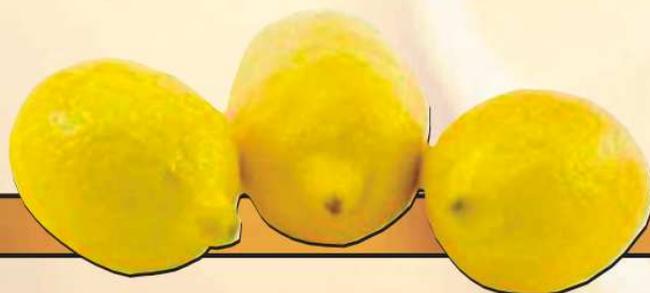


PRESENTED BY: DENNIS L. RUBIN, CHIEF

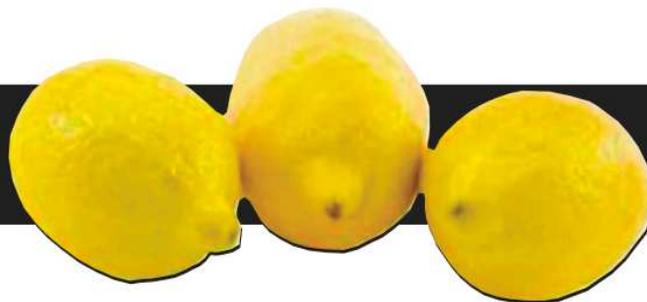


**LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS
INTO
LEMONADE**





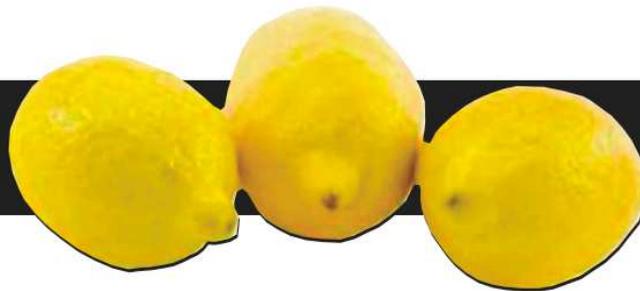
COURSE DESCRIPTION





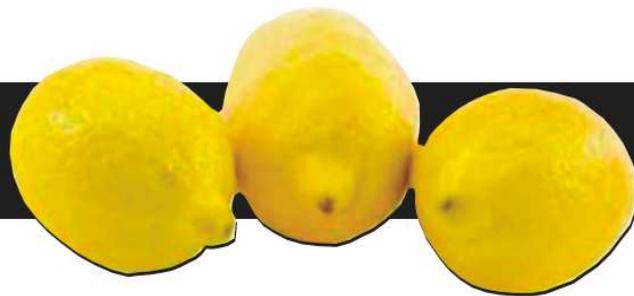
A Great Chance To Train

The Wetumpka Fire & Rescue Department is please to be able to host a great opportunity to train for volunteer and career firefighter through-out the great State of Alabama. Fire Chief Dennis L. Rubin of the District of Columbia Fire & EMS Department and formally from Dothan Fire & Rescue Department will be making an all day presentation that all fire and rescue department members will benefit from attending. Chief Rubin has developed a unique Leadership Program based on his 35 years of Fire – Rescue experience. The title of this program is called “Lemons To Lemonade: A Leadership Journey”. This very popular program has been the subject of Chief Rubin’s latest Firehouse Magazine Series “Rube’s Rules” which is currently featured by America’s most popular fire service journal.





ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT



DENNIS L. RUBIN, CHIEF



On April 16, 2007, Mayor Adrian M. Fenty appointed Dennis L. Rubin Chief of the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department – the same Department Rubin joined as a line firefighter at the age of 21. Rubin commands a staff of over 2,200 sworn and civilian employees and manages an annual operating budget in excess of \$200 million. The Department he leads is responsible for protecting more than 1.3 million people who visit, work, and live in the Nation's Capital each day as well as safeguarding our precious national landmarks from the U.S. Capitol to the White House. Prior to his nomination, Rubin was the Fire Chief of the Atlanta Fire and Rescue Department.



Chief Rubin's experience in fire and rescue service spans more than 35 years. He has served as a company grade officer, command level officer, and Chief in other cities including Chesterfield and Norfolk, Virginia and Dothan, Alabama. In 1994, he served as the President of the State Fire Chiefs Association of Virginia. Rubin was the host Fire Chief for the 1999 Southeastern Fire Chiefs Association conference held in Dothan, Alabama. He serves on several committees with the International Association of Fire Chiefs, including a two-year term as the Health and Safety Committee Chair. Chief Rubin was the host Fire Chief for the "Wingspread IV and V" conferences held in 1996 and 2006.



Chief Rubin's educational accomplishments include a Bachelor of Science Degree in Fire Administration from the University of Maryland and an Associates in Applied Science Degree in Fire Science Management from the Northern Virginia Community College. He is a 1993 graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officers Program (EFOP). Rubin is a Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) and has obtained the Chief Fire Officer Designation (CFOD) and Chief Medical Officer Designation (CMO) presented by the Center for Public Safety Excellence.



Rubin's teaching credentials are significant. They include a field instructorship with the University of Maryland Fire & Rescue Institute and Associate Instructorships with the Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia and Rio Salado Community College in Mesa, Arizona. Rubin has been an adjunct faculty member of the National Fire Academy since 1983. At the National Fire Academy he instructed, as well as developed, many courses. Rubin is also a popular speaker and lecturer at the local, state, national and international levels.

Rubin is the author of a full-length book entitled *Rube's Rules for Survival* that is available through Penn Well Publishing. He is also a long-standing contributing editor of *FIREHOUSE* Magazine, and has written more than 140 technical articles related to fire department operations, administration, training, and safety.

