

## Volunteer Firefighter and EMS Tax Credit Bill Signed by NY Governor

A bill designed to give New York volunteer EMS and firefighters a break on local property and school taxes was signed by Gov. Hochul on December 9, 2022.

But don't count on seeing a reduction in your property taxes any time soon. Local governments must "opt-in" to allow for volunteers to receive the tax exemption.

If you look at your property tax bill (January), it collects for several different governments. For example, the January tax bill may have county taxes, along with town and/or village and fire district taxes. To get a 10% discount off each of these items then the county, town, village, and fire district would all have to approve the 10% tax exemption. If, for example, only the county approves at 10% exemption for volunteers, then you would only receive the 10% off only the county portion of the bill.

For most of us the school tax bill (September) is usually more than the county or town taxes. To get a 10% on this, your school district would also have to "opt-in" to allow for the tax exemption on this.

A public hearing must be held before the exemption can be approved by the government.

The local government must specify the eligibility for the exemption, which can require 2-5 years of volunteer service to be eligible and determine how the volunteer can be certified as eligible for the exemption.

Once the government approves the volunteer exemption, volunteers would have to file paperwork with their local assessor to obtain the exemption.

Keep in mind that in order for the government to have necessary funds for their budget, the exemption for volunteers would have to be made up by others in their area.

For a property to be eligible to receive an exemption, the following must apply:

1. The property must be owned by the volunteer.
2. The property must be the primary residence of the volunteer.
3. The property must be located in the city, town or village that is served by the fire company or ambulance squad the volunteer belongs to.. (i.e., if you live in one area and volunteer in another you would not be eligible.)
4. The property must be used exclusively used as residence, if not then only the part that is used as a residence is eligible.
5. The Authority Having Jurisdiction over the volunteer agency must certify that the volunteer is a member for the time required by the government (2-5 years).

For those who have served 20 years as a volunteer, and has received the tax exemption, as long as the home continues to be his/her residence, this exemption will continue until his/her death. The tax exemption is also extended to the spouse of the member until his/her death, provided he/she does not re-marry.

The complete legislation can be found online at:

<https://legiscan.com/NY/text/A10155/2021>

Note that current New York State law allows volunteers to **take only one** of the following:

- only the 10% property tax exemption **OR**
- the \$200 tax credit on the volunteer's income tax,

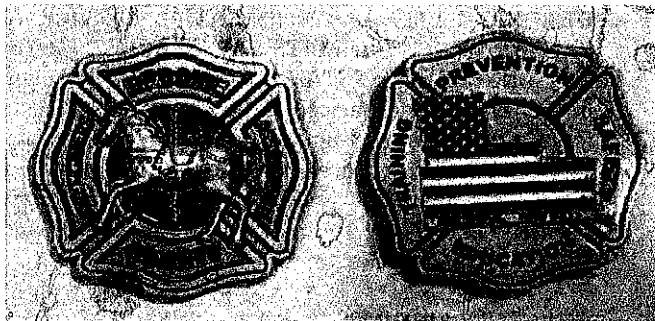
FASNY has more information on their website:

<https://fasny.com/resources/county-index-numbers/#:~:text=On%20Dec.%209%2C%202022%2C,by%20your%20local%20governments%20now.>

## Broome County Firefighters' Patches & Challenge Coins Available



If you are interested in purchasing these, contact Nick Griswold at (607) 221-8844.

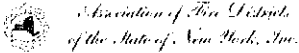


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## NEW YORK STATE FIRE SERVICE ALLIANCE LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES FOR THE 2023 SESSION



The Volunteer Fire Police Association  
of the State of New York, Inc.



COUNTY FIRE COORDINATORS ASSOCIATION  
OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK



NEW YORK STATE  
ASSOCIATION  
OF FIRE CHIEFS



NEW YORK STATE  
Fire Marshals and Inspectors Association

Each year the six New York agencies meet - Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York; the Volunteer Fire Police Association of the State of New York; Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY); New York State Association of Fire Chiefs; County Fire Coordinators Association of the State of New York; and New York State Fire Marshals and Inspectors Association - to determine the most critical issues facing the fire service that require legislation to be enacted.

