

**FIRE & RESCUE** DEPARTMENTS OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA



# Northern Virginia Fire & Rescue Chiefs Committee Charter

November 2021

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## Mission Statement

The Fire and Rescue Departments of Northern Virginia is a regional coalition of fifteen-member fire and rescue departments. Our mission is to provide the Northern Virginia region with the best possible emergency and prevention services through shared use of resources and coordinated emergency response with emphasis on standard operational procedures, training, health and safety, leadership education, mutual aid, communication, legislation, administration, and other concerns of cooperative benefit.

The coalition is organized into an operational structure that includes officer positions, section and groups and is led by the Northern Virginia Fire and Rescue Chiefs Committee (“NOVA Chiefs Committee”).

## Membership, Officers, and Committees

The NOVA Chiefs Committee is comprised of the fire and rescue chief or agency head from each fire and rescue department or agency.

## Purpose

The NOVA Chiefs Committee is primarily responsible for analyzing, planning, evaluating, and providing policy recommendations concerning regional:

- Public safety issues related to fire and emergency medical services;
- Collaborative leadership and succession planning;
- Hazardous materials and technical rescue;
- Fire prevention and code enforcement;
- Organizational management and administration;
- Homeland security and infrastructure protection; and
- Emergency response to weapons of mass destruction and all hazards disaster response.

## Specific Activities

- Develop recommendations concerning fire, rescue, and emergency medical services (EMS) issues common to the Northern Virginia Emergency Services Mutual Response Agreement.
- Establish interoperable radio and computer aided dispatch (CAD) communications and data systems and coordinated fire and rescue communications procedures among the 911 centers or public safety access points (PSAP).
- Develop common operational and response procedures that provide for shared use of special emergency response teams, equipment assets, and other regional resources operated under the National Incident Management System (NIMS) format.
- Standardize fire, EMS, and emergency service policies, procedures, apparatus, and equipment whenever and wherever feasible.
- Support the health and wellness of fire and rescue department personnel.
- Develop cooperative fire and EMS operational and leadership training programs that support regional procedures and programs.
- Develop cooperative partnerships and relationships with allied public safety agencies in the region including law enforcement, emergency management, transportation, public health, and public works at the federal, state, and local level and formalize relationships with external organizations.

- Evaluate and provide recommendations regarding federal and state legislative and regulatory initiatives that may have potential effect on service delivery.
- Coordinate resourcing and funding opportunities that enhance readiness, preparedness, response, and resilience.
- Provide the regional Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) with policy briefings and recommendations concerning fire and EMS issues.

## Member Departments

The NOVA Chiefs Committee is comprised of chief fire officers from the following agencies who have developed cooperative relationships to improve the delivery of fire and emergency medical services:

- City of Alexandria Fire Department
- Arlington County Fire Department
- City of Fairfax Fire Department
- Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department
- Fauquier County Department of Fire Rescue and Emergency Services
- Fort Belvoir Fire and Emergency Services
- Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Fire Department
- Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System
- City of Manassas Fire and Rescue Department
- City of Manassas Park Fire and Rescue Department
- Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority Fire and Rescue Department
- Mount Weather Fire and Rescue Department
- Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue
- Quantico Marine Corps Base Fire and Emergency Services
- Stafford County Fire and Rescue Department

## Committee Meetings and Chair Responsibilities

The NOVA Chiefs Committee, their subcommittees and working groups must have a quorum in order to conduct official business. The quorum must include the chair or vice-chair of the committee and shall be a minimum of half of the membership plus one.<sup>1</sup> The use of video conferences and teleconferences is encouraged.

### Elections

The Chairperson and Vice-Chair of the NOVA Chiefs Committee, Senior Operations Chiefs Committee, and Administrative Chiefs Committee shall be elected for a two-year term in November of even numbered years to take office the following January. Any officer may be removed by majority vote. The Chairperson rotates, alphabetically, by jurisdiction<sup>2</sup> for planning purposes and to ensure ownership of the position. During an election year, if the incoming jurisdiction is unable<sup>3</sup> to assume the position, the next jurisdiction in the rotation may accept an early appointment or the committee may nominate an alternate jurisdiction. The Vice-Chair shall be nominated and selected based on interested and capacity to support the committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Delegates may contribute towards the quorum.

<sup>2</sup> In January 2021, Prince William County assumed the Chair position.

<sup>3</sup> For example, because of internal leadership changes or capacity issues.

