



**Public Safety
Medical
Services**

By the numbers...

60

Percentage of Americans who have a fire escape plan

1500

Number of structure fires caused by outdoor grills in 1999

41.7

Percentage of Americans reporting using an illicit drug at least once

70

Percent increased risk in men of dying from heart disease if low in fitness

Sources: NFPA, SAMHSA, and the Cooper Institute for Aerobic Research

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Public Safety Health and Wellness

Serving Those Who Protect Our Cities, Homes, and Lives

Featured Department

Children Inspire Alexandria Fire Chief to Create Program

by Christopher M. Costlow, M.S.

Alexandria, Indiana – More than a century and a half ago, the first settlers came to Alexandria. The discovery of natural gas in 1887 grew the population of this Madison County town from 491 to 7,221 in 1900. As the gas slowly burned itself out by the early 1900's, some of the population left. Today, it stands at 6,000. During World War II, Alexandria was selected as **the** typical American town and highlighted in a book distributed in 1943 called Small Town, U.S.A.

Not Your Typical Department The Alexandria Fire Department is anything but typical. With only 13 sworn and 6 part-time personnel, they are all cross-trained in a variety of special rescue techniques. These include: extrication, Hazmat, search and rescue, and confined space entry. Child protective service and domestic violence training are provided as well.

With two major highways running through town (S.R. 9 and 28), the department sees its fair share of emergency runs. Sometimes these runs can be delayed from the more than 25 trains that come rumbling through town on any given day.

Nearby volunteer fire departments from Frankton, Richland Township, Pipe Creek, and Summitville help supplement the runs.

Children a Top Priority Alexandria Fire Chief Mike Hensley had a vision to provide both prevention and intervention services to ensure the safety of children in Madison County. His vision became reality when the **Community**

Connection Program was introduced in 2002.

The program is funded through a focus grant from the United Way of Madison County, the Indiana Children's Trust Fund and private contributions. The overall goal is to reduce the number of children who are harmed, abused, and neglected.



The **prevention** component includes the presentation of the *Talking About Touching* program in Alexandria, Anderson and Elwood Elementary schools. The program helps keep children safe from victimization and provides tools for controlling impulses. So far, 1,850 children are reached each year with this message. Alexandria, Anderson and Elwood fire stations are also designated as safe havens for children experiencing a crisis ranging from being locked out of the house to being the victim of abuse. Each participating establishment posts a window decal identifying the site as a *Safe Haven*. These **intervention** sites serve as temporary safe places where the

victim can receive assistance. Personnel will make calls for the victim with the goal of getting them to relevant services as quickly as possible. To date, 14 children have accessed this service. A 24-hour crisis response support is provided by *Alternatives Incorporated* out of Anderson.

Chief Believes in Wellness

Providing a wellness program to his personnel was an easy decision for Chief Hensley. After all, being a small department makes the loss of any personnel due to a preventable injury or death significant. The chief provides annual physicals and medical testing and is looking to implement a fitness program in the near future. His personnel have accepted the program with open arms. "They see the benefits of maintaining good health in how they do their jobs," he says. "Just like preventive maintenance is important for your vehicles, it is necessary to help personnel perform at their best as long as possible."

Fast Facts on the Alexandria Fire Department	
Fire Chief	Mike Hensley
Pop. Served	12,000
Area Protected Avg. Runs/Year	51 Sq. Miles 1300
# of Stations	1
# Sworn # Part-Time	13 6
Average Age	28.3 years
Special Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hazmat ● Extrication ● Search & Rescue ● Confined Space





Public Safety Psychology News

Interview Skill Development for Applicants and Promotion Candidates

by Jeffrey C. Savitsky, Ph.D., JD

Many applicants and promotion candidates assume that there is nothing that they can do to improve their scores from the interview phase of a selection process. They assume that interviews reflect underlying skills and abilities that cannot be changed in any significant manner. These are the candidates who explain the fact that they were not selected for a position by noting that they "do not interview well." The assumption that their interview skills cannot be changed is incorrect. Instead, applicants and promotion candidates can do a lot to improve their chances of excelling during a selection interview.

A candidate's efforts to improve their interview scores should begin well before the day of the interview. That is, the ability to respond effectively during an interview is a skill that can be learned and practiced but this process takes time.

Role Playing Hones Skills

I have found that the most effective way for practicing interview skills is to role play in front of a video camera. Under this system, a candidate has a friend ask them a series of questions that the candidate answers as if an interview board was present. The presence of the camera makes the situation feel as if it is a real interview in front of a real interview board. The candidate can also review the recording of the interview

at a later time and thereby observe and evaluate his or her performance. Of course, some candidates will review the recording and not find any reason for change. But most will be able to identify personal behaviors that need improvement.

