



Lt. John Mickel and Dallas Begg Act

Florida Law Adopts NFPA 1403 for All Live-Fire Training

Motivated by the deaths of three fire fighters in two separate live-fire training incidents, the Florida State Fire Marshal's office successfully gained legislative support for a bill designed to mandate safe live-fire training. On June 1, 2005, Governor Jeb Bush signed HB 69 into law as the Lt. John Mickel and Dallas Begg Act, effective January 1, 2007. The act is named for two Ocala County fire fighters who died in a training incident in 2002.

The Mickel/Begg Act mandates that NFPA 1403, *Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions* (2002), must be complied with at all live-fire exercises. Live-fire facilities must meet NFPA 1403 requirements before any live-fire training. Live-fire training must occur at state-certified training centers (including burn buildings and props) that are compliant with NFPA 1403 and NFPA 1402, *Guide to Building Fire Service Training Centers* (2002). Acquired structures must also be NFPA 1403 compliant. Additional requirements include using thermal imaging, ensuring prop maintenance and safety, using Class A burn props, establishing a rapid intervention team (RIT) during training, ensuring the ability for fast prop venting, and ensuring NFPA 1500, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program* (2002), compliance.

Beginning January 1, 2007, a certified live-fire instructor must be present at all live-fire training events. A 40-hour certification program for live-fire instructor (Level I instructor prerequisite) will begin in July 2005. To certify, instructors must pass a pretest by 80 percent and a final posttest by 100 percent (mastery). Unfortunately, this Act does not apply to industrial fire brigade training (NFPA 600, *Standard on Industrial Fire Brigades*, 2005). Virginia also has begun a NFPA 1403 compliance-training program for instructors.

For additional information on the process used to initiate the legislation, contact Elias "Buck" Tomlinson, Instructor, State Fire Marshal, Bureau of Fire Standards and Training, at 352.369.2845. For information on the certification program, contact Jeremy Donovan, Director, or George Mullins, Program Manager, Central Florida Fire Academy, at 407.855.3281. Information on the two training incidents may be found on the Centers for Disease Control (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health [NIOSH]) web site under Mickel/Begg and Port Everglades (Wayne Mitchell).

The enactment of this law is an example of how the fire service can influence the legislative process for the improvement of firefighter safety. It should be a model for other states, provinces, or local authorities as a means for preventing unnecessary fatalities and injuries.