Notes from 2024 NFFF Firefighter Life Safety Summit – Roadmap to the Future

The National Fallen Firefighters Association (NFFF) hosted the 2024 Firefighter Life Safety Summit (FLSS) on August 27-29, 2024, in St. Louis, Missouri. This was the fifth FLSS held, each with a goal of reducing firefighter line-of-duty injuries (LODI's) and line-of-duty deaths (LODD's).

The following are my notes taken from the NFFF Firefighter Life Safety Summit. Please note that much work is still in progress and these notes are my personal observations from participating at the summit.

The first FLSS was held in Tampa, FL, in 2004, bringing together more than 200 fire service leaders to develop initiatives to reduce firefighter line of duty injuries and deaths. The goal of the first summit was to define policies and training programs directed at reducing line of duty injuries and deaths. The result was a set of 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives (FLSI's) that have served as a model for changing the culture of the fire service with an emphasis on safety.

A second summit was held in 2007 in Novato, CA, the third summit back in Tampa in 2014, and more recently, the fourth summit was held in San Antonio in 2022. Each summit focused on a review of the 16 FLSI's and assess progress on reducing LODI's and LODD's.

Everyone would admit that much has changed in the fire service over the last twenty years and the fifth FLSS identified the need to reengage the fire service leadership to revisit the 16 FLSI's and determine if it was time for a change. During this fifth FLSS, a new view was taken of the firefighter safety challenges and a new set of FLSI's resulted.

The FLSI 2024 Framework is designed to provide a comprehensive approach to enhancing the safety, health, and well-being of firefighters. The framework uses the concept of "balanced scorecard" to establish a foundation representing the vision and strategy and then looking at the organization from multiple perspectives so that no one area dominates the decision-making process.

The foundation is based on four "pillars" which represent the vision and strategy for firefighter safety. The four pillars of the FLSI 2024 Framework are:

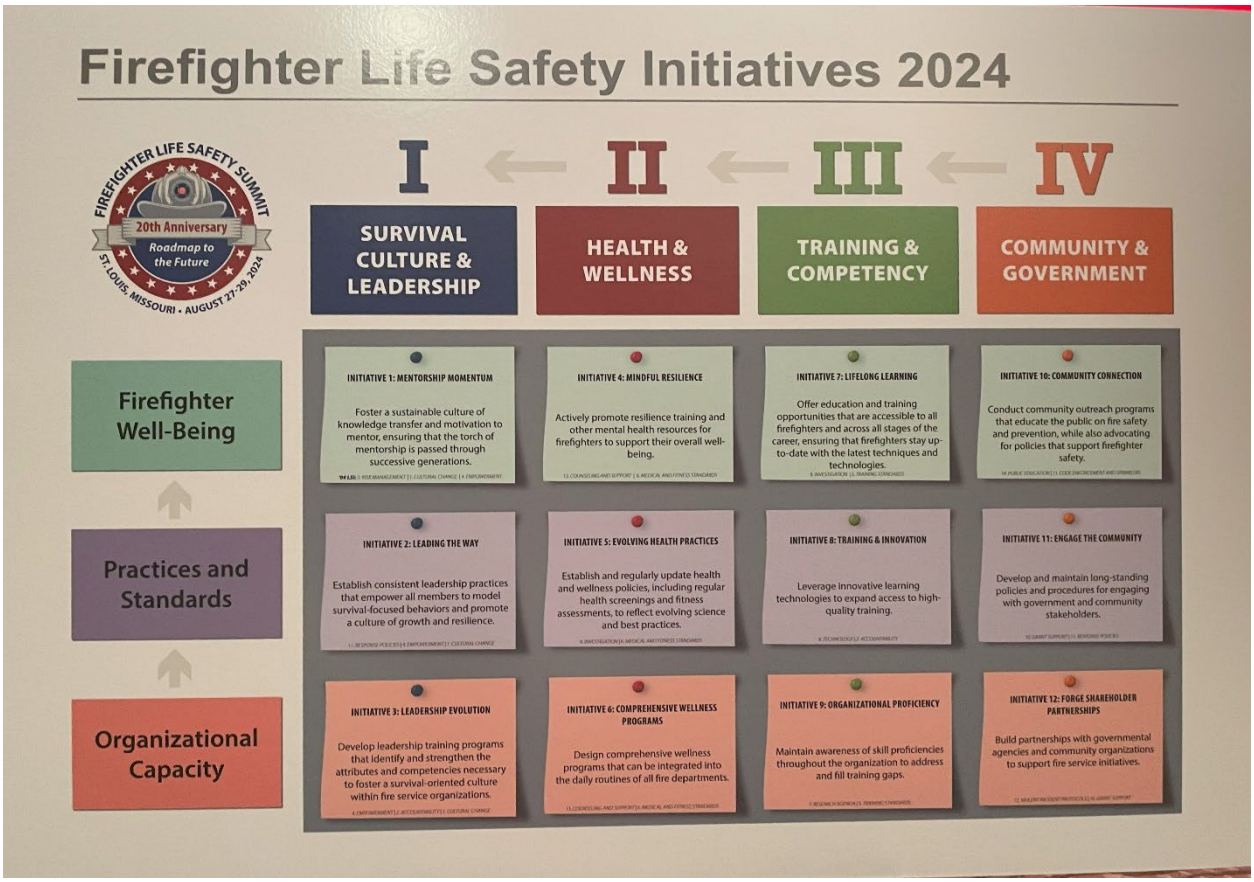
1. Survival Culture and Leadership – Fostering a survival-oriented mindset and strong leadership within the organization.
2. Health and Wellness – Addressing the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of firefighters.
3. Training and Competency – Ensuring ongoing training and development of competencies necessary for effective firefighting.
4. Government and Community – Enhancing firefighter safety through policy, legislative support, and community engagement.