The Chairperson and Vice-Chair of all other subcommittees and working groups shall be nominated and selected based on interested and capacity to support the group. Terms will also be two-years in length.

## Officer Vacancies

In the event of a vacancy occurring in any elected office, the committee or working group shall nominate and select a replacement by majority vote who shall serve until the next annual election.

## Chairperson (“Chair”)

The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the committee or working group; he/she shall have general and active management of the business and strategic direction of the group and shall see that all orders and resolutions of are carried into effect. The Chair shall establish any committee or task force as is necessary in accordance with the purpose and objective of the committee or working group.

Specific to the NOVA Chiefs Committee, the Chair shall serve as the chief executive officer and will liaise, on behalf of the committee, with the NOVA Chief Administrative Officers. The Chair, in coordination with the Fire Chiefs Budget Oversight Committee, will ensure routine review of the NOVA Chiefs Committee’s Financial Account.<sup>4</sup> The Chair is authorized to make purchases and/or payments from the financial account. On behalf of the NOVA Chiefs Committee, the financial account is managed by the Northern Virginia Emergency Response System (NVERS).

## Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair shall, in the absence or inability of the Chair, perform the duties of that office.

## NVERS Steering Committee Representatives

The NVERS Steering Committee is an interdisciplinary, interjurisdictional forum for regional collaboration, analysis, and recommendation making. The role of the Steering Committee is to identify capability gaps, recommend solutions to address gaps (e.g., development of regional plans, training opportunities, equipment acquisition, or policy), recommend grant-funded initiatives to the Board of Directors, and ensure that all projects and initiatives undertaken advance the preparedness of Northern Virginia.

Two representatives from the NOVA Chiefs Committee will serve as liaisons to the NVERS Steering Committee, to provide regional guidance from the fire service’s perspective. Representatives will be elected for two-year terms.

## Subcommittees and Groups<sup>5</sup>

To support regional initiatives, enhance cross-jurisdictional communication and collaboration, and provide professional development opportunities, the fire and rescue departments of Northern Virginia have created numerous committees and working groups. The entities discussed below provide recommendations or guidance on a multitude of subject matters.

All subcommittee and working group chairs are responsible for reviewing and submitting minutes, prepared by NVERS staff, to the NOVA Chiefs Committee within five business days of their meeting. Each committee or working group will select a chair or liaison to provide updates and/or briefings to the NOVA Chiefs Committee, as requested.

## Senior Operations Chiefs

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<sup>4</sup> For more information on the financial account, please see the *Northern Virginia Fire Chiefs Committee Financial Procedures and Policies (2019)*.

<sup>5</sup> For additional information on the roles and responsibilities of the Fire Chiefs’ subcommittees and groups, please see *The Guiding Principles for Committees and Administrative Procedures Manual (“Book 1”)*.

The Senior Operations Chiefs Committee is comprised of the assistant or deputy chief from each fire department or agency responsible for managing operations and ensuring regional emergency interoperability. Their role is to develop the specific operational doctrine to meet the strategic direction provided by the NOVA Chiefs Committee.

### **Administrative Chiefs Committee**

The Administrative Chiefs Committee is comprised of the assistant or deputy chief from each fire department or agency responsible for managing administrative, fiscal, fleet, facilities, professional development, or other non-operational functions. Their role is to develop the specific policies, practices, and systems to meet the strategic direction provided by the NOVA Chiefs Committee.

### **Fire Marshals Committee**

The Fire Marshals Committee is comprised of the chief fire marshal from each fire department or agency responsible for code compliance, investigation, and fire prevention. Their role is to coordinate regulatory, legislative, and prevention activities based on the strategic direction provided by the NOVA Chiefs Committee.

### **Leadership Development Institute (LDI) Advisory Board**

The LDI Advisory Board is comprised of representatives from the Fire Chiefs Committee, Senior Operations Chiefs Committee, Training Committee, LDI staff, a Northern Virginia Emergency Response System (NVERS) project manager, and at-large members. Their role is to implement the vision of the Fire Chiefs and provide direction and guidance to the LDI staff to ensure the program's delivery fulfills the mission.

### **Fire Operations Board**

The Fire Operations Board is comprised of operational, senior command level officers from each fire department or agency. Their role is to maintain regional interoperability through the development and/or refinement of operational and procedural manuals, informational or procedural bulletins, or other initiatives as assigned.

### **EMS Operations Board**

The EMS Operations Board is comprised of the senior EMS program manager from each fire department or agency. The board is responsible for addressing and maintaining EMS interoperability and their role is to conduct research and develop recommendations to enhance the regional delivery, training, procedures, and guidelines for EMS service.

