

THE Hundred Call

*"The Club
with a Heart"*

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Public Safety Officers Vaccinated

Connecticut began vaccinations for Covid-19 in mid-December. The first phase of the vaccine plan, Phase 1a, included healthcare personnel, long-term care facility residents and medical first responders. Among the latter group were approximately 600 employees of the Department of Correction, whose primary responsibilities are to provide medical and health services to the inmates lodged at the agency's fourteen facilities, including its 12-bed Medical-Surgical Ward at the University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington.

Phase 1b of the vaccine roll-out was initiated in mid-January and included first responders and public safety personnel. The federal advisory group, composed of medical workers and other health experts, that provides guidance on the implementation of the vaccine program, prioritized the vulnerable population of persons over 75 years of age, as well as "frontline essential workers," such as firefighters, police officers and corrections personnel.

Corrections

Beginning on February 1st, the Department of Correction arranged to have the remainder of its employees, beyond the health care workers, vaccinated at clinics coordinated through Griffin Hospital in Derby. Each correction facility had a designated liaison, who could assist employees schedule their appointments. All vaccinations are administered at the employees' work site. The direct care employees continue to participate in mandatory weekly testing even as the vaccination process continues.

In preparation for the wider availability of the vaccine, the department used memos, newsletters and a video, hosted by Commissioner Angel Quiros, to educate its staff about the vaccine and its benefits. Since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, they have had more than 1,200 employees test positive for Covid-19 out of a total workforce of approximately 6,000 DOC employees. As of March 12, 2021 there were 42 employees out recovering from the virus.

Prisons in Connecticut and across the country have struggled to contain Covid-19, in large part because the precautions that prevent the spread of the virus are difficult or im-

possible to implement in prisons. In particular, the confined spaces typically don't allow for social distancing and quarantining.

In Connecticut, that has meant thousands of Covid-19 cases among a relatively small population of incarcerated people. Since the pandemic began, the state has identified more than 4,200 coronavirus cases and 19 Covid deaths in the incarcerated population. That population currently has fewer than 10,000 people, although there is significant turnover in the population.

Law Enforcement and the Fire Service

The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, which includes the State Police, registered all of its sworn employees through the Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS), an appointment scheduling system provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Once enrolled, the employees could schedule their own vaccinations at a clinic of their choice.



Greenwich Police Chief James Heavey receives a vaccination for the coronavirus

Chief Darren Stewart of the Stonington Police Department and President of the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association said that his 40-person agency was assisted by the New London-based Ledge Light Health District. Both the police and

Public Safety Officers Vaccinated, Cont.

fire departments provided the District with their personnel rosters. District staff, in turn, entered the employees' names into the VAMS. The CDC then notified each employee, via email, of the date, time and location of the vaccination. While some of the appointments required as much as an hour's drive, Chief Stewart reported that his staff were gratified be inoculated.

Christopher Arciero, Chief of the Canton Police Department, said that vaccinations for his agency's 15 sworn officers were arranged through the Farmington Valley Health District. The organization, which provides services to ten municipalities in central Connecticut, held three vaccination clinics for area first responders, including one at the Farmington Police Department.



Hartford Fire Chief Reginald Freeman receives his first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at Saint Francis Hospital

When Hartford Fire Chief Reginald Freeman sat down at Saint Francis Hospital's coronavirus vaccine clinic on January 8, it felt to him like more than just a medical appointment — it felt like he was fulfilling his duty.

Freeman, who has been Hartford's fire chief for nearly five years, was one of a number of the city's first responders to receive the first dose of the coronavirus vaccine. "I really feel as if it's required of me, and my oath of office, to demonstrate that this vaccine is safe," he said. "Because the more people that we get vaccinated, the safer our community is going to be."

For Freeman, who is black, the heightened vaccine hesitancy among people of color was one of his primary motivations for taking the vaccine.

"I think it's very important for anyone that is a public civic servant — especially a chief of a department that's a person of color — to lead by example, for the simple fact of the skepticism that exists in the black and brown community about this vaccination," Freeman said. "The biggest reason why I wanted to get my vaccination is to encourage others, any and everyone, that this vaccination ... can be trusted."

Freeman said he's heard some of the baseless rumors that are being spread about the vaccine — including that the vaccine could change people's DNA or that it contains microchips.

"I believe in the science and I believe in the people that developed this vaccination," Freeman said.