The next step in developing the balanced scorecard was to define the multiple perspectives that will guide the initiatives needed to build upon the framework (pillars). These perspectives are:

1. Firefighter Well-Being – Directly support and improve the experience, safety and well-being of firefighters.

2. Practices and Standards – Developing, implementing, and standardizing practices and procedures to ensure efficient, consistent, and effective operations.
3. Organizational Capacity – Building and enhancing the capabilities of the fire service organizations to support their mission effectively.

The four foundation pillars each represent a critical area of focus for improving firefighter survival and well-being. The three perspectives are intended to tie the pillars together for a cohesive structure that represents the needs of the fire service. When put together, the matrix results in 12 “objective intersections” that address the challenges faced by the fire service. These intersections become the new Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives.



Over the next two and a half days of the summit, participants were assigned to one of four breakout groups, with each group assigned to develop a vision for the new initiatives under one of the pillars. Each group was then further divided into three subgroups with each subgroup assessing one of the new initiatives. Subgroups were rotated between the three initiatives under the assigned pillar so that multiple views were recorded on each initiative. Once all three subgroups had completed a review of the three initiatives, the entire breakout group convened to validate the principles established for each initiative. The principles included an assessment of key performance indicators (KPI’s) (how will we know that we are succeeding at meeting the goals of the initiative?),

targets (when should we expect to see progress/change?), and action items (what needs to be done to accomplish the goal?) All this information was collected by NFFF moderators to help define the new framework for the FLSI and develop a "roadmap for the future".

As a final activity, three breakout groups were assigned, one looking at the program (what does the NFFF and the fire service need to do to implement the new FLSI's?), one looking at the logo (the current Everyone Goes Home logo needs to change to reflect the new FLSI's, and the third looking at additional considerations such as cost and how to best communicate the change to the fire service. The information collected will be used by NFFF in the implementation of the new initiatives.