### **Communications Committee**

The Communications Committee is comprised of the communications program manager from each fire department or agency. Their role is to coordinate regional communications protocols and procedures, develop recommendations to enhance communication efforts, and maintain regional interoperability.

### **Training Committee**

The Training Committee is comprised of the senior training program manager from each fire department or agency. Their role is to coordinate regional training needs, ensure effective delivery of training, and recommend enhancements to regional training opportunities.

### **High Threat Response (HTR) Committee**

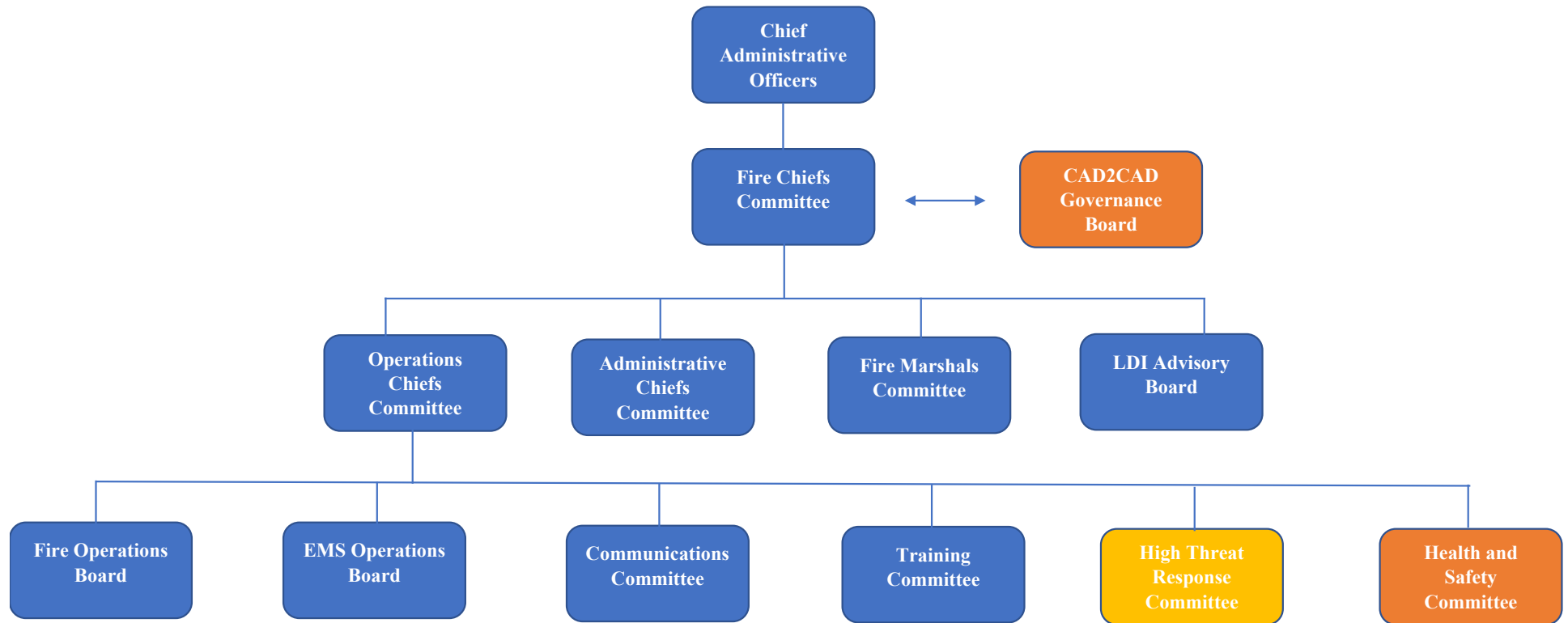
The HTR Committee is a multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional entity, comprised of jurisdictional representatives from the region's law enforcement, fire/EMS, public health, and emergency management agencies. Their role is to maximize the region's prevention of, response to, and management of novel threats, atypical incidents, asymmetrical attacks, and unconventional events.

### **Health and Safety Committee**

The Health and Safety Committee is comprised of the lead health, wellness, and safety officers from each fire department or agency. Although a formal Northern Virginia group does not exist, the representatives from Northern Virginia meet as members of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) Health

and Safety Committee. Their role is to develop and/or update policies, as well as address issues related to the health and safety of firefighters.

