



Monterey County Fire Training Officers Association 2011 Annual Report

The following report contains highlights and accomplishments of the Monterey County Fire Training Officers Association during 2011.

The Monterey County Fire Training Officers Association (MCFTOA) is a 501(c)(3) California Not-for-Profit Public Benefit Corporation. According to the corporation bylaws, the primary objectives and purposes of the corporation are:

“In the interest of promoting and improving public safety training, standards, and performance levels, provide education and training to professional and volunteer public safety personnel and agencies in Monterey County through such methods as conducting or sponsoring classes, seminars, schools, or other related training opportunities. Additionally, to maintain an audio-visual resource library on public safety issues and topics and to provide public safety personnel and agencies appropriate training resources and materials through contemporary delivery methods.”

Membership:

The MCFTOA ended the year with 31 active members representing 16 Monterey County public safety agencies. Our ultimate goal is to have members representing all public safety organizations in Monterey County. In order to provide the best local training possible, and to meet the training needs of the Monterey County fire service, it is vital that all Monterey County agencies are represented in the MCFTOA.

Officers and Board of Directors:

The following individuals served as the Officers and members of the Board of Directors for 2011:

President: Dan Gearhart, Division Chief-Retired, Seaside Fire Department
Vice-President: Paul Pilotte, Division Chief, Monterey County Regional Fire District
Secretary: Tammera Bandano, Training Manager, American Medical Response
Treasurer: Kathryn Pernet, Administrative Assistant, Seaside Police Department

Board Members: Deano Lindsey, Monterey County Regional Fire District
Stewart Roth, Monterey Fire Department
Christopher Vaughn, Salinas Fire Department

In accordance with our bylaws, two Board of Directors meetings were held during 2011. These meetings were on April 7, 2011 and August 4, 2011. The purpose of the Board of Directors is to ensure the organization and officers are functioning in an appropriate manner by meeting the needs of the membership and at the same time fulfilling the overall purpose of the MCFTOA.

Fire Library:

During 2011, we completed the transition of the Fire Library from the Monterey County Office of Education to the Monterey Peninsula College Public Safety Training Center. The transition included a complete inventory of the materials, purchasing two storage cabinets, and a new formal check-out procedure which includes a new check-out form. Additionally in 2011, a new auto extrication DVD series has been added to the inventory. A list of the available materials and the check-out form are available on our website.

Bylaws Revision:

Being a California Public Benefit Not-for-Profit Corporation, the MCFTOA has an extensive set of corporate bylaws. In order to operate in an efficient manner, the bylaws must be up-to-date and reflect the current procedures and policies of the organization. After many reviews and considerable input, our bylaws were revised and put into effect on March 10, 2011.

Nomination and Election Procedures:

According to our bylaws, Nomination and Election Procedures must be in place for the nomination and election of Officers and members of the Board of Directors. With this, a set of Nomination and Election Procedures were developed. After several reviews and revisions, our Nomination and Election Procedures were approved and adopted on April 14, 2011.

Website:

Since launching our website several years ago, we remain committed to making the site an effective training resource for the fire service community in Monterey County. We greatly improved the site during the past year with the expansion of our topic tabs, inclusion of an Event Calendar, and an enhanced photo gallery. Additionally, we have added a tab for the Fire Chiefs Association that now includes the Fire Chiefs Association Operations Manual and Communications Policies. Updates to the website are performed by our personnel which allows for continual improvement and revisions in a timely fashion.

Wildland Fire School:

Due to unfavorable weather conditions, a significant reduction in student registrations, and increased operating costs, we found it necessary to cancel our Wildland Fire School in 2011. This is the second year in a row where Wildland Fire School was cancelled.

Following the cancellation of the school, we spent a considerable amount of time assessing and evaluating the future of our Wildland Fire School. After extensive input and discussion, the decision was made to discontinue offering our four-day school until such a time as the economy will allow agencies to support the school through increased student registrations.

In place of the Wildland Fire School, we are planning to conduct several one-day Wildland Training Exercises available to the fire agencies within Monterey County and the surrounding operational area. We believe these wildland training opportunities will be beneficial to the fire service community in Monterey County as we prepare for the upcoming wildland fire season.

Wildland Training Exercise:

On July 17, 2011, along with the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department, we supported a local one-day Wildland Training Exercise at the Fort Hunter Liggett Military Installation. Three Monterey County agencies and an agency from Santa Cruz County participated in the exercise. A total of four engine companies and 22 personnel received “hands-on” wildland training under “live-fire” conditions. After meeting our desired training objectives for the day, we were able to support the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department with their prescribed burning program. Chief Chris Orman served as Incident Commander for the exercise, Chief Jeff Minetti was the liaison with the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department, Captain Dale Williams served as lead Instructor, and the MCFTOA assisted with Safety, logistical support, and provided a free lunch.