Personal observations:

1. This summit is likely to be one of the most impactful to the fire service since the first summit in 2004.
2. Departments should embrace the change and seek to implement the new initiatives to reduce LODI's and LODD's.
3. These processes must have additional volunteer participation and input. I felt like a minority during some of the discussions but was not afraid to speak up for the volunteer voice. NVFC should consider developing a closer relationship with NFFF so that volunteers have a greater representation as State Advocates and participating in events such as summits.

FIREFIGHTER LIFE SAFETY SUMMIT

20th Anniversary

Roadmap to the Future

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI • AUGUST 27-28, 2024

Disclaimer

- Much work is ahead before the “new” Life Safety Initiatives are ready to be implemented.

- The information presented is based on my own personal participation in FLSS #5 and does not represent the position of the NFFF or the NVFC.

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Firefighter Life Safety Summit

Established with a goal of defining policies and training programs to reduce Firefighter Line-of-Duty Injuries and Deaths

- 2004 – Tampa, FL
- 2007 – Novato, CA
- 2014 – Tampa, FL
- 2022 – San Antonio, TX
- 2024 – St. Louis, MO

Developed in FLSS #1

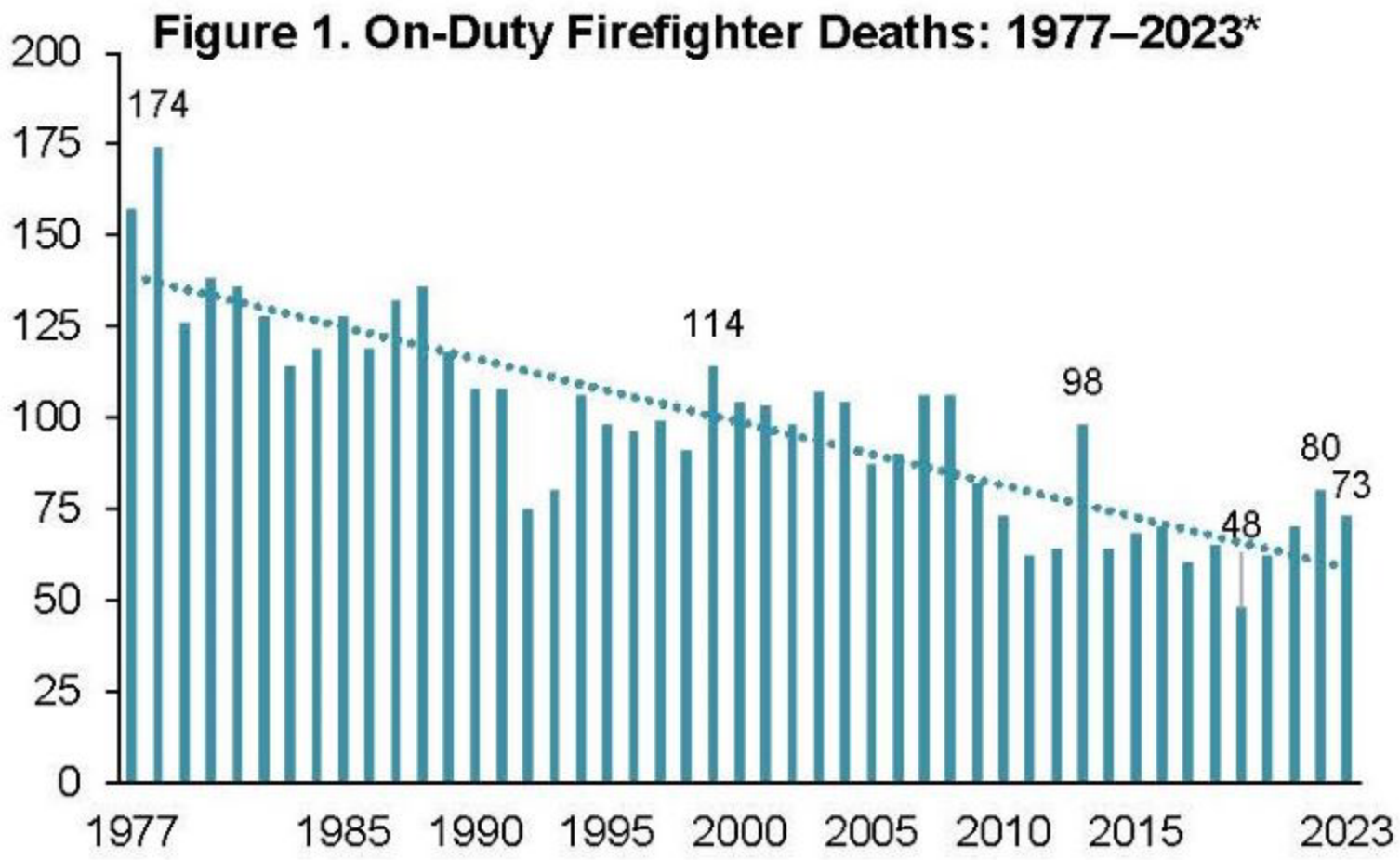
Tampa, FL - 2004

16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives

1. Define and advocate the need for a cultural change within the fire service relating to safety; incorporating leadership, management, supervision, accountability and personal responsibility.
2. Enhance the personal and organizational accountability for health and safety throughout the fire service.