- **ENSURE VFBL PARITY WITH WORKERS COMPENSATION**- Bring the volunteer firefighters benefit law pay equal to worker's compensation/what career firefighters receive when injured in the line of duty. Corresponding legislation: S.1340 (Brooks) / A.3597 (McMahon) (2021-2022 Session)
- **DESIGNATE EMS AS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE AND EXPAND THE BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO EMS PERSONNEL AND SET STANDARDS FOR EMS**- Recognizes EMS as an essential service, establishes a special district for the financing and operation of general ambulance services, expands access to health insurance and retirement benefits available to EMS providers. Corresponding legislation: S.8432-A (Mayer) / A.9509-A (Otis) (2021-2022 Session)
- **ANALYZE FINDINGS FROM THE NYS DHSES RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TASK FORCE IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE ON:**  
(1) RECRUITMENT EFFORTS  
(2) RETENTION EFFORTS
- **PUBLIC SAFETY AND BUILDING CODE COMPLIANCE ISSUES AMEND PENAL CODE TO ADDRESS ENDANGERING THE WELFARE OF OCCUPANTS AND FIRST RESPONDERS** Corresponding legislation: S.3741 (Gaughran) / A.6087 (Zebrowski) (2021-2022 Session)
- **RECOVERY OF 54-G FUNDING TO SUPPORT CODE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS**- Ensure state funds collected through dedicated fees on each fire policy written in the state go to support local code enforcement activities and not continue to be swept into State General Fund. Corresponding legislation: S.6970-A (Kavanagh) / A.8802-A (Zebrowski) (2021-2022 Session)
- **TIMELY ADOPTION OF UPDATED STATE FIRE AND BUILDING PREVENTION CODE** Would require that a new building code as published by ICC would be adopted by the NYS Codes Council within specified time frame. Corresponding legislation: S.6210-A (Skoufis) / A.3559-A (Hunter) (2021-2022 Session) provides a framework to accomplish; support amendments to extending the timeline of enactment from 12 months.
- **ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS** - Ensure the Executive and Legislative prioritization of provision of affordable housing stock through legalization of more residential space is executed in a manner that prioritizes occupant safety and the safety of first responders in emergencies. Ensure a focus on legalizing existing units as well as create new units; advocate for increasing access to housing for first responders as a recruitment and retention tool. Corresponding legislation: To be determined.
- **LITHIUM-ION BATTERY SAFETY STANDARDS** - Ensure proper registration/permitting, research and standard development, repairing and regulation of products containing lithium-ion batteries, work with stakeholders to raise public awareness around best fire safety practices, and examine solutions proposed from decision makers and opine as a trusted public safety voice.
- **CONTINUE TO IMPROVE TAX BENEFITS FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS** Push to allow volunteer firefighters to receive both real property tax exemptions and income tax credit, while continuing to advocate for an income tax credit increase (has been at \$200 since its inception in 2006.) This credit would step increase tied to qualifying years of service up to \$2,500 for 10 or more consecutive qualifying years of service. Corresponding legislation: S.3989-A (Reichlin Melnick) / A.1320-A (Zebrowski) (2021-2022 Session)
- **CANCER COVERAGE COST RELIEF** - Pursue data collection to enable establishment of a funding stream to alleviate fiscal burden on districts/departments providing the coverage.

As these measures work through the legislative process, the Fire Service Alliance will reconvene to strategize and/or identify additional measures to be considered by the Legislature.

It would be a good idea to send information on all of these initiatives to your local legislators- both Senate and Assembly. Note that we will have a new State Senator in NY District 52 as of January 1, 2023 - State Senator Lea Webb.

After January 1, you should be able to find her contact information at <https://www.nysenate.gov/find-my-senator>



Bill Text: NY A10155 | 2021-2022 | General Assembly | Amended  
New York Assembly Bill 10155 (**Prior Session Legislation**)

**Bill Title:** Provides all local governments with the option to provide a property tax exemption to volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance workers.

**Spectrum:** Moderate Partisan Bill (Democrat 10-3)

**Status:** **(Passed)** 2022-12-09 - signed chap.670 [A10155 Detail]

**Download:** [New\\_York-2021-A10155-Amended.html](#)

STATE OF NEW YORK

10155--A

IN ASSEMBLY

May 4, 2022

Introduced by COMMITTEE ON RULES -- (at request of M. of A. Zebrowski)  
-- read once and referred to the Committee on Real Property Taxation  
-- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended  
and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the real property tax law, in relation to providing all local governments with the option to provide a property tax exemption to volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance workers; and to repeal various provisions of the real property tax law relating thereto

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The real property tax law is amended by adding a new  
2 section 466-a to read as follows:

3 § 466-a. Volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance workers. 1.  
4 Real property owned by an enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer  
5 fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance  
6 service or such enrolled member and spouse residing in any county shall  
7 be exempt from taxation to the extent of up to ten percent of the  
8 assessed value of such property for city, village, town, part town,  
9 special district, school district, fire district or county purposes,  
10 exclusive of special assessments, provided that the governing body of a  
11 city, village, town, school district, fire district or county, after a  
12 public hearing, adopts a local law, ordinance or resolution providing  
13 therefor.

14 2. Such exemption shall not be granted to an enrolled member of an  
15 incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated  
16 voluntary ambulance service residing in such county unless:

17 (a) the applicant resides in the city, town or village which is served  
18 by such incorporated volunteer fire company or fire department or incor-  
19 porated voluntary ambulance service;

21 (c) the property is used exclusively for residential purposes;  
22 provided however, that in the event any portion of such property is not  
23 used exclusively for the applicant's residence but is used for other

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets  
[-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD15549-04-2

## Firefighter Nation

**ENGINE COMPANY COLD WEATHER OPERATIONS**

By FirefighterNation Staff

The older we get, the less we enjoy cold weather operations. However, if you live anywhere but a few southern states and Hawaii, cold weather is inevitable. Thus, we offer some cold weather tips for engine company operations.