A second benefit of role playing interviews in front of a video camera is that simply doing this activity seems to improve the level of comfort and self confidence that an individual will have during an interview. The fact is, that even without feedback, the simple act of practicing in front of a camera seems to help candidates overcome the anxiety and nervousness that will interfere with their ability to present

themselves effectively to an interview board.

Be Familiar with Questions

Of course, simply practicing interviews to gain personal confidence and self assurance is only part of the preparation to improve skills. Another critical preparation step is to become familiar with the content of likely interview questions. Candidates should go to the library and review books that are designed to help people prepare for interviews. These books will typically contain many of the types of questions that will be asked during selection and promotion interviews.

Dr. Savitsky is the director of the Institute for Public Safety Personnel, Inc. He can be reached at 1-800-892-IPSP or e-mail at jeff@ipsp.net.



Your Health and Fitness

New Maximal Aerobic Capacity Analyzer Available at PSMS

by Jason Hammersley, M.A. and Nichole Andersen

Public Safety Medical Services (PSMS) recently acquired a new cardiorespiratory instrument called the VmaxST.

Maximal Oxygen Uptake Can Be Measured Directly

The VmaxST is a portable metabolic gas analyzer which utilizes a method of indirect calorimetry to measure energy expenditure during physical activity. With this new instrument, PSMS will now not only be able to measure sub-maximal oxygen uptake (as we do with the treadmill test) but maximal oxygen uptake as well.

Portability Allows For Testing in the Field

Because the VmaxST is portable, it is extremely valuable to our research. It allows us to measure the energy expenditure required for job-specific activities such as climbing a ladder, lifting heavy equipment, or apprehending a suspect.



Easy to Use and Comfortable

Another benefit to the VmaxST is its ease of use and comfort. Unlike older models, the client wears a facemask as opposed to a mouthpiece. The shoulder harness that securely straps around their chest is similar to a flak jacket or air pack. It's also versatile. The VmaxST is able to analyze oxygen and carbon dioxide exchange while walking, running, or performing public safety duties. Once the client has finished the maximal exercise test, the data

collected from the VmaxST is analyzed with state-of-the-art computer software.

DNR Utilizes the VmaxST

Recently, PSMS utilized the VmaxST metabolic gas analyzer on more than 50 Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) recruit trainees. The information from these tests allowed the DNR to know definitively the applicants' aerobic fitness level and evaluate the effectiveness of their previous exercise program.

All Public Safety Agencies Could Benefit

Like DNR, other public safety agencies could benefit from this new equipment. Departments who require certain minimum standards for aerobic fitness levels could use this type of test to determine and set a minimum level of oxygen uptake an individual needs to perform job-related tasks efficiently without putting themselves or others in danger. Knowing your

personnel's maximal aerobic capacity will provide the confidence that this individual is capable of performing their job successfully and safely.



More Information

For more information on maximal aerobic testing or the VmaxST, please contact Tisch Williams, manager of the human performance lab.

Jason is an exercise physiologist and Nichole is an exercise science intern with Public Safety Medical Services.



Public Safety Medical News

Is Monkey Pox a Threat?

by Steven M. Moffatt, M.D. and Ellen K. Walsh, P.A.-C

The recent media reports of human monkey pox outbreak in Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin have created concern about public safety in the face of a rare infectious disease right in our backyards. What is it? How did it get here? What are the symptoms? Is there a cure? Who's at risk? How can we prevent its spread? How can we protect our community and ourselves from further infection?

The Arrival of Monkey Pox

Human monkey pox is a rare disease that occurs mainly in the rain forest countries of western and central Africa. It was first clinically identified in laboratory monkeys, but its original host is probably an African squirrel. Other rodents also get monkey pox and its introduction to the United States was made with the importation of several species of rodents from Africa for sale as pets. The virus was subsequently transmitted from these infected rodents to native Prairie dogs that are also sold as pets. Transmission of

the virus to humans has been linked to direct exposure to infected animals. The CDC and FDA have imposed a ban on interstate commerce and importation of Prairie dogs, and six species of rodents from Africa. These include tree squirrels, rope squirrels, dormice, Gambian giant pouched rats, brush-tailed porcupines, and striped mice.