Training Needs Assessment:

In order to meet the fire service training needs within Monterey County, we conducted a Training Needs Assessment seeking input from local agencies on the types of training they would like to see made available. The assessment was completed in May 2011 and we received 33 responses to our survey. The results of the survey were made available to the Fire Chiefs Association on June 14, 2011 through our monthly status report. We hope to incorporate the more popular responses from the assessment into our future training plans.

Fireground Safety System Training Program:

Following the adoption of the Monterey County Fireground Safety System in July 2011, the MCFTOA was tasked with developing a Fireground Safety System Training Program available to Monterey County agencies. This project was completed in December 2011 and delivered to local fire agencies. The training program contains a new PowerPoint presentation and includes all the related documents associated with the Fireground Safety System. The training program is formatted on a CD and available free of charge to all fire service agencies in Monterey County.

Monterey County Fire Chiefs Association Operations Manual:

As mentioned earlier, the Fire Chiefs Association now has a dedicated page on the MCFTOA website. A sub-tab on this page is dedicated to the Fire Chiefs Association Operations Manual. After receiving approval from the Chiefs Association, and working with the Operations Committee, the entire Operations Manual, Volumes I and II, have been placed on our website. During this project, several of the documents were re-formatted for consistency and updated as needed. All the documents are in PDF format for ease of viewing and printing. Having the Operations Manual on the MCFTOA website allows for updates, revisions, and new documents to be posted and available in a timely fashion.

Meeting Locations / Storage Site / Physical Address:

Beginning in January 2012, all future meetings of the MCFTOA will be at the Monterey Peninsula College Public Safety Training Center. Each month, an agency will host the membership meeting at the center. Additionally, the MPC Public Safety Training Center will be a storage site for our historical records and will serve as the physical address for the organization.

MCFTOA “Polo” Style Shirts:

Following the redesign of our logo in 2010, we have invested in “polo” style shirts for the organization. This project was completed in 2011 and polo shirts bearing our “revised” logo are available to members of our organization.

Liability Insurance:

After concerns were raised about the lack of financial protection for the organization in the event of a claim filed against the corporation, the MCFTOA obtained both General Liability and Errors and Omissions insurance coverage. This coverage is renewed yearly and covers general liability and errors and omissions by officers and directors of the organization.

Social Media:

Since late in 2010, the MCFTOA has branched into social media by establishing and maintaining a Facebook page. The page is slowly becoming popular with 89 current “likes” and hundreds of weekly views. Along with regular postings about fire service related training opportunities or resources, the page has a photo gallery and often posts announcements concerning local fire service events.

Additionally, following our Wildland Fire School in 2009, we posted a video on YouTube capturing the highlights of the school. To date, the video has received 4,501 views. As social media is becoming more popular every day and is being embraced by the public safety community, we will continue to look for new ways of delivering and supporting training programs through this new and popular resource.

Annual Budget:

During 2011, the MCFTOA adopted a new annual line-item budget format that will assist us in tracking revenues and expenses based on overall categories. The new budget format will take effect starting in January 2012.

Conclusion:

The Monterey County Fire Training Officers Association has a long-standing reputation with the local fire service of providing and supporting fire service related training to both individual members of the fire service community and local fire agencies. For over forty years, the MCFTOA has been a part of local fire training that has included major training exercises such as live-fire structural training burns, Oil Fire School, MCI Drills, Movement Drills, and our Wildland Fire School. Over the years, these activities have provided critical training to thousands of firefighters from Monterey County and throughout the State of California.

Along with these major training events, the MCFTOA has provided and sponsored numerous classroom training opportunities on various fire service related topics. The MCFTOA has also supported local training delivery efforts with our Fire Library and recently developed website.

As the primary focus for our organization, we will continue to provide and support fire service training using both traditional and contemporary delivery methods. To accomplish this mission, we must rely upon personnel from the local fire service that serve as members and Officers of the organization. Without their participation, our past accomplishments would not have been possible, and our future endeavors may not be successful.

The quality of our product is only as good as the effort and participation of our members. Over the years, our members have shown tremendous effort which has yielded an outstanding product. To keep our product exceptional and, we encourage any member of the local fire service to support the organization by joining and assisting the Training Officers in providing quality and relevant training opportunities to the Monterey County Fire Service. Through active participation and representation from all agencies in Monterey County, we can continue the great work of the organization for the benefit and safety of the Monterey County fire service.

Dan Gearhart
2011 President
Monterey County Fire Training Officers Association

January 26, 2012