

Fire Department Tradition and Firefighter Safety

Chief Dennis Compton



Respecting and Embracing Tradition

And

Perhaps the Greatest Tradition is Unity

Introspection is a Key to this Session

We Preach UNITY

- **We're Family**
- **Brothers and Sisters**
- **We can Count on Each Other**
- **Leave Nobody Behind**
- **Where You Go – I Go**
- **Don't Leave Me – I Won't Leave You**
- **Refer to Station as Our House**
- **Mourn and Celebrate Our Losses**

Despite Our Many Differences – We Must Value the Tradition of UNITY

- **Ethnicity**
- **Color**
- **Gender**
- **Sexual Orientation**
- **Religion**
- **Politics**
- **Young**
- **Old**
- **Civilian**
- **Sworn**
- **Other Differences**

Some Fire Department Characteristics That Can Make Unity Challenging

- Long Term Employment
- Decentralized Workforce
- Fire Station Life and Work Shifts
- Department “Folklore” and the “Myth” that *Anything Goes*
- Strong Personalities
- Enabling Behavior
- Individual and Systemic Biases
- Requires “Introspection” by Individuals and the “Organization”

Has the Nation's Societal / Political Environment Made Fire Department Unity More Challenging?

- For Individual Members**
- For Department Leaders at All Levels**
- For Labor and Volunteer Leaders**

How Do Leaders Best Lead and Teach the Tradition of Unity?

- Stress Individual Responsibility
- Instill Accountability
- Clear Expectations and a Defined Culture
- Supervisory Training (1st Level – at All Levels)
- **Leadership Training**
- Set the **Example**:
 - + For Individual Members
 - + For Department Leaders at All Levels
 - + For Labor and Volunteer Leaders

**Leadership plays a huge role in
maintaining unity**

**And leadership is
role-based – not rank-based**

Remember These Three Things About Leadership – Trust – and Respect

1. We Lead primarily by example
2. If you lie, steal, or talk behind people's backs – people won't Trust you or your decisions
3. If you're rude or disrespectful towards others – people won't Respect you

Your attitude
– positive or negative –
is contagious

If You're an Officer – Be a Leader

Unity Must Remain a Coveted Tradition and Value for Myriad Reasons. Bottom Line – **it Matters!**

- Service Delivery
- Firefighter Safety
- Managing Internal Conflict – Deciding How We
Choose to Use the Time We Have
- What Matters Most in the End? **UNITY**

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