



Title: SAFETY ARTICLE: The Tetrahedron of Safety

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The triangle seems ensconced into the very fabric of the fire service. When we had the opportunity to move away from it, we opted for the three dimensional triangle... the tetrahedron. While pushing the envelope of tradition is something I relish, I am not touching this one.

Safety in the fire service is dependent upon three components and one situation:

- The climate or culture of the organization
- The individual
- The supervisor
- The actual event or incident

Just as a truss becomes unstable if just one component making up a truss triangle fails, the lack of focus upon safety by the organization, supervisor or individual can result in injury, long term disease or worse. Over the next three articles we will explore the impact, emotion, reality and potentially positive or negative results upon safety that each component can have.

Why focus on an event or incident? It is because the incident is the stage upon which the drama of safety is presented. Just as a Shakespearian play consists of five acts, each with multiple scenes, our drama of safety consists of:

- Act 1 - Prelude
- Act 2 - Response
- Act 3 - Operations
- Act 4 - The return
- Act 5 - Prologue

Act 1 - Prelude - The scenes making up this act consist of training, equipment maintenance and readiness, familiarity and environmental factors such as time of day, weather, traffic conditions.

Act 2 - Response - The scenes making up this act consist of the time it takes for dispatch to process the call for help, the reaction time of the fire department to the call, once dispatched, the travel time from the station to the scene and the time it takes to deploy and be ready to conduct operations once the unit arrives on scene.

Act 3 - Operations - This is the heart of the drama, each incident will have scenes unique to the type incident and the challenges it presents. Here, the climate / culture, the individual and the supervisor lay themselves open to the scrutiny of the audience. Their strengths / weaknesses exposed to all as the act unfolds.

Act 4 - The return - The battle is over, hopefully evil has been vanquished and the heroes prevailed. The scenes consist of replenishing and decontaminating both human and equipment resources, making the scene safe and preparing for the next challenge that awaits them.

Act 5 - Prologue - The narrator of our drama, along with key players review the actions of our play, identifies strengths, weaknesses and areas that require further attention to ensure future positive outcomes.

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players: they have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages." William Shakespeare
The next article will explore the climate / culture of a fire department.

Resources for this article - http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/w/william_shakespeare.html

As always, your feedback and comments are appreciated. Email me at Charlie.brush@myfloridacfo.com
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