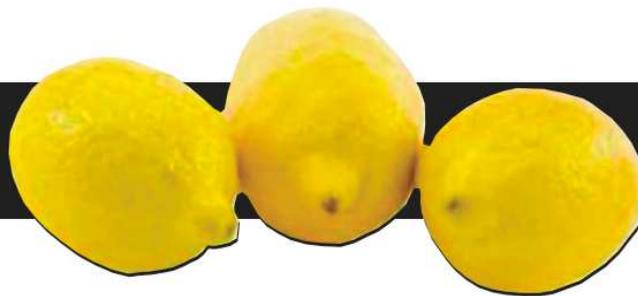
Chief Rubin has a strong commitment to community service and lives in Washington, D.C. He has three children — Dennis II, Andrea, and Ashley — and one grandchild named Luke.

1923 Vermont Ave. NW • Washington, DC 20001

Office: (202) 673-3320 • Fax: (202) 673-3187 • E-mail: dennis.rubin@dc.gov



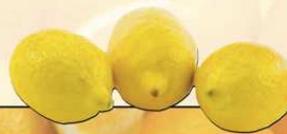
COURSE OUTLINE AND NOTE TAKING GUIDE



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT • DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT



**LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS
INTO LEMONADE**




DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT • DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT

LEADERSHIP: LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



Washington, D.C.




DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT

AND SOME OF RUBE'S RULES



**LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE**






LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



Wouldn't work without a **GREAT Boss:**



Mayor Adrian M. Fenty

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT • DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT

LEADERSHIP: LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

BUT FIRST: A QUOTE

In a recent email – “Hey Rube....”

Three Alarm Fire at a Landmark Building...

Fire hydrants that don't work...

Prostitution in the Firehouses...

Fireworks Explosion on the Mall...

Mass Causality Incident in Southeast!

Where did you get the really cool helmet shield?




DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT






**MAY 2007 TOM AURNHAMMER
DURANGO, COLORADO FIRE DEPARTMENT**

LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT



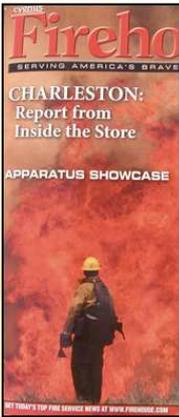
DC FIRE & EMS HAS:
Added 4 Fire Liaisons (FLOs) • Added 4 EMS Liaisons (ELOs)



Providing Agency Input at Our Communications Center

LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



77 CHIEF CONCERNS >>>

Preventing Harm, One Home at a Time

DCFD's "SAVU" Program Solves Alarm Verification and Utilization

APPARATUS SHOWCASE

Supply Strikes

**FIREHOUSE
MAGAZINE
FEATURES
DC'S
SAVU
PROGRAM**



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT

LEADERSHIP: LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

LESSON LEARNED...

**"Success has 1,000 fathers –
failure is an orphan."**



LEADERSHIP: LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



THE LEMON
Eastern Market – 225 7th Street, SE
Third Alarm – April 30, 2007.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT



- Units Responded at 00:57 Hours for the building fire
- Heavy fire was reported in the rear and through the roof
- An exterior attack brought the fire under control in just over two hours
- Efficient firefighting saved more than a third of the historic building.



LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

THE LEMONADE - DC Fire & EMS Pledges to Help Rebuild Eastern Market



- Mayor Fenty has dedicated resources to rebuild Eastern Market.
- "Market Weekend" drew huge crowds just after the fire.
- Public Education opportunity



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT • DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT

LEADERSHIP: LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

PUBLIC EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY: ALLOW SAFE ACCESS




'SEEING IS BELIEVING'



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT • DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT






**LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE**



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT



*1st Annual
Livable, Walkable Community Awards
DC Fire and EMS
Public Service Award
December 5, 2007*

**LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE**



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT



"LADDER PIPES UP! BUILDING GOES DOWN!"



LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

LESSON LEARNED...

Always expect the unexpected.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT



LEADERSHIP: LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



THE LEMON

**2nd Alarm – 801 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
August 18, 2007**

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT



Fourth Alarm Fire – Avalon Condominiums
October 1, 2007 • 2627 Adams Mill Road, NW



- Heavy fire showing through the roof on arrival
- Firefighters were trapped
- Two members were injured.

LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

THE LEMONADE

DC Fire & EMS Partners With the Adams Morgan Community



- Detailed Incident Report developed
- Tremendous service opportunity
- Community meetings
- Neighborhood BBQ.



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT

LEADERSHIP: LEMON S INTO LEMON ADE

THE LEMONADE

DC Fire & EMS Partners With the Adams Morgan Community



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT



LESSON LEARNED...

Always be open, honest, and transparent

LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

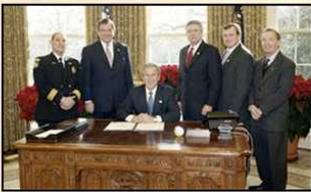


In October, DC Fire & EMS Played a Lead Role in Honoring those Lost in 2006 at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT



LEADERSHIP: LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



**PRESIDENT BUSH
SIGNS THE
'HOMETOWN
HEROES ACT'**



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT



LESSON LEARNED...

Be persistent!

LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

LEADERSHIP: LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



OLD EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING
639 17th Street, NW • Third Alarm – December 19, 2007

LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



THE LEMON
Old Executive
Office Building
639 17th Street, NW

Third Alarm –
December 19, 2007

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT • DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT • DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT

LEADERSHIP: LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



- Dispatched at 9:34 AM
- Arrived at 9:37 AM
- Tower 3 found heavy smoke
- US Marine Rescued from 5th Floor.




LEADERSHIP: LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

THE LEMONADE

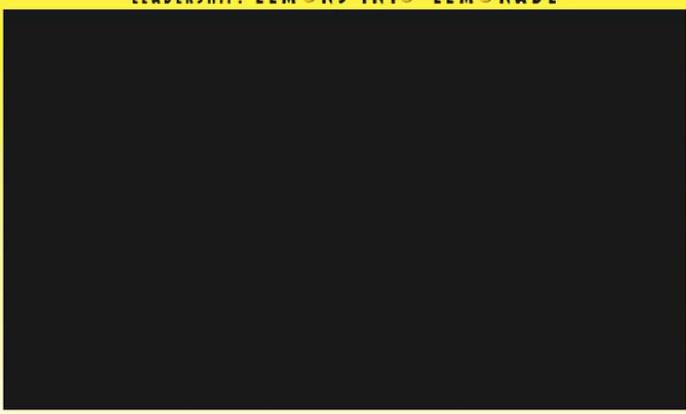


YOU'RE WELCOME, MR. PRESIDENT...

