

Changing the Will and Battling the Egos in Today's Fire Service

November 13th, 2010 Firefighter Chance Hyatt Zoble of the Columbia Fire Department (SC) was tragically killed while operating at a brush fire on a busy interstate just outside the City of Columbia. Drawing from personal experience of knowing what it takes to change a department's behavioral culture after a tragedy, this presentation will explore this and several additional high-profile incidents of LODD lessons learned, as well as significant issues effecting health and safety which according to the US Fire Administration, almost all point to a similar root cause: The need for culture change and the reduction of risk-taking behaviors. But changing the fire department's culture can be a battle of wills and egos. We will review several insights from industry experts, as well as publications from multiple government and nonprofit fire service organizations, as well as, the lasting impact on firefighters, families and the community when a preventable tragedy strike. This will be accomplished through personal testimonies, videos and interactive discussions. The ambitious, interactive class will review Columbia Fire Department's LODD and resultant Roadway Safety SOG implementation, importance of Cancer Prevention Initiatives, Risk-Management Discussions, and the role of strong leadership in initiating a needed culture change BEFORE tragedy strikes. Personnel will leave this course with the knowledge of what it takes to be an effective change agent, as a leader, to prevent line of duty injury and death. One life lost to a preventable tragedy, is one life too many.