

## Press Release

### **Economic Crisis Impacts Florida Fire Departments, According to a New National Survey Sponsored by Fireman's Fund Insurance Company**

MIAMI (June 18, 2009) – The current economic crisis is negatively impacting Florida fire departments, according to a 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 218 fire departments in Florida.

*"Supporting Safer Communities: A National Firefighter Survey"* found that Florida fire departments face the following challenges:

- Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) have delayed purchasing equipment, and 66 percent have delayed replacing equipment.
- More than six in ten (62 percent) volunteer and combination fire departments are losing volunteers.
- Nearly half (49 percent) have increased fundraising efforts and/or grant writing due to budget cuts.
- Forty-five percent of departments do not have urban search and rescue equipment.
- Forty-three percent of departments lack protective personnel equipment for all personnel to respond to hazardous materials incidents.
- More than one third (37 percent) of departments do not have water rescue equipment.
- More than one third (36 percent) are going to have to cut back or have cut back staffing.
- About one in five (19 percent) do not feel they have adequate hydraulic extrication equipment to extract accident victims in a timely manner.

The firefighter 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). 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).

Not all Florida news was grim:

- Ninety-two percent of departments have at least one thermal imaging camera, considered a critical tool to identify hot spots and locate injured or sleeping persons in a burning building.
- Seventy percent agree/strongly agree that they have sufficient equipment/apparatus to enable them to do their jobs adequately.
- Sixty-nine percent agree/strongly agree that they have sufficient training to do their jobs properly.
- Eighty-three percent of departments have public education programs.

“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 directed 55 grants to Florida fire departments, totaling \$786,676.

### **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**

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