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT



LEADERSHIP: LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



JIMMY'S TIRE STORE

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT



THE LEMON



3145 Mount Pleasant Street, NW • Five Alarm Fire – March 12, 2008

LEADERSHIP:

LEMONS INTO LEMONADE





LEADERSHIP:

LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



3145 Mount Pleasant Street, NW • Five Alarm Fire – March 12, 2008



- Dispatched at 11:46 PM
- Heavily Occupied Apartment Building
- Several People Trapped.



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT

LEADERSHIP: LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



3145 Mount Pleasant Street, NW
Five Alarm Fire – March 12, 2008



RUBE'S RULES - #1



YOU GOTTA SHOW UP!

- ...At Fire Stations
- ...At Emergency Incidents
- ...At Community Events
- ...At Celebrations
- ...Lead by Example.

LEADERSHIP:

LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



RUBE'S RULES - #2



LEAD FROM THE FRONT!

- ...Set the Standard High
- ...Ethical Behavior
- ...Moral Behavior
- ...Do the Right Thing

*"Someone is always watching."
Gen. Colin Powell*



LEADERSHIP: LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



"MEN AT WORK?"



RUBE'S RULES - #8



DO THE TOUGH STUFF FIRST!

...Never Put Off the Tough Stuff

...The Rest of Your Day Will be Easy.

LEADERSHIP:

LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



RUBE'S RULES - #9



BE THE CUSTOMER SERVICE ADVOCATE!

...Crazy Job

...Paid With or Without Delivering Service

...Paid Ahead of Time

...Good News Book

...Own The Problem – Tower 3.



LEADERSHIP: LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

RUBE'S RULES - #10

PASSION FOR FIREFIGHTER HEALTH AND SAFETY!

...Members and Families First!

...First Responsibility of a Fire/Rescue Officer

...“Everyone Goes Home”

...The Sandy Lee Story.



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT



RUBE'S RULES - #11



IF I DON'T CARE...!

...You Don't Want To Work Here

...You Don't Want To Be a Member

...Time To Go To The House.

LEADERSHIP:

LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



LEADERSHIP:
LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



RUBE'S RULES - #12



PERSONAL BEHAVIOR!

...Self-Discipline is the best Discipline

...Fair, Honest, Transparent and Consistent

...The "Hot Stove" Rule.



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT

LEADERSHIP: LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



CHESTY THE MARINE



By DENNIS L. RUBIN

Rule 1: You Have to Show Up

It Seems Simple Enough, but Never Underestimate Its Value or Power

After more than four decades in our business, I have developed a list of rules that I try to live by on duty and off duty. Over the years, I kept a list of ideas on three-by-five cards and reviewed the information on them from time to time. Typically, I would pull out the cards when I was preparing for promotional interviews or simply wanted to make sure that I was focusing on what was important to me. The cards served me well, and in great anonymity, until recently.

A fire-rescue service mentor asked me to make a presentation on leadership. The specific request was to present my leadership style and philosophies to a national group of senior fire and EMS officers at a staff and command school. That is when I took out the cards and developed a successful presentation based on the rules that I had jotted down over the years. Those in the first session of "Rube's Rules: A Leadership Journey" enjoyed the information and provided positive feedback.

Since then, I have presented this material about a half-dozen times, refining the content each time. I thought that it would be valuable to our profession to take the next logical step by documenting them for publication so that more folks could have the benefit of this experience. By no means are these 13 rules new or break-through information; they would be best described as time-tested leadership points with my

personal twist. If you implement them into your daily leadership and management style, I am certain that you will improve your performance as a courageous leader within your organization.

Show up. The first rule seems simple enough, but never underestimate its value or power. Many functions and events occur in, near and around your fire department. By showing up at many of them, you raise your profile and your image within your organization.

Let me start by pointing out that no one in a leadership role should become a "micro" manager; that is, unless the folks being led are new or in need of training and personal development. That information will fall under several other rules. Your presence sends a loud and clear message that you are interested, that you care and that your members are important to you. I have heard this trait referred to by many names, but the most interesting is the "ministry of simply being there." That description has always stuck with me and it makes a lot of sense. I have spent many hours in the hospital with members who didn't know that I was there. However; being present at these critically important times makes a world of difference to those in need and the entire organization.

Another great benefit of simply "being there" is that it will change some people's behaviors and attitudes and lead them to be more productive. I have attended dozens of community fire- and life-safety educational events. On the first visit or two, the departmental folks who don't know me spend a little time saying hello and getting the "scoop" on me and what is happening at headquarters. Generally, next we talk about the importance of public education and the

role that the members play in connecting the department to the community that we serve.

Then, the members and I discuss how they should perform their duties to leave

the best impression possible with our customers. This has always been a very powerful process of street-level improvement and acceptance by the members who perceive being "stuck" doing public education. I can recall one specific "pub-ed" venture. We didn't have any citizens express an interest in accident prevention, so I challenged the crew working this event to "stir up" some interest

by asking folks to stop by the Child's Fire and Life Safety House. Before long, the team had a line of children waiting to "Stop, Drop and Roll" and slide down our "Ladder Tower" kiddie slide. What a great improvement, just because the leadership showed a little interest and support of the troops.