Within his department, Freeman said he has combatted that misinformation by providing the actual facts and explaining that the vaccine has been proven to be safe and effective.

Annual Connecticut Law Enforcement Memorial Service

The annual memorial service will be held at the Connecticut Police Academy in Meriden on Thursday, May 20th starting promptly at 11:00 AM. This year we are adding the name of Trooper 1st Class Eugene K. Baron, Jr. to the memorial. Trooper Baron passed away on May 25, 2020.

Trooper Baron, along with several other troopers, responded to New York City on September 11, 2001 to help with the search and rescue operations. As a result of being exposed to the toxic fumes and materials over several weeks, Trooper Baron developed cancer. He was honored by the City of New York for his heroic efforts at the recovery site, and his death was confirmed as a line of duty death directly related to the attacks on the Twin Towers at the World Trade Center.

The format for the service is still under discussion with the Connecticut State Police Department as they definitely want to have a program following CDC guidelines to honor Trooper Baron and his family. Trooper Baron leaves behind

his loving partner Victoria Racamato, his three children, sons Eugene, John and daughter Maureen.

Trooper Baron is the 145th hero who has lost his life in the line of duty here in Connecticut.



2020 Law Enforcement Fatalities Reported

According to preliminary data compiled by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF), as of December 31, 2020, 264 federal, state, military, tribal, and local law enforcement officers died in the line-of-duty in 2020, an increase of 96% from the 135 officers killed during the same period the year before. In 2020, officer fatalities ranged from automobile crashes to heart attacks and from gunshots to being beaten to death. Of these tragic deaths, **Covid-19 related fatalities were the single highest cause of officer line-of-duty deaths in 2020.**

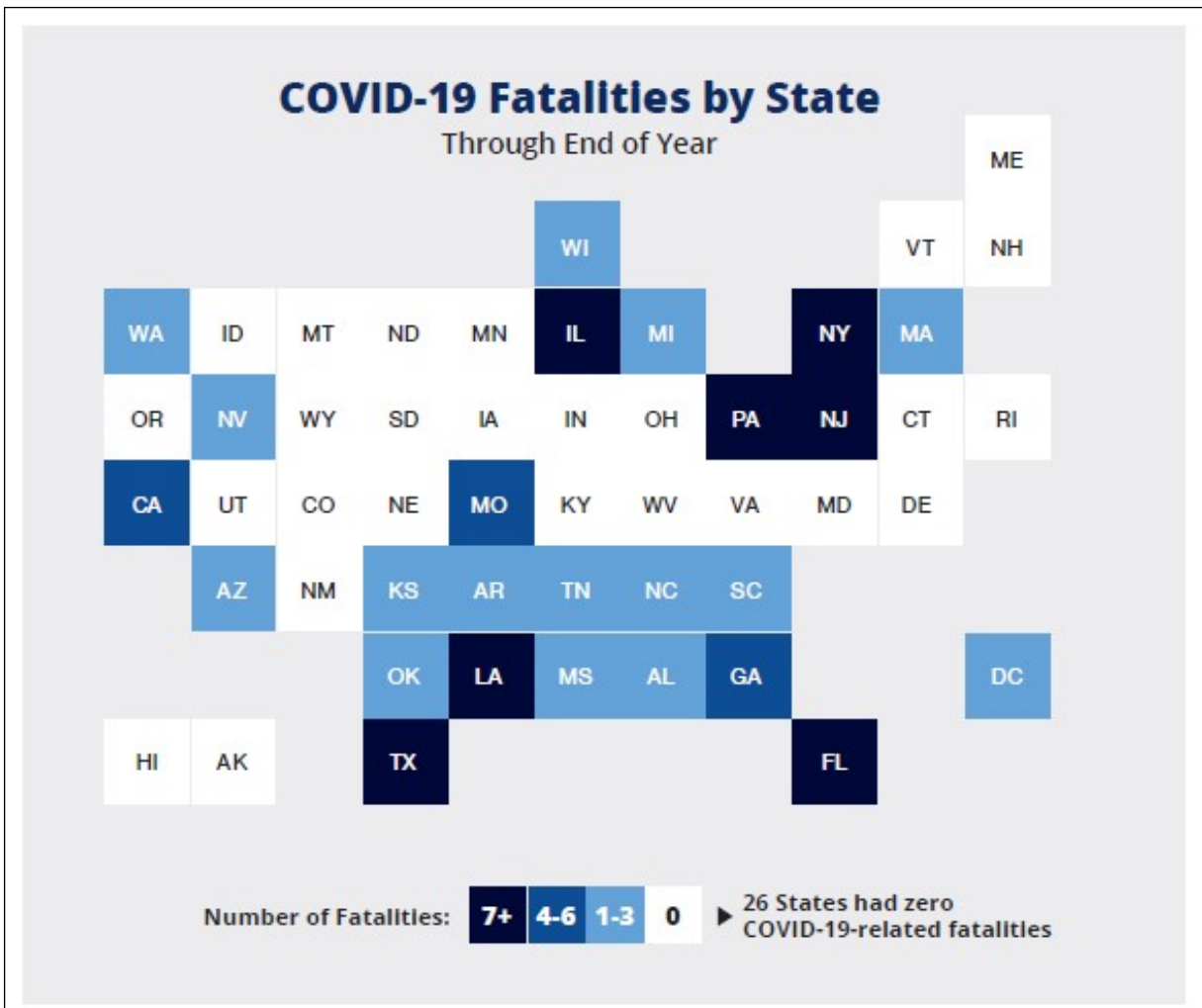
Of the 264 officers who have died in the line of duty, there were 145 confirmed Covid-19 cases. It must be noted however, as the pandemic rages on, NLEOMF has already identified a significant number of additional Covid-19-related fatalities. Once these cases are confirmed, NLEOMF projects that the total number of Covid-19 fatalities and the total number of line-of-duty deaths will grow significantly. Unfortunately, even with the preliminary Covid-19 fatalities, 2020 had the highest number of law enforcement line-of-duty deaths since 1974.

