

Press Release

Fire Departments In Key Hurricane States Feel Undertrained When Responding to Disasters, According to a New National Survey Sponsored by Fireman's Fund Insurance Company

NOVATO, Calif. (June 2, 2009) – A new, national survey of U.S. firefighters shows that while firefighters continue to meet the demands of responding to hurricanes and other disasters, many fire departments in key hurricane states lack adequate training and needed equipment. The survey, sponsored by Fireman's Fund Insurance Company, polled nearly 9,500 fire departments or 30 percent of departments in the country.

Supporting Safer Communities: A National Firefighter Survey found that in the key hurricane states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia:

- Fifty-eight percent of departments do not feel they have adequate training when it comes to major disaster response (such as hurricanes, floods, earthquakes).
- With water rescue, 64 percent do not feel they have adequate training.
- With urban search and rescues (which firefighters undertake after a hurricane takes place) – 67 percent do not feel they have adequate training.
- For search and rescues in non-urban settings – 56 percent do not feel they have adequate training.

The study also found that when it comes to disaster response, there is a need for emergency equipment and resources. Fire departments reported lacking:

- Protective equipment that meets current guidelines for personnel to respond to natural disasters / rescues – 50 percent do not have this important equipment.
- Forty-two percent do not have equipment for off-duty responders – this is a key need in the event of a major disaster.
- Thirty-two percent do not have a back-up power supply (typical of a major disaster situation).
- Ability to interface with Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) resources – 29 percent do not have something in place today to easily access this critical function.

"Our national firefighters are always there to respond to the aftermath of hurricanes. But we need to be sure they have adequate funding for training and equipment so they can continue to help keep our communities safe," said Chuck Kavitsky, chairman of Fireman's Fund Insurance Company which has awarded

more than \$21 million in grants to 1,100 fire departments across the country for needed equipment, training and community education.

The national 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. Nearly 17,500 firefighters from nearly 9,500 departments participated, 61 percent of which hold the rank of fire official (chief, captain or lieutenant). The base sample size for key hurricane states is 1,821. 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.

To help prepare for a hurricane, Fireman's Fund® advises homeowners to take special precautions. The Fireman's Fund® Risk Services and Solutions program offers wind mitigation consultation services to its customers, consisting of analyzing the structural features of a home or commercial building and making recommendations on how to better protect families, homes, businesses and their contents during a hurricane. Fireman's Fund's risk engineers provide the same high level of expertise to more complex commercial structures.

Fireman's Fund will also make referrals to a network of service providers for shutter systems, wind resistant building products, emergency evacuation and storage for protection of art and other valuables, and planning for family evacuations. For disaster preparedness information, go to http://www.firemansfund.com/servlet/dcms?c=about&rkey=463&WT.mc_id=090890.

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.

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