3. Focus greater attention on the integration of risk management with incident management at all levels, including strategic, tactical, and planning responsibilities.
4. All firefighters must be empowered to stop unsafe practices.
5. Develop and implement national standards for training, qualifications, and certification (including regular recertification) that are equally applicable to all firefighters based on the duties they are expected to perform.
6. Develop and implement national medical and physical fitness standards that are equally applicable to all firefighters, based on the duties they are expected to perform.
7. Create a national research agenda and data collection system that relates to the initiatives.
8. Utilize available technology wherever it can produce higher levels of health and safety.
9. Thoroughly investigate all firefighter fatalities, injuries, and near misses.
10. Grant programs should support the implementation of safe practices and/or mandate safe practices as an eligibility requirement.
11. National standards for emergency response policies and procedures should be developed and championed.
12. National protocols for response to violent incidents should be developed and championed.
13. Firefighters and their families must have access to counseling and psychological support.
14. Public education must receive more resources and be championed as a critical fire and life safety program.
15. Advocacy must be strengthened for the enforcement of codes and the installation of home fire sprinklers.
16. Safety must be a primary consideration in the design of apparatus and equipment.

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation®

On the Web at: www.FireHero.org

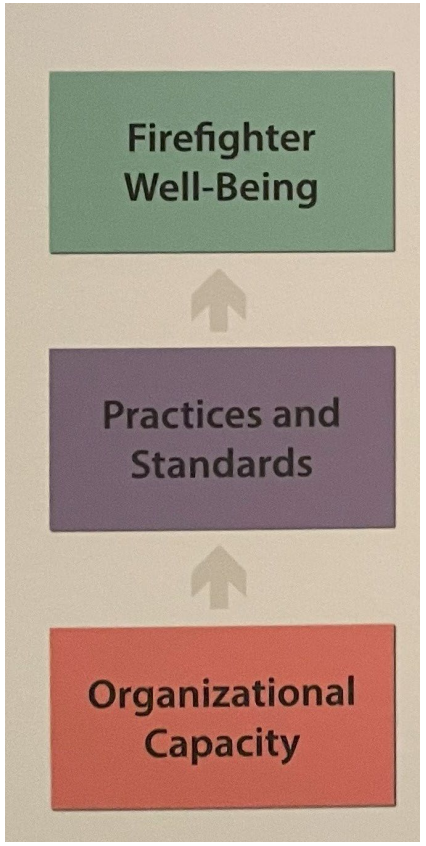


*Does not include the 343 firefighter deaths at the World Trade Center in 2001.

It’s All About the Shoes !!!