Pay attention to details. Another way to measure your impact on an operation is to listen to your operations radio frequency. Over the years, I have worked in cities that followed written guidelines a little closer because a chief officer has started his or her response to an alarm. I can remember as a battalion chief's driver being directed to continue a response to a "food on the stove" report. The chief had me drive to the rear of the structure to ensure that the second-in-company officer had laid a supply line there, as was required by policy (the chief checking up on a company's position at such a small incident never seemed to happen). As word got out that the newly appointed battalion chief was checking rear positions, even on small incidents, the required policy was reinforced and followed closely. 

Your presence sends a loud and clear message that you are interested, that you care and that your members are important to you.

DENNIS L. RUBIN, a *Firehouse*® contributing editor, is chief of the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department. Previously, Rubin was chief of the Atlanta, GA, Fire and Rescue Department. He holds a bachelor of science degree in fire administration from the University of Maryland and an associate in applied science degree in fire science management from Northern Virginia Community College, and is enrolled in the Fire and Emergency Management Administration program at the graduate school of Oklahoma State University. Rubin is a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officers Program, is a Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) and has obtained the Chief Fire Officer Designation (CFOD) from by the International Association of Fire Chiefs. He is an adjunct faculty member of the National Fire Academy and author of the book *Rube's Rules for Survival*.



RUBE'S RULES OF LEADERSHIP >>>

By DENNIS L. RUBIN

Rule 2: Lead from the Front

To Be Effective, Be Sure That Your Actions Match Your Words

This second column in the “Rube’s Rules” series relates to courageous leadership. Leading from the front is a simple, straightforward behavior that typically can be accomplished mostly with self-discipline and common sense. It is a concept that is easy to understand and easy to write about; however, at times, it seems difficult to perform. Interestingly, it seems that it is more difficult to lead by example for long periods, such as the length of a fire-rescue service career of 25 or 30 years. With this notion in mind, leading from the front becomes increasingly important to discuss, understand and research further to be successful for the long haul.

There are epic examples of folks saying one thing and doing exactly the opposite. “Do as I say and not as I do” doesn’t sell in America and is even weaker in emergency response circles. Do you remember the fire investigator John Orr? He was a highly decorated fire service professional who seemed to be on top of his game in every aspect. He was seemingly a very effective and respected battalion chief in Southern California who was revered by many. In fact, Orr was a sought-after lecturer and author on the topic of fire and arson investigations. Little did we know the real character of that man who was wearing the firefighter’s uniform.

The fire service was amazed to find out that Orr was one of America’s most notorious and destructive serial arsonists. He was found guilty of setting dozens of fires up and down the West Coast and even was

responsible for several fire fatalities. As Orr would travel to deliver lectures on the topic of investigating arson fires, he would stop along the way and set significant buildings on fire. Then, Orr would “just happen” to be in town after these major events, he would offer his services to the local fire marshal and he could seemingly do the nearly impossible by determining the cause of the fire quickly, accurately and effectively. I guess it helped that he had set the fires a few hours earlier. After being found guilty by a jury of his peers, Orr is now in a federal penitentiary serving a life sentence for multiple counts of murder and arson.

Put your leadership into practice. To put this rule into the context of your day-to-day leadership style, everyone in your agency is watching you. The members in your outfit hear you as well, but your actions are what they see, react to and remember. To be a courageous leader by today’s standards, your words and the actions must line up and be in sync. As a leader in your agency, there can be very little to no difference between what you say you are going to do and what you actually do. The best advice that I can give to you is to determine what your core values are and stick with them.

Most fire-rescue department leaders, from senior firefighter to fire chief, prepare and circulate a wealth of written documents (memos, e-mails, member evaluations, reports and the like). The point is that just about every member of the organization can read or hear what you are saying. Your written words have been captured (in some form or another) for all time’s sake and your actions (performance) must agree with what you say.

Many years ago, I came across a video that helps me stay focused on understanding the concept of leading from the front. A local TV station produced an undercover

news program titled “Men at Work.” The program compared public works departments in three communities performing such duties as street repairs and litter removal. Two performed above the viewers’ (and media’s) expectations. The news reporter raved about the workers, the supervision, the management performance

**“Do as I say
and not as I do”
doesn’t sell in
America and is
even weaker
in emergency
response circles.**

and the government employees in general. Undercover reporting in the third community, however, left viewers wondering whether any work was performed by the public works department or, for that matter, by any city employees. It was an indictment of all government employees – not caring, not performing their required duties and simply violating the public trust.

One supervisor was caught on tape littering and even relieving his bladder in public on the very street he was charged with keeping clean.

What were they thinking? What would the results be if the local media spent a day secretly following you and your crew for 12 hours? And, finally, we (the classes and I) have focused on the fact that we (fire and rescue) are a highly scrutinized and highly visible agency. We must always think about how we look to our key stakeholders (citizens and visitors) and always, I mean always, lead from the front.

Always remember that someone is watching you. Whether it is the public, the media or your own people, they are watching!



DENNIS L. RUBIN, a *Firehouse*® contributing editor, is chief of the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department. Previously, Ruben was chief of the Atlanta, GA, Fire and Rescue Department. He holds a bachelor of science degree in fire administration from the University of Maryland and an associate in applied science degree in fire science management from Northern Virginia Community College, and is enrolled in the Fire and Emergency Management Administration program at the graduate school of Oklahoma State University. Rubin is a graduate of the National Fire Academy’s Executive Fire Officers Program, is a Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) and has obtained the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) designation from the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC). He is an adjunct faculty member of the National Fire Academy author of the book *Rube’s Rules for Survival*.



By DENNIS L. RUBIN

Rule 3: Flawlessly Execute The Basics of Your Job

Determine Whether You Are Operating at the Top of Your Game

In this third installment of the “Rube’s Rules” series, we will discuss ensuring that the job at hand is completed safely, efficiently and effectively. I love the notion of great customer service in the ways in which we fight fires and save lives. This concept was pioneered roughly 20 years ago by Chief Alan Brunacini; this topic will be covered in a Rube’s Rule later in this series. However, the fact of the matter is that we must resolve the emergency at hand quickly and professionally; no ifs, ands or buts accepted.