Firearms-related fatalities were the second most common cause of officer deaths, with 48 officers killed in 2020. This represents a 6% decrease from the 51 officers killed in firearms-related incidents during the same period in 2019. The

leading circumstance of firearms-related fatalities was officers investigating suspicious persons or activities, followed by attempting an arrest. Ambush attacks leading to officers' deaths remained constant compared to the same period the previous year.

Forty-four officers were killed in traffic-related fatalities in 2020, a two percent increase, compared to 43 deaths during the same period the previous year. Automobiles were the single leading cause of death, with 18 of those incidents being a collision with another vehicle, and 8 single vehicle crashes. Throughout the year, there were also 15 struck-by fatalities and 3 motorcycle fatalities.

During 2020, 172 officers died of other causes. Of these deaths, 10 were physical-related, such as a heart attack or stroke suffered on duty, and 12 succumbed to injuries sustained in the 9/11 terrorists attacks. Additionally, three officers drowned, one perished in a helicopter crash, and one was beaten to death. The largest single cause of death in this category and in the entire report are the 145 Covid-19 deaths where officers were confirmed by their agency to have engaged in a line-of-duty action or activity and the officer was diagnosed or evidence indicated that the officer had Covid-19 or complications at the time of the officer's death.



Firefighters Face Possible Risk From Toxic PFAS: *Their Gear*

Firefighters face dangers beyond the blaze itself. Their work subjects them to carcinogens from burning materials, as well as toxic per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) from flame-suppressing foams. A recent study finds that firefighters can also be exposed to PFAS over time through another source: their protective clothing.

Firefighters suffer from disproportionately high rates of cancer, including types that have been linked to PFAS exposure such as testicular cancer, prostate cancer, mesothelioma, and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. The clothing worn by firefighters, known as turnout gear, is made with fluoropolymer textiles and treated with PFAS for water resistance so that the material does not become soaked and heavy during use.



Firefighters' gear may pose risk

Graham F. Peaslee, a professor of experimental nuclear physics at the University of Notre Dame, began the study in 2017 when he was contacted by Diane Cotter. Her husband, a 28-year veteran of the Worcester (Massachusetts) Fire Department, had been diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer. Cotter had examined her husband's gear and found that, while it appeared outwardly intact, there was serious fabric decay on the inside. Cotter wondered whether the uniform could be shedding toxic chemicals and asked Peaslee to take a look.

"It took the spouse of a firefighter writing to me and saying, 'I'm trying to find out what this gear is made out of and no one will tell me,'" the researcher said.

Peaslee uses nuclear techniques like particle-induced gamma-ray emission spectroscopy to measure the levels of fluorine in various consumer goods—from fast food wrappers to underwear. Based on fluorine levels, he can gauge the amount of PFAS present.

