

## Press Release

### **Economic Crisis Impacts Fire Departments in the Washington, D.C. Metro Area, According to a National Survey Sponsored by Fireman's Fund Insurance Company**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 19, 2009) – The current economic crisis is negatively impacting fire departments in the greater metropolitan areas of Washington, D.C. (the District, Virginia, Maryland and West Virginia), according to a new, comprehensive national survey of firefighters sponsored by Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. The study attracted nearly 9,500 fire departments or 30 percent of departments in the country, including 45 fire departments in the Washington, D.C. metro area.

"*Supporting Safer Communities: A National Firefighter Survey*" found that, in the Washington, D.C. metro area, the top four challenges facing fire departments today are:

- Eighty-five percent of departments find staffing, recruitment and employee retention is at least somewhat challenging.
- Seventy-one percent of departments do not have adequate training for terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.
- About half of these departments have had to increase fundraising efforts and/or grant writing because of budget cutbacks.
- Forty-seven percent of departments have had cuts or reductions in services.

"When you consider that firefighters are the first responders to nearly every fire, medical emergency, and natural or man-made disaster in our local communities, it is imperative that we have adequate funding to ensure we keep our communities safe," said Washington, D.C. Fire Chief Dennis Rubin. "This study is extremely valuable for both its depth and scope – one that effectively shows the needs of today's fire service in communities across the country and particularly here in the District."

The study was conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs based in New York, and was available online for six weeks from mid-February to March 31, 2009 to any career and volunteer firefighters, regardless of geography, rank or size of their community. About 17,500 firefighters from nearly 9,500 departments participated, 61 percent of which hold the rank of fire official (chief, captain or lieutenant). These findings are based on data at the department level rather than on all respondents. When multiple firefighters from the same fire service organization responded to the survey, the first individual to respond was selected

on behalf of that department. Full results can be found at [www.firemansfund.com/firesurvey](http://www.firemansfund.com/firesurvey).

Additional findings include:

- Nearly half of departments do not have the needed resources/equipment for wildland fires.
- More than half of departments do not have needed resources and equipment for urban search and rescue.
- Forty percent of departments do not have needed resources and equipment for hazardous materials incidents.
- Sixteen percent of departments do not have adequate extrication equipment needed to safely and quickly remove injured people from a vehicle crash.

“As a company, Fireman’s Fund® believes it is extremely important to raise awareness of the needs of local fire departments,” said Chuck Kavitsky, chairman of Fireman’s Fund. “Supporting the fire service means safer communities. That is why we have focused our philanthropic giving to directing grants to fire departments throughout the country.”

Fireman’s Fund Insurance Company’s nationwide philanthropic program is designed to provide needed equipment, training and educational tools to local fire departments. Since 2004, Fireman’s Fund has issued grants to more than 1,100 different departments totaling more than \$21 million. Independent insurance agencies that sell Fireman’s Fund products are able to direct these grants to support fire stations in their communities.

In the last five years, Fireman’s Fund has issued a total of 48 grants to fire departments in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C., totaling \$759,578.

### **About Fireman’s Fund**

Fireman’s Fund Insurance Company is a premier property and casualty insurance company providing personal and commercial insurance products nationwide. It is rated 'AA-' by Standard & Poor’s Rating Services. Founded in 1863 with a mission to support firefighters, Fireman’s Fund continues this effort today through its national philanthropic efforts. Fireman’s Fund is a member of the Allianz Group (NYSE: AZ), one of the world’s largest providers of insurance and other financial services. For more information, visit [www.firemansfund.com](http://www.firemansfund.com).

### **About Ipsos Public Affairs**

Ipsos Public Affairs is a non-partisan, objective, survey-based research practice made up of seasoned professionals. Ipsos Public Affairs conducts strategic research initiatives for a diverse number of American and international organizations, based not only on public opinion research, but elite stakeholder, corporate, and media opinion research. Ipsos Public Affairs is a member of the Ipsos Group, a leading global survey-based market research company. To learn more, visit: [www.ipsos-pa.com](http://www.ipsos-pa.com)

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