Before the incident commander can call in to the communications center to get the customer service ball rolling, he or she must get the incident under control. I feel obligated to make sure that my opening statement is crystal clear to all. If the fire is still moving and out of control, but the operational focus is to worry about the Red Cross being dispatched to the emergency location to temporarily house “Mrs. Smith,” the plan is falling apart and out of balance. Obviously, Chief Lloyd Layman’s “Big Seven” structural firefighting strategies must be satisfied or at least well underway before related support activities can be implemented.

In order to perform our sworn fire and emergency medical duties, we must be capable of doing the work at hand correctly every time. At a minimum, firefighter/EMTs must be certified to the basic na-



Alan Etter/DCFD

Nothing can ever replace having the correct skills, knowledge and abilities to handle any emergency.

tional standards. When I speak of efficiency, one old axiom comes to mind that is a great example: “Extinguish the fire and it will be contained (most of the time) quickly.” Of course, you cannot always apply this thought process, but based on the situation, time, fuel configuration, building construction and the like, there are times when it does hold true. Nothing can ever replace having the correct skills, knowledge and abilities to handle an emergency regardless whether it is a multi-systems trauma or a second-alarm apartment fire.

Being a big fan of the U.S. military, and in particular the U.S. Marine Corps, I have used a particular phrase to discuss the importance of core values. The slogan is, “Once a Marine, always a rifleman.” The point is to focus attention on the core mission of the Marine Corps to protect our nation from foreign and domestic enemies by being an excellent infantryman. As you can tell, this is a very important statement and speaks volumes about being able to flawlessly execute the basics of one’s job. In the Marine Corps, whether you are a four-star general or a newly appointed private, you are first and foremost a rifleman. The comparison is that if you are going to claim to be a firefighter (regardless of your affiliation

– volunteer or career), you must maintain the basic training requirements and certifications to do your job (i.e., EMT, Firefighter 1, Firefighter 2).

During a presentation on leadership, a PowerPoint slide appeared bearing that Marine Corps phrase. A chief officer raised his hand to comment. He came to his feet (a little unusual for a fire-rescue leadership class) and went on to tell an interesting personal story. The chief was a “ring knocker” (graduate) from the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO. He had done very well in his studies, graduated with honors and received a commission as a second lieutenant in the Air Force. The first official act of the new “butter bar” lieutenant was to request a transfer of his commission to the U.S. Marine Corps. After a few weeks of waiting and a few other administrative steps, he was accepted into the Corps. His first assignment was to be shipped to Parris Island, SC, to learn to be a rifleman, followed by the standard Officer Candidate School; no shortcuts and a good measure of respect for the core value of being a rifleman. This mission-critical phrase was reinforced that day and continues to keep me focused on just how important it is to “flawlessly execute the basics of your job.”

DENNIS L. RUBIN, a *Firehouse®* contributing editor, is chief of the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department. Previously, Ruben was chief of the Atlanta, GA, Fire and Rescue Department. He holds a bachelor of science degree in fire administration from the University of Maryland and an associate in applied science degree in fire science management from Northern Virginia Community College, and is enrolled in the Fire and Emergency Management Administration program at the graduate school of Oklahoma State University. Rubin is a graduate of the National Fire Academy’s Executive Fire Officers Program, is a Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) and has obtained the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) designation from the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC). He is an adjunct faculty member of the National Fire Academy author of the book *Rube’s Rules for Survival*.

The measurement for all of our credentials (EMS, fire, rescue, hazardous materials and the like) should be the same as our emergency medical certifications. I have had the wonderful opportunity to be a part of several fire-EMS departments in different states over the past few decades. With each opportunity (new department), I was the final authority to determine whether my fire-related certifications were acceptable. The state health department (or the equivalent) would review my EMS records and prescribe what training and updated certifications I would need to be a member of the new outfit. Whether it was a required CPR recertification course or a complete NREMT course and testing, it was clear what I had to do to be qualified/certified in the new community. As you can tell, I am very much in favor of national certifications for all of our core disciplines, using the various certification agencies.

The final logical point is to briefly discuss improving your various certifications and capabilities. That is raising the bar as the leader (be it the formal or informal leader) to make sure that you and your department grow and keep up with the changing times. I can remember that in 1971, Private D.L. Rubin was required to successfully complete the American Red Cross Advanced First Aid Course as part of a nine-week firefighter recruit school. This training was great for the times, but within that same year it was determined to be outdated and not comprehensive enough for ambulance service. Our department adapted to and required emergency medical technician certification as the baseline and included paramedic training. We have never looked back!

Can you imagine never obtaining current information? This could never happen in the medical world, so I am asking you to make the same commitment in all phases of your career. The National Fire Academy offers one of the best leadership development processes with the Executive Fire Officer program. This four-year training curriculum touches on all types of strategies to improve your effectiveness as a leader. You should consider obtaining the Institute of Public Safety Excellence's Chief Fire Officer designation and Chief Medical Officer designation. These designations are a specific and measurable way to determine whether you are operating at the top of your game and to keep your skills, knowledge and abilities up to na-

There is no more important function for a firefighter/EMT than to be able to flawlessly perform his or her job when the chips are down. The lives of all first responders and the lives of those in the community that they are sworn to serve are literally on the line every time an emergency vehicle goes out the door. Until next time, be safe out there!





By DENNIS L. RUBIN

Rule 4: Relentless Follow-Up

Liability, Public Trust and Agency Integrity Depend on Meeting Obligations

I am fortunate to be able visit a few different fire-EMS departments each year and check out how they operate. From departments on New York's Long Island to the West Coast, it is difficult for me not to stop in and say hello and, if the opportunity exists, to watch as members of the hosting department apply their trade skills.

Universally, I would say that the departments do a great job of following through with the tasks at hand. For instance, when "incident command" calls on the radio for "Division 2" working a hoseline fighting fire on the second floor and there is no response, the process is typically consistent from one agency to another. A second radio call is made in an attempt to raise the attention of the operating companies. Once that second attempt is made, usually a Mayday is transmitted and a long list of reactionary steps is taken to locate, protect and remove the companies that are in distress. Fortunately, the root cause of this Mayday rescue activity is a communications problem of one type or another and the operating units were not in too much distress.