Cotter helped Peaslee collect more than 30 used and unused sets of turnout gear. Each set is made of an insulating cloth thermal layer with a moisture barrier at its center. The gear is coated on the outside with a water-resistant shell. Peaslee's team found that the shell averaged just over 2% fluorine by weight, while the moisture barrier averaged more than 30% fluorine. Turnout gear, he says, contains "the most highly fluorinated textiles I've ever seen."

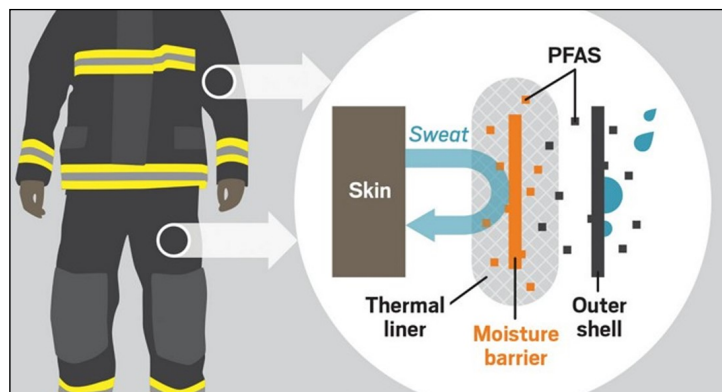
The study identifies specific PFAS on firefighting textiles in the parts-per-billion range, and total fluorine in the parts-per-million range.

"That says we're sort of swimming in a sea of it," Peaslee

said of the measured chemical quantities. "Those numbers for scientists are scarily high because usually we use the parts-per-trillion, which is a factor of a thousand less."

Over time, as the layers rub against each other, PFAS from the moisture barrier and the outer shell appear to migrate to the thermal layer, which is PFAS-free when new but accumulates PFAS with time. PFAS may contact the skin via this layer, Peaslee says.

There could also be other routes of exposure, the researchers found. PFAS from the outer shell readily came off in the researchers' hands as they manipulated the textiles, raising concerns that the chemicals could be accidentally ingested or inhaled. Liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry analysis of samples from the outer layer indicated that its fluoropolymers decompose into other PFAS, including perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) or C8, notorious for polluting water supplies around the world. A single fluorine-laden dust sample collected from a textile storage area supported the idea that the chemicals were dispersing into the environment.



Source: Environmental Science & Technology Letters

The International Association of Fire Fighters—a union representing approximately 320,000 members in the U.S. and Canada—said in a statement that the study is "important" in providing the necessary data to identify cancer-causing agents for firefighters.

"This research, in addition to the numerous studies sponsored by the IAFF, provides necessary information to make changes to protect our members on the frontline," the union said in a statement.

Manufacturers of firefighting gear in the US aren't required to disclose the chemicals in their products, although some are slowly shifting towards PFAS-free options. "Industry has to do the right thing and provide safe alternatives," Cotter urges.

"It's a David and Goliath story in that sense," Peaslee adds. He's already studying whether these chemicals are absorbed through the skin, and he hopes that others will begin large-scale experiments to probe the long-term health impacts.

"Firefighters are out there risking their lives for us," he says. "The least we can do is give them the safest gear possible."

Plainville's well-liked police chief, Matthew Catania, dies

Plainville Police Chief Matthew Catania, Sr, a widely known and well-liked chief with close to 40 years in Connecticut law enforcement, passed away on March 10, 2021, after complications from heart surgery at St. Francis Hospital.



Chief Matthew Catania, Sr

Born in 1959, Catania grew up in Rocky Hill and followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a police officer in 1981 for the town of Old Saybrook. He transferred to Simsbury in 1985, bringing his philosophy of professionalism with him. While in Simsbury he obtained his Bachelor's degree and immediately went on to working on his Master's Degree in Leadership which he later obtained. He rose to the rank of Captain and retired in 2010 to become Chief of Police for the town of Plainville.

Catania, 61, of Avon, came from a large Connecticut law enforcement family. His father, John, was a police officer in Rocky Hill. His brother Mark is a police captain in Glastonbury and his brother Robert became a sergeant with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation after retiring as commander of Rocky Hill's detective division. Another brother, Glenn, is a retired Hartford officer.