# Appendix A: Northern Virginia Fire and Rescue Chiefs Committee Organizational Chart (2021)



Northern Virginia Committees

Multi-Disciplinary Committees

MWCOG Committees



## Appendix B: Multi-Year Strategic Initiatives

In 2013 and 2015, the Fire Chiefs Committee conducted “recommitting to regionalization” work sessions, in which they established or validated strategic priorities for outyears. The result of those sessions yielded various priorities, ranging from health and wellness to intelligence sharing. In February 2019, members of the committee met to review, discuss, and determine next steps associated with the past initiatives. Listed below are the current multi-year strategic initiatives.

### Health and Wellness Initiative

#### Description

The initiative will seek to provide the best health and wellness opportunities for Northern Virginia fire and rescue personnel. This will be achieved through a shared awareness of jurisdictional health and wellness policies, leveraging best practice approaches across the region, championing common programs to reduce financial impacts, and examining near miss/post incident analyses to affect policy and/or procedural changes.

#### Outcome(s)

The initiative will result in the following:

1. A shared awareness of jurisdictional health and wellness best practice programs and initiatives.
  - a. Development and utilization of a document repository to store jurisdictional health and wellness policies to meet or exceed the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1582: *Standard on Comprehensive Occupational medical Program for Fire Departments*. For example:
    - i. Physical Fitness Programs
    - ii. Nutritional Programs
      1. Healthy Meal Plans
    - iii. Cardiovascular Health
    - iv. Cancer Prevention
    - v. Traumatic Exposure Recovery for (Psychological) Stress
      1. Peer Delivery Model
    - vi. Health and Safety Officer Programs
    - vii. O2X
      1. Peer Fitness Trainers
  - b. Examination of long-term jurisdictional planning to continue to enhance fire and rescue personnel health and wellness (e.g., novel disease planning, etc.).
2. A review of health and wellness programs to inform policies and procedures who agencies seeking accreditation.
3. Identification of health and wellness programs or approaches to champion collectively, leveraging a regional contracting vehicle to reduce jurisdictional financial impacts.
4. The development of an online database of regional close calls/near miss and post-incident analyses.
  - a. A component of the database will include a fillable form/template to gather lessons learned and offer recommendations moving forward.

#### Next Steps

1. Gather and consolidate jurisdictional health and wellness best practice programs and initiatives on [www.NVERSSharePointWorkSpace.com](http://www.NVERSSharePointWorkSpace.com).
2. Gain consensus on health and wellness programs or approaches to champion collectively.
3. Gather and examine near miss and post incident analyses from regional events.
  - a. Ex. *Significant Injury Investigation Report, Firefighter Crushing Injury, City of Alexandria Fire Department (2018)*
  - b. Ex. *Confined Space Close Call Incident, Fort Belvoir Fire and Emergency Services (2019)*

### **Fire Chief Champion**

Chief Denise Pouget, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA)

## **Professional Development**

### **Description**

The Northern Virginia Fire Chiefs Committee is committed to developing, maintaining, and enhancing professional development opportunities for agency members. The Committee will take steps to develop leaders at all levels to improve the fire service in Northern Virginia.

### **Outcome(s)**

The initiative will result in the following:

1. Develop and execute a regional command school, designed to teach Northern Virginia fire/EMS personnel on strategies and tactics.<sup>6</sup>
2. Develop and execute a regional first line supervisor training program.
3. Develop a program for identifying and advertising professional development and leadership training for fire department personnel in the region.
4. Develop and implement a mentoring, career development, professional coaching, and succession plan that ensures departments have individuals who are motivated and eligible for higher level positions, with particular focus on executive and senior manager ranks.

### **Deliverable(s)**

1. Compile listing of executive/leadership development opportunities including associated costs, requirements, and target audience.
2. Gain consensus and establish basic training and certification requirements for mid and upper-level management positions.

### **Fire Chief Champion**

Chief Tim Keen, Prince William County

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<sup>6</sup> The intent of this objective is to offer courses that better prepare Northern Virginia fire/EMS responders to attend the Northern Virginia Leadership Development Institute (LDI).

# Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Deployment Model Evaluation

## Description

The initiative will seek to better inform jurisdictions of EMS mutual aid capacity and ultimately, provide the best possible service for the citizens of Northern Virginia.