The point of this story is that we are great at "relentlessly following up" at most emergency incidents, when our members lives are at risk. However, we get side tracked when less-interesting



Alan Eter/DCFD

As part of the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department's "Smoke Alarm Utilization and Verification Program," firefighters install free smoke alarms in homes on request. The senior officers who oversee this program are regularly reminded of the importance and consequence of failing to meet the schedules agreed on with occupants.

situations occur (perhaps the routine issues are the toughest) and follow-up is a lot more difficult, but still very important organizationally and professionally.

Follow-Up Has Its Rewards

At a seminar on quality improvement, a city manager mentioned that the city he worked for had received the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award for being one of the world's best-run cities. It was obvious to see the pride in the face and voice of this public-sector executive.

After discussing the award for a few minutes, the manager joked and pointed out to the group that among the qualifications that his city possessed was the ability to return the one telephone call that the evaluation team placed to this large, southwestern city's switchboard

late on a hot summer afternoon. As the Baldrige evaluation team would tell this city manager much later in the evaluation process, 10 calls were placed to 10 major cities around the world in a way that would generate a return call. Only two cities were willing to follow up and learn of the opportunity to be declared one of the world's best-run cities – and his was one of the two. There were many, many more performance measures that were evaluated and the entire process took over six months to complete, but the very first step to be considered was to simply follow up and return a telephone call.

I had a similar experience when I worked in Atlanta, GA. The Fireman's Fund Insurance Co. had selected the greater Atlanta area to be the host region for the second phase of the nationwide kickoff of its now very popular Heritage Program. I received a telephone call from one of FFIC's vice presidents, Daryl Siry, who wanted to set up a meeting to discuss how his company would provide equipment and other resources for the department and other agencies in the metro area.

I was very skeptical about agreeing to hosting this vague planning meeting and the "too good to be true" opportunity caution lamp lit as Daryl described this event. In fact, Mr. Daryl had already set up a time and a date that he and his team would arrive at my office to review their plan. Very lucky for Atlanta Fire-Rescue that I was available and able to meet with the Heritage Team with little notice and little background information. Having met with dozens of sales folks, I was thinking that there had to be a "hook" of some type. Well, the FFIC Heritage Program was exactly what Daryl had described. The Atlanta metro area was awarded nearly \$500,000 in various grants and Atlanta Fire-Rescue was the recipient of nearly a quarter of a million bucks, simply because we followed up on

DENNIS L. RUBIN, a *Firehouse*® contributing editor, is chief of the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department. Previously, Ruben was chief of the Atlanta, GA, Fire and Rescue Department. He holds a bachelor of science degree in fire administration from the University of Maryland and an associate in applied science degree in fire science management from Northern Virginia Community College, and is enrolled in the Fire and Emergency Management Administration program at the graduate school of Oklahoma State University. Rubin is a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officers Program, is a Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) and has obtained the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) designation from the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC). He is an adjunct faculty member of the National Fire Academy author of the book *Rube's Rules for Survival*.

drawn hose wagons (although those were the good old days)! Plain-text messages are a must for all response agencies; include your police department as well. No worries about a missed interrupted code or a misunderstood one with the plain-talk text.

Perhaps the most important concept is that of using the communications order model all of the time. Always briefly, but accurately repeat the message to ensure understanding and reception of the message. When command gives the order to a truck company to provide positive pressure ventilation to the fire floor, the truck company assigned must restate the chief's message to ensure that communications has occurred. "Copy," "Received," "OK" or any other limited acknowledgment is just a communications trap waiting to bite an officer. Take the time to briefly restate the core idea of the message to make sure that the direction was received and understood. "Command to Engine 25." "Engine 25. Go with your message, Command." "Engine 25. Advance a 2½-inch handline to the second-floor bedroom in quadrant C - Charles and attack the fire. You are assigned as Division 2 supervisor." "Engine 25 copies. Advance a 2½-inch handline to second-floor bedroom on quadrant C - Charles and attack the fire and assume Division 2 supervisor." "Affirmative Engine 25." The complete idea has been communicated from one person to another with a high degree of understanding.

A running complaint that I hear about using the communications order model is that there is not enough radio time or personnel to use such an elaborate process to get a simple task communicated. The reality is that you can't afford not to use this system, which is intended to prevent mistakes, omissions or duplications of tasks. The last thought for this column is to remember to use the phonic alphabet when communicating, such as C as in Charlie, as in the above example. By using the phonic pronunciation, understanding will be greatly increased and confusion and mis-

Summary

There is an art to learning how to communicate at an emergency incident. There is a great deal of stress and other negative impacting factors that must be resolved to be an effective communicator. There are a lot of items that can be used to help make the process flow smoother from understanding

the process to the difficulty to understanding and applying the tricks of the trade.

Please take the time to learn more about effective communications and training on all of your department's policies and procedures as though your life depends on it, because it does! Until next time, be safe out there!





By DENNIS L. RUBIN

Rule 5: Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!”

The Art of Learning How to Communicate at Emergency Incidents

Without a doubt, the process of communicating is critical in every phase of emergency services work. Interesting enough, how effective we are at communicating on the emergency scene will likely determine the outcome of the success or failure of our events. In fact, next to operational tactics, strategy, and execution, proper and effective communications are likely the next most important process that we engage in performing. When communications are effective all seems to go well and when they don't disaster occurs just about every time.

There are brilliant case studies that identify examples of great communications and studies that describe very, very poor ones. Both will be explored in the column, along with ways to ensure that your critical communications processes are effective. Non-emergency situations require effective communications as well, but the focus of this article will be that of what happens while we are working on the streets.