Three of Catania's four children are also police officers. His oldest son, Matthew, works for the Canton Police Department. His son Nicholas is a sergeant with the University of Connecticut Police Department and his daughter Gabriella is with the Bloomfield police. A son in law, Kenan Vugdalic, serves as a police sergeant in Bloomfield.

Catania is remembered by friends and colleagues as being approachable, fair, hardworking and humble. He enjoyed serving the community and promoted community policing, a concept in which he wholeheartedly believed in. He led by example and was a true role model for the members of the police department as well as his family.

When he arrived in Plainville, "he took our police department to the next level, as far as accountability, as far as training," said Town Manager Robert E. Lee. "Basically, bringing our police department to the point where people respect what they do every day."

If a resident had a complaint about the police, Catania would meet with the person and listen to what he or she had to say. He wouldn't be afraid to admit a cop may have made a mistake, Lee said.

"There were times when he said, 'We could have done better,' " Lee said.

"We have a relatively young department. He had high standards. But he was fair," he said.

Plainville police Lt. Nicholas B. Mullins agreed. The chief "was certainly very well-liked by almost everyone that knows him. He was well-liked because he was fair," Mullins said, including when he had to discipline an officer for misconduct.

He also had an "open-door policy" and regularly touched base with any of the department's 40 sworn officers at any time, whether they were members of the command staff or rookies on patrol, he said.

"So if there was a problem, he would let you know. He would work with you to resolve it," Mullins said.

Bristol Police Chief Brian Gould described Catania as "an incredibly genuine, caring and loving person," and said, "I found him to be very noble, professional and he was a credit to not only the Connecticut police chiefs but policing in general; just an overall great individual."

Chief Christopher Chute of the nearby New Britain Police Department said Catania was a friend as well as a colleague. "He was probably one of the most-liked chiefs I've known — I never heard anyone say anything negative about him, and that's a rare thing in this profession," Chute said.

Mark Catania, the Glastonbury captain, said, "My brother was the kind of police officer who everyone in the 169 towns in Connecticut would want to have. He was very open, communicative. Getting out in front of problems, making sure the community felt safe. He is just the kind of guy who gave 150% every single day. It's going to be a real tough, tough, tough void for them to fill."

Catania leaves his wife of 31 years, Melanie, and their four children. He also leaves five brothers, a sister, their spouses, and many cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends, as well as the numerous police communities he served and influenced.



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Hundred Club Receives St. Patrick's Day Donation

The Hundred Club of Connecticut was the grateful recipient of a generous donation from the Hartford Chapter of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick. Officially The Society of The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick for the Relief of Emigrants from Ireland, the group is a charitable and social organization for Irish-Americans. Founded in 1771 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to aid migrants from Ireland, the organization has since developed a focus on encouraging "greater interest in ties of friendship between America and Ireland," in addition to sponsoring scholarships, cultural events, charity activities, and educational endowments.

The Hartford Chapter, with over 200 members, was established fifty years ago. The group meets once a year, on the day after the Hartford St. Patrick's Day Parade, for dinner and to celebrate their heritage and the accomplishments of the members.

Matthew Carbray, a Past President of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, recently notified Managing Director Bill Sydenham to announce that The Hundred Club had been selected as the beneficiary of its 2021 charitable gift.

Carbray, a member of both The Hundred Club and the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, explained

that, because of the pandemic, they had to postpone their dinner last year. Furthermore, this year's gathering was being postponed until September.

"Because the timing of our dinner will coincide with the 20th anniversary of 9-11, we thought the Hundred Club would be a very noble and worthy cause to receive our annual charitable donation," Carbray said.

A check, in the amount of \$3017 - to coincide with St. Patrick's Day, was presented to President Paul Fitzgerald on March 17th at the Club's offices. Accompanying Carbray were four other stewards from the Society, including Dan Nolan, a former Deputy Chief of the Hartford Fire Department, member of The Hundred Club and the Keynote Speaker at 2001 Annual Dinner.



Jim Hughes, Dan Nolan, President Paul Fitzgerald,
Matt Carbray, Pat Griffin and Mike Long (L-R)

The delegation from the Sons of St. Patrick also invited President Fitzgerald and the Managing Director to their September dinner meeting. According to Carbray, "We have ties to your cause. Within our membership, we have folks that have served in law enforcement, the fire service and corrections. If you could say a few words to our group about The Hundred Club's mission and benevolence, I believe that we could encourage a number of our members to join the organization."