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### Short Cuts, Deaths & BP-Asking Questions (The Secret List)

Hey,

As you may remember, 2 Kilgore (TX) Firefighters died in the Line of Duty (\*NIOSH report link below) while training on their new aerial truck back in January of 2009. They died after falling from the elevated aerial platform during training. The members were participating in the drill to familiarize themselves with a newly purchased 95-foot mid-mount aerial platform truck. The group of 4 FF's, without safety belts, were in the aerial platform which was raised to the roof of an 8 story college dorm. The platform became stuck on the concrete parapet wall at the top of the building. During attempts to free the platform, the top edge of the parapet wall gave way and the aerial ladder sprung back from the top of the building, then began to whip violently back and forth. 2 of the 4 FF's standing in the platform were ejected from the platform because of the motion. **They fell about 80 feet to the ground and were tragically killed in the Line of Duty.**

Now, the family of one of the Firefighters who was killed will soon be in court. Firefighters Cory Galloway and Kyle Perkins were the victims who died in the Line of Duty. FF Galloway's family has filed a lawsuit against E-one Incorporated, Hallmark Apparatus of Texas, and the City of Kilgore because of his death. The suit focuses on the fact that the truck had just been delivered a few weeks before the training, which did not include safety belts. The suit accuses the Kilgore FD of requiring its FF's to operate the equipment in a high risk exercise after just a few hours of basic training, and without safety belts. **Predictable?**

While the courts and attorneys will figure this one out, it really hits hard (especially recently) around the fact that so many FD's are cutting costs, and in some stupid and very risky ways. Now keep in mind, cutting costs may or may not have been the reason why the truck didn't have safety belts or more training, that remains to be proven in court. But with SO MANY FD's and their Cities, etc, are trying to "find savings" and "save money" it (as always) is just a matter of time before it "catches up" - and in most cases, the "catching up" doesn't personally impact those who made the decision to cut the funds and save the money.

When a city closes a firehouse and lays off Firefighters but keeps parks open, the impact of the closed firehouse will rarely personally impact those at city hall. But it will impact the person who will eventually have a fire. Naturally, the cuts also impact those who are expected to "fix" that fire (firefighters) when they arrive later, and perhaps with less staffing due to other cuts. Do more with less.

### **SEATTLE FIRE KILLS 5:**

Take the recent case of Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn who is now taking back his idea of cutting the number of Firefighters who would respond after that horrific apartment fire last weekend that killed 4 kids and an adult. 4 kids and an adult killed in a fire had better have an impact on elected officials. The goal would be to get them to "get it" BEFORE people are killed.

Like Mayors and City Managers everywhere, McGinn initially proposed the idea to save money. He suggested that less Firefighters on the apparatus would work out OK. But then, as the Mayor stated very publicly, "this past weekend gave us a concrete example of the importance of protecting our public safety budget; in light of that event, I am not proposing any reductions to the SFD"

The city is facing a \$50 million dollar budget shortfall and like cities everywhere, decisions have to be made.

If the budget is cut, service is absolutely reduced and in some cases risk is increased. Of course, risk doesn't "have" to be increased. **When a city shuts down firehouses or reduces staffing, they can order their Firefighters to NOT take risks and they can advise their citizens to NOT have fires.**

That'll probably work out well, dontcha think? Ask the Seattle Firefighters who did their heroic best to bravely try to save those kids.

### **BP:**

And then there is the BP oil disaster. The "face" of BP, Mr Hayward had been well known (before the incident) for his aggressive cost cutting and supporting a culture of corner cutting and carelessly increasing risks that led BP to choose cheaper, quicker ways of drilling. Their decisions then exposed BP's workers to greater risks as well as OUR Gulf of Mexico. Cost cuts = more profits. We understand profits and the fact that they are in business to make money but I'll bet they never thought THIS would happen. It "could" happen but what are the odds. Take a risk and see what happens. Awww come on now, what's gonna happen?

### **760 RECENT SAFETY VIOLATIONS:**

When you look at BP's "safety" record, we find that the company has had 760 US safety violations in 5 years, compared with ExxonMobil's 6 during the same time. How do you

think BP's risk management philosophy compares to ExxonMobil? And we haven't even talked about the 11 men killed. R.I.P.

### **RISKY BUSINESS:**

As a Firefighter, Fire Officer or Chief, we manage risks everyday. Sometimes thru proactive methods with training, prevention, pub-ed, pre-plans, command and company leadership, staffing, heavy first alarm responses, etc. We know there will be a problem at some point, so we take action to minimize the problem. It's the opposite of putting your head in the sand and pretending "everything will be ok".

**The Firefighters will not fall out of a tower ladder.**

**We won't have a fire with people trapped.**

**The oil well will not catch fire and leak into the pristine Gulf of Mexico.**

Risk management is a systematic approach to minimizing a department's (or community) exposure to risk. A risk management system includes various policies, procedures, training and practices that work in unison to identify, analyze, determine, evaluate, address and monitor risk. Risk management information is used along with other information, such as feasibility, life safety and cost vs benefit, to arrive at a risk management decision. Transferring risk to another party, lessening the negative affect of risk and avoiding risk altogether are considered pretty common risk management strategies.

**The RISK warning signs were all there.**

Could Firefighters get tossed out of a tower ladder? Have Firefighters ever fallen out of or off aerial devices previously? Has training or the lack of equipment lead to death and injury to Firefighters in the past?

Who asks those questions?

Could staffing cuts result in civilian (and Firefighter) deaths? Have civilians ever died due to fire service cuts? **Who asks those questions?**

Could a company with 760 safety recent violations cause the worse environmental disaster in our history?

**Who asks those questions?**

**Ask the questions. Yeah you.**

**Hopefully you belong to a Department where the leadership has the answers and has thought about "what might go wrong" well before you ask the questions.**

**Maybe you don't even have to ask.**

Take Care-Be Careful. HAPPY FATHERS DAY.

BillyG

The Secret List 6-19-10 / 1616 Hours

[www.FireFighterCloseCalls.com](http://www.FireFighterCloseCalls.com)

\*NIOSH REPORT: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/fire/reports/face200906.html>  
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