## Outcomes

The initiative will result in the following:

1. An examination of EMS station locations, deployable units housed at identified stations, and staffing requirements of EMS units.
2. A shared, regional understanding of EMS mutual aid expectations.
3. An examination of mutual aid data (i.e., number of calls requesting mutual aid vs. providing mutual aid).
4. A shared, regional understanding of jurisdictional Operational Medical Director protocols and personnel skill sets.
  - a. This item will seek to inform jurisdictional capacity and ultimately, improve patient outcomes.
5. The development of a recommendation for the regional procurement and utilization of a data analytic software platform.

## Dependencies

1. A request for review and support of the initiative will be made to the EMS Chiefs Committee.
2. Regional consensus on procurement and utilization of a single data analytic software system.
3. Funding to procure a data analytic software system.
4. As appropriate, development and approval of data sharing agreements and/or memorandums of understanding.

## Next Steps

1. The Fire Chiefs Committee will request the development of an ad-hoc working group to review data collected associated with EMS station locations, deployable units housed at identified stations, and staffing requirements of EMS units.
  - a. The working group will be comprised of select members from the EMS Operations Board, as well as operational members of Northern Virginia fire/EMS departments.
  - b. The Fire Chiefs Committee may also wish to consider representation from the Operational Medical Directors and/or hospitals on the working group.
2. NVERS staff will develop a template to capture previously collected data so jurisdictions may validate and/or update as appropriate.
3. The working group will hold a work session to develop recommendations for the Fire Chiefs Committee's consideration. The recommendations, informed by the data, may offer suggestions towards improving service delivery through relocation of deployable units or reconfiguration of unit staffing.

## Fire Chief Champions

## **Situational Awareness and Data Analysis**

### **Description**

The initiative will seek to connect the existing regional data streams to support data-driven decision-making and situational awareness within and across jurisdictions.

### **Outcome(s)**

The initiative will result in the following:

1. Regional integration of data streams with the computer-aided dispatch to computer-aided dispatch (CAD2CAD) system:
  - a. Computer-aided dispatch to geographic information systems (CAD2GIS);
  - b. First Due;
  - c. First Watch;
  - d. National Fire Operations Reporting System;
  - e. Situational awareness dashboards;
  - f. Records management systems.
2. Real-time monitoring of deployed resources, to include:
  - a. Impact of resource movement (situational and system awareness); and
  - b. “Triggers” for unit preemption.
3. The development of regional data sharing policies to avoid procurement of duplicative software and/or tools, ensure the sustainability of best practice approaches, and to provide guidance towards the consolidation of information systems.
4. The development of a repository of data and essential datasets to assist with budgetary and deployment planning, along with other processes.
5. The development of common symbology (i.e., national standards) for unit availability and situational status (within the CAD2CAD and CAD2GIS programs).
6. An annual review of best practices and technology solutions to ensure an awareness of enhancements or alternatives that better support the fire service’s mission.
7. Long-term planning considerations for deployment strategies and/or regional response models.

### **Next Steps**

1. Conduct a review of the current technology systems to determine which ones to regional integrate.
2. Revisit the *Northern Virginia Fire and EMS Assessment (Phase 1, 2016 and Phase 2, 2017)* to update, as appropriate, the outcomes leveraging identified regional data streams.
3. Assess sharing computer-aided dispatch data, record management systems, and geographic information system layers within the region.

### **Fire Chief Champion**

Chief Dave Povlitz, Arlington County

## **Collective Bargaining**

### **Description**

The initiative will seek to promote awareness of jurisdictional collective bargaining items.

### **Outcome(s)**

The initiative will result in the following:

1. Regional balancing of collective bargaining in good faith to avoid:
  - a. Confining or restricting policies;
  - b. Policies that would affect cross-jurisdictional issues; and
  - c. Impacts to jurisdictional recruiting and/or retention.
2. A comparison of ratified contract parameters (e.g., matrix or quick reference guide), for regional awareness.
3. Host a repository of active collective bargaining agreements.
4. A strategic understanding of concerns surrounding multi-year contracts.
5. Continued coordination with labor unions to ensure involvement in jurisdictional contracts.

### **Next Steps**

1. Coordinate a thirty (30)-minute panel presentation on collective bargaining for April 2021.
  - The intent of the presentation is to provide awareness level information, from the perspectives of labor attorneys, academics, and human resources professionals.
2. Annually, request a presentation from labor specialists to gain an understanding of new collective bargaining processes.

### **Fire Chief and Subcommittee Champions**

Chief Dave Povlitz, Arlington County  
Northern Virginia Administrative Chiefs Subcommittee