin, James Riley, Chris Mullins, Tom Goodman, Nick Grossman, Abigail Buday, and of course





75th IAAI International Training Conference & Expo

April 7-12, 2024 • Las Vegas, NV
Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino

*Classes are subject to change.
Lunch provided Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.*

Sunday, April 7th • Mezzanine	
2pm - 6pm Early Registration/Event Check-in	
3pm - 6pm Welcoming Reception	
MONDAY, APRIL 8th	
6:00am - 8:00am • Mezzanine Registration/Event Check-in	8:30am - 12:00pm • Mezzanine Lunch Provided 12:00pm-1:00pm
1:00pm - 3:00pm • Celebrity 5 Annual General Meeting IAAI-President Chris Van Vleet	1:00pm - 5:00pm • Celebrity 1-8 (excluding 5) General Session — 75th Anniversary Opening Ceremonies
1:00pm - 5:00pm • Melrose 4 IAAI-Fundamentals of Fire Investigation Barry Grimm, Dixon Robin	
Week-long class Starts 1pm Monday ends Friday at noon	
1:00pm - 5:00pm • Melrose 4 IAAI-Fundamentals of Fire Investigation Barry Grimm, Dixon Robin	
TUESDAY, APRIL 9th	
3:00pm - 3:20pm • Rotunda Area • Afternoon Break	



Introducing the Latest NFPA 921: 2024 Edition

By Terry-Dawn & Wayne J. Mck...

1. Introduction¹

After more than three years of work, the 2024 edition of NFPA 921 Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations is approaching completion. The content of the 2024 edition has been settled by the NFPA Standards Development Process. The Public Input Stage and Public Comments Stage have been completed.² These steps allowed for the public's participation in the development of a First Draft and a Second Draft of the revised edition of NFPA 921. Upon the NFPA Standards Council will issue NFPA 921, 2021 edition as a "Consent Standard,"³ and then publish it in early 2024. It will be available as a digital edition through a paid NFPA LINK® subscription or in a softcover print format.⁴ As with previous editions, the NFPA will also provide free online access for viewing the document through the NFPA 921 Document Information Page.⁵

2. Preview the New Edition: Examining the First and Second Drafts

Before NFPA 921, 2024 ed. is published, changes from the 2021 edition can be identified by studying the First Draft Report together with the Second Draft Report. These reports are accessible through links on the "Next Edition" tab of the NFPA 921 Document Information Page.⁶ The First Draft Report uses legislative text to enable readers to see the initial changes ("First Revisions") from the 2021 edition. Likewise, the Second Draft Report shows Second Revisions — changes from the First Draft, also available in legislative text.

By reviewing these two reports in order, one can track the evolution of NFPA 921 from the 2021 to the 2024 editions. Public Comments and Public Comments are also published, together with the actions taken by the NFPA 921 Technical Committee, together with investigations' (the "Comments")

3. Overview of 2024 ed. Revisions

Most of the 29 chapters of NFPA 921, 2021 edition were extensively revised or completely re-written. A founder of NFPA 921 is its "scope" as defined in Chapter 1 Administration, Section 1.1 "Scope" has been broadened to recognize NFPA 921 is not only designed to assist investigators in their investigative duties concerning the "origin, cause, responsibility or prevention" of incidents, but also in investigating, and rendering opinions about "fire spread." Here are some of the takeaways of the revisions:

- On one end of the spectrum, three chapters have been extensively revised or completely re-written, including Chapter 6 *Fire Effects and Fire Patterns*, Chapter 8 *Fire Investigator Safety, Health, and Wellness*, and Chapter 14 *Sources of Information* (together with a new section on "Terminology Specific to Wildfire Investigations" in Chapter 3 Definitions).
- On the other end of the spectrum, relatively few revisions were made to Chapter 1 *Administration*, Chapter 5 *Basic Fire Science*, Chapter 7 *Building Systems*, Chapter 8 *Fire Protection Systems*, Chapter 12 *Legal Considerations*, Chapter 14 *Sources of Information*, Chapter 15 *Planning and Investigation*, Chapter 17 *Physical Evidence*, Chapter 18 *Origin Determination*, and Chapter 23 *Incendiary Fires*.
- There were several global revisions. For example, throughout NFPA 921 the word "boat" was changed to "vessel," because the term "vessel" is more inclusive (this mainly affects Chapter 29 *Marine Fire Investigations*); the acronyms for ac (alternating current) and dc (direct current) were capitalized (AC; DC); and "gypsum wallboard" was changed to "gypsum board" (because gypsum board installations are not limited to walls).
- There were no revisions, or only editorial or global revisions made to six chapters: Chapter 11 *Fire-Related Human Behavior*, Chapter 20 *Analysis of Fire Incidents*, and Chapter 21 *Fire Investigation and Reporting*.