

**Collaborative Agreement**  
**between**  
**The Oregon Fire Chiefs Association (OFCA)**  
**and**  
**The Occupational Safety and Health Division (Oregon OSHA),**  
**Department of Consumer and Business Services**

**Introduction**

This agreement is the result of an expressed interest by the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association (OFCA) to build upon the pre-existing informal working relationship with Oregon OSHA by creating a more formal safety and health partnership. Oregon's fire service is one of the state's most important assets. The continued safety of firefighters in the state is of paramount concern to both the OFCA and Oregon OSHA.

**OFCA Activity**

The OFCA will augment existing Oregon OSHA activities by focusing on three major categories of firefighter injury and illness (taking into account both frequency and severity) that are not normally the type of situations addressed by Oregon OSHA enforcement activity: Heart ailments, vehicle and driver safety, and musculoskeletal sprains and strains.

- Heart-related ailments represent the leading cause of death for firefighters, approaching half of all firefighter deaths (45 to 48 of the roughly 100 deaths that occur nationally each year).
- Vehicle-related fatalities represent the second leading cause of death, representing roughly one-quarter to one-third of all firefighter deaths (26 to 36 nationally each year).
- Strains and sprains represent between 42 and 48 percent of all reported injuries each year.

**Heart Ailments:**

The goal of the program will be to create a cultural change and reinforce good habits by rewarding firefighters when they are observed participating in safe or healthy activities or submit ideas for improvement of the safety or wellness program. The program to address heart ailments will be comprised of several facets:

- The OFCA will introduce a statewide wellness initiative, complete with a coaching model.
- The wellness program will include a positive reinforcement element, promoted by a fire service vendor.
- A statewide group health program will be introduced that includes annual physicals and a high-quality health consultation.
- Physical fitness coaching, which also will assist with sprains and strains in addition to heart-related issues.
- Five-minute daily safety training will also be implemented to increase awareness and personal responsibility at staffed stations.

- All-volunteer stations would be asked to use the 5-minute safety training at each regular drill session to keep personnel focused on safety.

#### OFCA Inspection/Audit Activity:

The current schedule of OFCA safety inspections will be revised and the number of inspections will be increased. Data from Oregon OSHA citations will be used to further focus the OFCA activities. Recommended solutions and “best practices” will be collected, sorted by category and shared throughout the fire service to improve hazard recognition as well as knowledge of Oregon OSHA requirements.

#### Training:

The current number of regional safety workshops conducted by OFCA will be increased and expanded. Examples of current classes offered are:

- Accident Investigation
- Safety Committee Operations
- Oregon OSHA Top 25 Citations
- Near Miss Program
- 10 Most Common Injuries to Firefighters
- How to Develop a Strategic Plan
- Company Officer Leadership
- Cultural Drift

#### Research:

A team will be assembled to conduct a needs analysis to determine areas where training is needed. Members of the team would represent safety officers from Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue and Clackamas Fire District, Jeff Griffin and Paulette Oliver from Wilson Heirgood Associates and a representative from Oregon OSHA. Members of the team will coordinate the development and delivery these fire-service specific safety and health training programs as requested by membership or revealed by the statewide needs analysis.

#### **Joint Oregon OSHA/OFCA Activity:**

Oregon OSHA and OFCA will:

- Meet at regular intervals to review workers compensation injury and illness trends and district experience modification factors to help focus training, OFCA inspections and Oregon OSHA consultative visits where most needed.
- Regularly review national trending information and data received from the National Fire Protection Association, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and the National Council on Compensation Insurance.

- Regularly review Oregon OSHA enforcement reports so that the OFCA can relay data to members for training purposes.

**Oregon OSHA Activity:**

Oregon OSHA will support this effort by the following:

- Participation on the research team and the regular meetings.
- Discuss enforcement scheduling protocols related to the fire service with the OFCA prior to implementing any changes.
- Provide services to the fire service using sufficient numbers of consultants and enforcement staff who have specific training, experience or a combination of the two that provides them with an understanding of the unique risks, dangers and operating conditions of the fire service.
- Provide safety training at the annual OFCA conference.

**Terms of Agreement:**

This agreement remains in effect until terminated. Either party can propose revisions to the agreement by providing written notice to the other party. Either party can terminate the agreement by providing at least 30 days written notice to the other party.