Monkey Pox Transmission and Symptoms

Human transmission of monkey pox from an infected animal can occur by contact with the animal's blood, body fluids or rash, or if they are bitten. Human to human transmission can occur through transmission of large respiratory droplets or touching bodily fluids or objects contaminated by the virus. In about 12 days after contact, those infected with monkey pox get a fever of 99.3 degrees or higher, headache, backache, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath and fatigue. One to three days later, a rash develops into fluid filled vesicles

usually starting on the face, but it can start on other parts of the body as well. The blisters go through many phases before crusting over and falling off. The course of the virus can last 2 to 4 weeks. In Africa, monkey pox is fatal in approximately 10% of all cases. No fatalities have occurred in the 54 cases under investigation in the United States. Those at highest risk for infection are animal handlers, pet owners and veterinarians who have contact with infected animals and those who have prolonged, unprotected face to face contact with patients infected with the virus.

Smallpox Vaccine Used

There is no cure or treatment for monkey pox, but studies suggest that the smallpox vaccine is 85% effective in preventing monkey pox if given during the first four days after exposure to an infected animal. Since the FDA has not approved the smallpox vaccine for use against monkey pox, the government is making it available on an emergency basis after discussions with the patient,

their physician, and local health officials.

Prevention

Prevention is the key to blocking the spread of the virus. Banning the sale and importation of animals implicated in the current outbreak, common sense and good hygiene will all contribute to the virus's containment. Animals who might carry the virus should not be released into the wild. If an animal is sick, call your vet's office and inform them of what you suspect so they can take containment measures. Watch other household pets for signs of illness. Use care when handling animal litter. Wear gloves, a gown and a mask, preferably one rated N-95. Household detergents and cleaners should be used following manufacturers' directions. Use similar precautions when caring for an infected person.

Dr. Moffatt is the medical director and Ellen is a Physician Assistant for Public Safety Medical Services.



Odds and Ends

Start Planning Now for Fire Prevention Week

by Mike Russell

This October, communities across North America will be learning an urgent fire safety message from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA):

"When Fire Strikes: Get Out! Stay Out!"

Your department can take an active role in this campaign to teach two simple life-saving lessons:

- Install smoke alarms and test them regularly
- Develop and practice home fire drills

As you know, smoke and fire can spread through a structure in only moments - making fire prevention education and escape planning and practice absolutely essential.

Fire Prevention Week

The 2003 Fire Prevention Week (FPW) is October 5-11. The NFPA has prepared a number of easy-to-use online resources to help firefighters and other first responders prepare an effective campaign. Here is a description of new materials available online.

Online Resources

Fast Facts: Statistical information from NFPA.

Safety Tips: Installing and testing smoke alarms, and planning and practicing home fire escape plans.

How-to Guides: Step-by-step instructions on how to hold open houses, community fire drills and more.

Fundraising: Develop a winning team with local sponsors.

Media Materials: Spread your FPW message far and wide.

Escape Stories: Access stories about families who developed home escape plans – and saved their lives.

More Information

Visit the NFPA Fire Prevention Week Web site at www.nfpa.org/FPW/index.asp for more details.



Quotable

“There are many ways of going forward, but only one way of standing still.”
—**Franklin D. Roosevelt**

Our Mission

Public Safety Medical Services seeks to provide public safety agencies and municipalities with expert medical, psychological, and fitness evaluations.

We inspire healthier and more productive lives through innovative programs delivered with pride, integrity, and dedication.

Public Safety Health and Wellness is a bi-monthly publication of Public Safety Medical Services committed to enhancing the well-being of public safety professionals.



Editor

Christopher M. Costlow, M.S.



Send Your Feedback or Story Ideas to:

Public Safety Medical Services,
303 N. Alabama Street, Suite 110,
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Toll-Free Phone: 877.972.1180
FAX: 317.972.1190
E-mail:
comments@publicsafetymed.com

Web site:

www.publicsafetymed.com

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Serving Those Who Protect Our Cities, Homes, and Lives



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303 N. Alabama, Suite 110
Indianapolis, IN 46204

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What's Happening Public Safety Calendar of Events

LAW ENFORCEMENT

August 4-6

Event:

Street Crimes Program



Location:

Indiana Law Enforcement Academy, Indianapolis

Contact: Lance Burris, 317.837.3265

August 7-8

Event: Leadership and Quality Policing Conference

Location:

Buffalo Grove, IL

Contact: IACP, 703.836.6767



August 25-27

Event: Hostage Negotiations

Location: Public Agency Training Council, Indianapolis

Contact: PATC, 800.365.0119

FIRE SERVICE

July 15-18

Event: Indiana Fire Chief's Association State Conference

Location: Evansville, IN

Contact: IFCA at 866.254.1914



August 22-25

Event: Fire-Rescue International

Location: Dallas, TX

Contact: IAFC at 800.424.5249 or www.iafc.org.

September 13-17

Event: 3rd Annual Practical Water Rescue Conference

Location: St. Louis, MO

Contact: 800.869.3476 or www.mufrti.org/Water/

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