The \$64,000 question to be considered is whether two people can have perfect communications under ideal conditions. As you have likely guessed, this is a trick question. A hint: Are you married or do you have any teenagers at home? Usually, these notions elicit a chuckle or two from most folks, understanding that the

DENNIS L. RUBIN, a *Firehouse®* contributing editor, is chief of the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department. Previously, Rubin was chief of the Atlanta, GA, Fire and Rescue Department. He holds a bachelor of science degree in fire administration from the University of Maryland and an associate in applied science degree in fire science management from Northern Virginia Community College, and is enrolled in the Fire and Emergency Management Administration program at the graduate school of Oklahoma State University. Rubin is a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officers Program, is a Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) and has obtained the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) designation from the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC). He is an adjunct faculty member of the National Fire Academy author of the book *Rube's Rules for Survival*.



Alan Etter/DCFD

Make sure that your critical communications processes are effective.

process of perfect communications is difficult at best even under ideal conditions. Starting with the basic concept of communicating an idea or thought is developed by a person sending (sender) a message to another person (receiver). This message must travel through some sort of medium, perhaps a portable radio, to the receiving person. Generally, there is some sort of interference (background noise, accents, volume to mention just a few) that degrades the quality of the message. Then the receiving person has to encode the message to provide feedback or take action.

Here's a personal example. In 1990, my son was in the final approach to graduate from high school. He was a good student (Bs and Cs), a quality athlete and in general a very well-behaved young man during his attendance. Well, at about T-minus six weeks, my son asked me to buy him a car to reward him for his efforts. Needless to say, I agreed with very little thought, knowing that he had performed so well.

In the flash of the instant of me saying yes to his request, he was visioning sporting around in a Corvette or perhaps it was a Porsche or some equally exotic and expensive automobile. I had clearly thought that the family VW Bug would be the ticket. Perhaps with new paint, tires, brakes

and a little body work, I would be able to provide him with great transportation for an investment of about \$1,000. Needless to say, we were both taken aback (a lot for me) in trying to understand each other's concept of a graduation gift. Had our communications failed? The compromise was a pickup truck that was a few years old and bought from a local car dealer.

Now, I must ask, do you think that my namesake was wearing a facepiece and talking to me through an 800-MHz portable radio? Dennis was not crawling through smoke or under great stress in an IDLH atmosphere while he was communicating with his dad. Think back to the situation of the discussion; it was under ideal and relaxed conditions. Neither the sender nor the receiver had to compete with screaming sirens or roaring diesel engines. I assure you that there was no breaking glass, smoke detectors or fire alarm systems squealing providing interference noises.

Tricks of the Trade

When we communicate at most alarms, all of the above factors must be considered and overcome for us to be effective at the mission-critical function of communications. Transmit your message in a concise, clear, calm and commanding (projected, but not screaming) voice. When the transmit key is activated, pause for just a fraction of a second so that (hopefully) your radio will capture the signal, ensuring that the entire statement is heard by all on the alarm. Next, always use standard messages and directions that are incorporated into your department's policy and training. All operational communications must be based on the National Incident Management System (NIMS) model, following the protocols. The day of the "10 codes" and other coded messages have gone the way of the horse-

drawn hose wagons (although those were the good old days)! Plain-text messages are a must for all response agencies; include your police department as well. No worries about a missed interrupted code or a misunderstood one with the plain-talk text.

Perhaps the most important concept is that of using the communications order model all of the time. Always briefly, but accurately repeat the message to ensure understanding and reception of the message. When command gives the order to a truck company to provide positive pressure ventilation to the fire floor, the truck company assigned must restate the chief's message to ensure that communications has occurred. "Copy," "Received," "OK" or any other limited acknowledgment is just a communications trap waiting to bite an officer. Take the time to briefly restate the core idea of the message to make sure that the direction was received and understood. "Command to Engine 25." "Engine 25. Go with your message, Command." "Engine 25. Advance a 2½-inch handline to the second-floor bedroom in quadrant C – Charles and attack the fire. You are assigned as Division 2 supervisor." "Engine 25 copies. Advance a 2½-inch handline to second-floor bedroom on quadrant C – Charles and attack the fire and assume Division 2 supervisor." "Affirmative Engine 25." The complete idea has been communicated from one person to another with a high degree of understanding.

A running complaint that I hear about using the communications order model is that there is not enough radio time or personnel to use such an elaborate process to get a simple task communicated. The reality is that you can't afford not to use this system, which is intended to prevent mistakes, omissions or duplications of tasks. The last thought for this column is to remember to use the phonic alphabet when communicating, such as C as in Charlie, as in the above example. By using the phonic pronunciation, understanding will be greatly increased and confusion and misunderstanding limited.

Summary

There is an art to learning how to communicate at an emergency incident. There is a great deal of stress and other negative impacting factors that must be resolved to be an effective communicator. There are a lot of items that can be used to help make the process flow smoother from understanding

the process to the difficulty to understanding and applying the tricks of the trade.

Please take the time to learn more about effective communications and training on all of your department's policies and procedures as though your life depends on it, because it does! Until next time, be safe out there!





By DENNIS L. RUBIN

Rule 6: Consistent Performance

Consistency Must Include the Ability to Perform Correctly and Effectively

Perhaps the most important trait for any organization is consistent performance in every aspect of its operation. I cannot think of a single agency that doesn't want to be consistent in how it functions and delivers services or products to its customers.

The American fire-rescue service is no different. A comment that a fire chief hates to hear is several or even many fire departments are operating under the banner of his or her agency. For example, seven battalions times three shifts could equal 21 small departments within one agency. Some outfits devote a lot of time to achieving and measuring their performance to ensure that they are consistent in all that they do. Other departments place little or no emphasis on consistent performance.

Consistency must include the ability to perform correctly and effectively. We in the fire-rescue service must strive for consistently good or even consistently great performance because lives depend on our abilities. A department's strategic vision should call for consistently great performance by all members and companies all of the time and provide a way to measure the results. This organizational goal is simple to recite and understand, but it is difficult for any agency to achieve, much less one that must work under demanding constraints all of the time.

