On Thursday, January 16, the Tallahassee Fire Department hosted Fire Ops on the Hill, a training exercise where elected officials and staff from the City of Tallahassee, Florida Legislature and Florida Chief Financial Officer’s office learned what it means to be a firefighter. The exercise, which was designed to simulate everyday scenarios that local firefighters face, had participants donning fire safety gear, operating fire equipment and experiencing heart-pounding emergency situations.

“Seeing is believing and when we put these individuals in the heat of the moment and allow them to operate the equipment, it gives them a greater respect for everything that goes into being a firefighter,” said Lt. Mike Bellamy who is the Public Information Officer for the Tallahassee Fire Department. “I just thought about when firefighters have to do this, they do it under extreme circumstances,” said Representative Allen Williams. “Today was a simulated approach. But to have to do that, think about all the different things you have to do and go save a life, it gives you a great sense of appreciation for what they have to do.”

Participants taking part included Tallahassee Mayor John Marks; State legislators and their aides, including Senator Bill Montford, Representative Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda and Representative Alan Williams. Officials from the Florida Chief Financial Officer’s office, representatives from the Tallahassee Fire Department and the Florida State Fire Marshal’s Office were all on hand showing off the capabilities of their respective agencies as well as the collaboration that exists between them.

This exercise took participants through several interactive stations, including hazardous materials, vehicle extrication and urban search and rescue/rappelling. The finale was an arson demonstration with the Florida State Fire Marshal’s Office showcasing the work of an arson detective and his K9.

This event also served to spotlight the Tallahassee Fire Department’s training facility and the important role it plays in keeping fire service professionals appropriately trained to respond to local, state and regional emergencies.

What is Confined Space Rescue?

Many workplaces contain areas that are considered "confined spaces" because while they are not designed for people, they are big enough for workers to enter and perform certain jobs. A confined space is not designed for continuous occupancy and also has limited or restricted means for entry or exit. Confined spaces include tanks, vessels, silos, storage bins, hoppers, vaults, pits, manholes, tunnels, equipment housings, ductwork, pipelines, etc. When emergencies occur in these spaces, emergency crews are required to wear special equipment which includes rope, breathing apparatus and additional rescue equipment to remove the victim. The Tallahassee Fire Department is equipped to handle most any confined space rescue and trains often throughout our community to ensure the highest level of readiness.
Smoke Alarms

Earlier this year, the Tallahassee Fire Department took receipt of 1,000 smoke alarms donated by the Home Depot, located at 3200 Capital Circle NE. The smoke alarms were awarded to the Home Depot by Kidde in recognition of its efforts to help keep our communities and local residents safe. The Tallahassee Fire Department is currently utilizing the smoke alarms to support our existing fire prevention campaigns. “Smoke alarms are vital to our community and provide the early warning necessary to escape a deadly fire”, said TFD Fire Prevention Division Chief Bill Ekwall. “We are excited and very thankful that the Home Depot has provided the free smoke alarms that will continue to support our fire prevention programs.”

The Tallahassee Fire Department Smoke Detector Program began in the early 1980's and was designed to provide senior citizens and low-income citizens with a smoke detector for their home. Senior citizens have an increased risk of dying in fires. More than 1,200 Americans over the age of 65 die as a result of fire and 3,000 are injured due to residential fires each year. Over the years, the department has installed many smoke detectors throughout Tallahassee and Leon County.

Understanding Smoke Alarms

The two most commonly recognized smoke detection technologies are ionization smoke detection and photoelectric smoke detection.

**Ionization** smoke detection is generally more responsive to flaming fires.

How they work: Ionization-type smoke alarms have a small amount of radioactive material between two electrically charged plates, which ionizes the air and causes current to flow between the plates. When smoke enters the chamber, it disrupts the flow of ions, thus reducing the flow of current and activating the alarm.

**Photoelectric** smoke detection is generally more responsive to fires that begin with a long period of smoldering (called “smoldering fires”).

How they work: Photoelectric-type alarms aim a light source into a sensing chamber at an angle away from the sensor. Smoke enters the chamber, reflecting light onto the light sensor; triggering the alarm.

The best evidence has always indicated that either type of smoke alarm will provide sufficient time for escape for most people for most fires of either smoldering or flaming type. However, research is ongoing, and standards are living documents. If at any time, research points to a different conclusion, then that will lead to proposals for changes in the NFPA standard or the closely related Underwriters Laboratories standard for testing and approving smoke alarms. Both organizations currently have task groups looking at smoke alarm performance in the current home environment.

More info: www.talgov.com/fire
What You Need to Know after a Fire Occurs?

The Tallahassee Fire Department responds to over 300 building fires each year with a large number of those occurring in family dwellings. “Home fires in our community are more prevalent than most people realize,” says Lt. Mike Bellamy who is the Public Information Officer for the Tallahassee Fire Department. “Most people don’t consider what types of things need to be handled after a significant fire occurs in their home, so we provide a copy to residents at the scene of the incident.”

Contacting your homeowner’s insurance company is the first step you should take after a fire. It is important to have your insurance company’s contact information saved in your cell phone so that you don’t have to rely on going back into your home right away to retrieve documents. The fire department will also help you connect with local emergency disaster relief services such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army and Good Will. These agencies can also help with temporary housing, clothing, medications and other essential items.

Your insurance company will need a copy of the fire report, which can be requested by contacting the Tallahassee Fire Department Front office at 850-606-6600. You will also want to notify your mortgage company of the fire. Create an inventory of damaged property or total loss of items to have ready after it is safe to return to your home. IRS 574– Tax Information of Disasters, Casualty Losses and Thefts will also provide information on how to assist you with your property loss. Lastly, be prepared to contact local and state government agencies to replace important documents and records, i.e., birth certificates, title deeds, and wills.

What Not to do After a Fire:

⇒ Do not re-enter the house,
⇒ Do not attempt to turn on power, the power company will be responsible for restoring power.

Day of Service Helps Educate Residents of the Risks of Home Fires

The Tallahassee Fire Department joined forces with the Capital Area Red Cross in taking a creative approach to observing the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday by promoting fire safety in Tallahassee. Over 100 volunteers took to the Winthrop Park neighborhood, walking door to door passing out fire safety information, as well as providing smoke alarms to residents. “We were excited when the Red Cross contacted our department to partner in this day of giving,” said Fire Prevention Div. Chief Bill Ekwall. “Fire safety education is grassroots and having an opportunity to have a face to face interaction with members of our community is priceless.” After volunteers canvased the 32303 area of Tallahassee speaking with residents about fire safety, the day continued with a free fire safety event at Winthrop Park.
Fire Station 2, located at 2805 Sharer Road, opened on Thursday, April 5, 2001. The inaugural shift on duty was Lt. Zeb Daniels, Lt. Robert Obernier, Driver-Operator Richard Tryon, Driver-Operator Brett Anderson, Firefighter Shane Hopkins and Firefighter Brooks Hall. The Station houses an engine, a ladder truck and the department’s Hazardous Materials Team. The Station cost $2.2 million and is 16,000 square feet. The official grand opening was on Tuesday, May 1, 2001. The original Station 2 was opened at 224 E. 6th Avenue in 1951. The firefighters were responsible for building and maintaining fire trucks during that time period and the shop was located in the rear of Fire Station 2.

The Florida Photographic Collection is an internationally recognized component of the State Archives of Florida and contains over one million images, and over 6,000 movies and video tapes. Over 174,000 of the photographs have been scanned and placed on this website.