Steps for Defining a New Framework for FLSI

- Apply a “Balanced Scorecard”
  - Begin with a foundation of principles reflecting the vision for the organization (“pillars”).
  - Consider multiple perspectives for what that vision should be.
  - The perspectives define the Objectives (initiatives) - How will we achieve the principles?
  - Next step, define the Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s) – How will we know that we are successful?
  - And then, the Actions – How will we get there?


Firefighter Well-Being
Practices and Standards
Organizational Capacity

I
II
III
IV
SURVIVAL CULTURE & LEADERSHIP
HEALTH & WELLNESS
TRAINING & COMPETENCY
COMMUNITY & GOVERNMENT
INITIATIVE 1: MENTORSHIP MOMENTUM
Foster a sustainable culture of knowledge transfer and motivation to mentor, ensuring that the torch of mentorship is passed through successive generations.
'04 LSI: 3. RISK MANAGEMENT | 1. CULTURAL CHANGE | 4. EMPOWERMENT
INITIATIVE 4: MINDFUL RESILIENCE
Actively promote resilience training and other mental health resources for firefighters to support their overall well-being.
13. COUNSELING AND SUPPORT | 6. MEDICAL AND FITNESS STANDARDS
INITIATIVE 7: LIFELONG LEARNING
Offer education and training opportunities that are accessible to all firefighters and across all stages of the career, ensuring that firefighters stay up-to-date with the latest techniques and technologies.
9. INVESTIGATION | 5. TRAINING STANDARDS
INITIATIVE 10: COMMUNITY CONNECTION
Conduct community outreach programs that educate the public on fire safety and prevention, while also advocating for policies that support firefighter safety.
14. PUBLIC EDUCATION | 15. CODE ENFORCEMENT AND SPRINKLERS
INITIATIVE 2: LEADING THE WAY
Establish consistent leadership practices that empower all members to model survival-focused behaviors and promote a culture of growth and resilience.
11. RESPONSE POLICIES | 4. EMPOWERMENT | 1. CULTURAL CHANGE
INITIATIVE 5: EVOLVING HEALTH PRACTICES
Establish and regularly update health and wellness policies, including regular health screenings and fitness assessments, to reflect evolving science and best practices.
9. INVESTIGATION | 6. MEDICAL AND FITNESS STANDARDS
INITIATIVE 8: TRAINING & INNOVATION
Leverage innovative learning technologies to expand access to high-quality training.
8. TECHNOLOGY | 2. ACCOUNTABILITY
INITIATIVE 11: ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY
Develop and maintain long-standing policies and procedures for engaging with government and community stakeholders.
10. GRANT SUPPORT | 11. RESPONSE POLICIES
INITIATIVE 3: LEADERSHIP EVOLUTION
Develop leadership training programs that identify and strengthen the attributes and competencies necessary to foster a survival-oriented culture within fire service organizations.
4. EMPOWERMENT | 2. ACCOUNTABILITY | 1. CULTURAL CHANGE
INITIATIVE 6: COMPREHENSIVE WELLNESS PROGRAMS
Design comprehensive wellness programs that can be integrated into the daily routines of all fire departments.
13. COUNSELING AND SUPPORT | 6. MEDICAL AND FITNESS STANDARDS
INITIATIVE 9: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFICIENCY
Maintain awareness of skill proficiencies throughout the organization to address and fill training gaps.
7. RESEARCH AGENDA | 5. TRAINING STANDARDS
INITIATIVE 12: FORGE SHAREHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS
Build partnerships with governmental agencies and community organizations to support fire service initiatives.
12. VIOLENT INCIDENT PROTOCOLS | 10. GRANT SUPPORT

The Road Ahead

- What NFFF needs to do:
  - Refine the new initiatives based on input from the LSS participants
  - Update or generate new training programs
  - Develop an awareness campaign for the new initiatives

- What you need to do:
  - Educate yourself and your members on the new initiatives
  - Embrace the initiatives as a way to reduce LODIs and LODDs