DENNIS L. RUBIN, a *Firehouse*® contributing editor, is chief of the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department. Previously, Rubin was chief of the Atlanta, GA, Fire and Rescue Department. He holds a bachelor of science degree in fire administration from the University of Maryland and an associate in applied science degree in fire science management from Northern Virginia Community College, and is enrolled in the Fire and Emergency Management Administration program at the graduate school of Oklahoma State University. Rubin is a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officers Program, is a Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) and has obtained the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) designation from the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC). He is an adjunct faculty member of the National Fire Academy author of the book *Rube's Rules for Survival*.



Courtesy of DCFD

We must strive for consistently good or even consistently great performance because lives depend on our abilities.

If standard operating procedures (SOPs) or even the style of hose loads are based on the shift that is working that day, true consistent performance will be difficult to impossible to reach. In some places, core operations change in measurable and visible ways from one platoon to another. If there is a void in operational procedures, if training to support the procedures is not sustainable and in place, or if an agency's policies are not enforced, the outfit will never attain consistently good performance. All of these elements must be in place, described officially and supported organizationally all of the time if the agency is to achieve this highly desirable outcome. In fact, a reward system must be established around attainment of consistency. If the leadership of the agency fails to set standards and provide the needed resources and incentives, the department is destined to varying results and varying community satisfaction levels.

To underscore the importance of this organizational goal, let's talk about an American institution that exudes consistency in products and performance. Many years ago, when Ray Kroc and his McDonald's team put forth the concept of a fast-food hamburger restaurant, the core value

would become consistency. Think about the last time you visited a McDonald's restaurant near your home. Then, think about the last time you visited a McDonald's more than 100 miles from your home. What was that experience like? I would be willing to guess that the visit was just like the one at your home-based McDonald's.

I would submit that you enjoy the same tastes, flavors and textures at the remote location. I would further venture to say that the restaurant was reasonably clean with customer service that you have grown to expect from this giant corporation. I am thinking that the pricing was roughly the same, as were the shape and size of the parking lot.

Early into this great economic venture, the management structure figured out that consistency was the way that McDonald's would be a highly profitable corporation. About five decades later, the company is thriving and is a model for consistent performance. The company spends a great deal of time and energy to ensure that a customer's dining experience is a controlled and expected one. We could learn a lot from the model that this fast-food outlet provides for us.

The consistency journey should start with the development of clear, concise and well-written policies. Some organizations are reluctant to place their policies into a written format due to the legal concerns. The arguments stem around the belief that if policies, procedures or protocols are committed to paper, the agency could be held accountable for substandard performance in a court of law. In fact, there is an element of fire chiefs who think that the documents need to be described as "guidelines," not procedures. Regardless of the name selected for the organizational directives, they will have to be memorialized in print and available for frequent reference.

Next, there must be a formal way of learning and sustaining the information by the members of the department who

will be delivering services to the public. Often, organizations develop an initial officer training program and the follow-up retention is left up to chance. The best systems that focus on consistent process incorporate an ongoing training component that makes sure that the mission-critical information is renewed and reviewed on a regular basis.

The last step that helps to ensure consistent performance is a follow-up enforcement component. The best position that the chief could hope for would be that the follow-up/enforcement element is figuring out a reward system because the members follow the policies, procedures and protocols every time and need only positive reinforcement. The reality, however, is that sometimes we must be guided toward compliance. A standard, clear, transparent, fair and equitable follow-up system should be developed and implemented to keep the agency focused on consistently high-quality and correct performance.

When I discuss consistency, I must include a comment about using job aides to ensure that we get the task at hand completed correctly the first, every time. The District of Columbia Fire & EMS Department has just implemented a structural fire and special operations "Job Aide" that lets responding companies complete a quick reference while responding to a specific type of alarm. The concept is that an officer can complete a last-minute check to ensure that all elements of a particular pre-determined assignment are handled correctly on every single response (consistent behavior/performance). The DCFD Job Aide will soon be added to every officer's riding position on engines, trucks and rescue squads. If you are interested in an electronic copy of this document, please e-mail us at www.dc.gov/FEMS.

Advanced life support/basic life support (ALS/BLS) medical protocols are in a final review by several outside agencies to ensure that they meet best practice and legal sufficiency. As they are completed and placed into service, a comprehensive training program will be delivered to all pre-hospital care providers and a Job Aide developed with a copy to be carried on every ambulance. This action item should be completed by the end of this calendar year, so if you are interested in that material as well, stay tuned and please let us know of your interest.

We use several checklists during emergency events that keep us focused

like a laser during immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH) operations. After several rounds of Mayday training evolutions, a useful and effective Mayday checklist was finalized and added to the resources that the incident commander has at his or her disposal at the command post. Finally, a "mini" operational critique is conducted after each work-

ing incident, while still on location and before the units are allowed to return to service, to discuss whether we followed our policies at each significant event. This procedure, developed by our operations commander, Chief Lawrence Schultz, has had amazing impact and results to help us ensure constantly perfect operational performance.





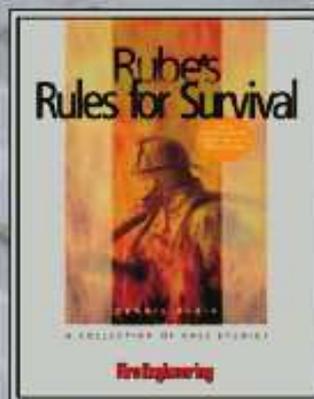
ORDER NOW!!

RUBE'S RULES FOR SURVIVAL

ONLINE AT WWW.FIRERUBE@GMAIL.COM

YOU MAY MAIL THE ORDER FORM BELOW TO:

**D.L. RUBIN & ASSOCIATES
6722 3RD ST., NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20012-2750**



RUBE'S RULES FOR SURVIVAL

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

NUMBER OF COPIES - _____

PRICE EACH X **\$13.05**

SHIPPING & HANDLING **+\$3.95**

TOTAL ENCLOSED - \$ _____

- CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PLEASE -