**PERSONAL PREPARATION**

Personal preparation is imperative. You have to find the happy medium between wearing enough clothes in the firehouse to stay warm yet not too many clothes that cause you to overheat when you have your turnout gear on and are exerting yourself at a fire. Being sweaty and cold is just as miserable as being wet and cold from the hoseline.

For operations that require multiple rotations into the building, it is your preference whether to allow your gear to thaw. We always prefer allowing the ice to remain on the exterior of our fire clothes rather than allowing it to melt and soak through. We may be crazy, but it seems warmer and less miserable that way. Be sure to keep a change of clothes on the apparatus in a gym bag or backpack. Include sweatpants, a sweatshirt, extra gloves, a T-shirt, a warm hat, and several pair of socks. It's also a good idea to carry extra fire gloves and protective hoods during this time of year. When returning to quarters, change out your turnout gear if you are lucky enough to have a second set. If not, before you go home, take your fire clothes apart and arrange for them to dry by the time you return for your next shift.

**APPARATUS**

The apparatus will also need some additional attention during cold weather: If you are going to wash the apparatus, make sure you dry it thoroughly. Doors and discharges will freeze. Be careful not to wash down the discharges and intakes, making the caps nearly impossible to remove. Bleed the moisture from the air reservoirs daily; open the air bleeder valves until you remove all moisture. Make sure the heating system works before the worst of the cold weather sets in. If you have leaky valves that allow water to lay in the discharge lines, get them fixed so they don't freeze. Drain the pump in quarters as well as all intakes, drains, and valves. This will require the driver to open the tank-to-pump valve when charging a line to prime the pump. The pump primer may also need to be activated to expel all air from the pump.

Make sure your apparatus chains are in good working order. If you have drop-down chains, they are convenient and always available on the pumper. In heavy snow conditions, we found we stop relying on the drop-down chains and stick to the old fashioned heavy chains that we permanently put on the apparatus. Make sure your chains are properly sized for your tires and in good repair. Heavy chains are good for major snow and ice accumulations while the cable type is better for light snow and ice.

Drivers should obviously use caution commensurate with road conditions and keep in mind the capabilities and limitations of the skid chains. Our chains restrict driving speeds to 35 mph. It is advisable to have some wire available when the heavy chains are in place to secure broken links to prevent body damage to the apparatus; cut-up wire clothes hangers work well for this purpose.

**RESPONSE**

Company officers will need to be vigilant to ensure the water supply will not be interrupted during cold weather. Check fire hydrants regularly for water and pump them out if necessary. Thaw any frozen hydrants you find immediately. You can thaw hydrants using two short sections of 2½-inch hose attached to each hydrant discharge. Attach one hose to the engine's discharge and one to the engine's intake and circulate water through the hydrant to thaw. This takes about 15 minutes, depending on how badly the hydrant is frozen. Also, uncover hydrants after large snowstorms. Snowplows are notorious for throwing snow and covering the hydrants. Get out and drive your district and dig them out. You may have to do this multiple times a day for several days in a row.

Most everything slows down in the cold—our response is no different. The only thing that doesn't slow down is the fire. Adding an engine to the initial structure fire dispatch may be a good idea, even if you turn it around most of the time. When you need it on the scene, you will be happy you had the foresight to start it early. Call for additional alarms earlier in extreme weather, especially the winter. The fire will not cut you any slack just because the roads are icy and slick. The most basic tasks can become extremely difficult with a few inches of snow on the ground.

Securing a water supply may present an issue. Just finding a hydrant may be difficult if you haven't unburied your hydrants. The firefighter connecting to the hydrant should be equipped with a shovel and a pickax to make the connection. Stretching the attack line will be more difficult in slippery conditions. You may not be able to ideally position the apparatus because of snow accumulation, and it may require a longer stretch. This is another good reason to add an engine to the response to assist with the longer stretch.

Once the fire has been extinguished, you need to keep the water moving to prevent it from freezing in the hoseline. You can accomplish this by cracking the nozzle to keep the water moving in the hose and through the pump. Occasionally, hoselines may become frozen. You can place frozen sections of hose in the bed of a ladder truck and return to quarters. You can thaw frozen couplings on the scene using the exhaust from the apparatus. (This works for self-contained breathing apparatus couplings as well.)

Be prepared for fire suppression systems to be ineffective because of freezing or broken pipes because of freezing in the system. Also, be prepared to perform alternative stretches in standpipe-equipped buildings if this problem presents itself.

**BE PREPARED**

Prepare and be proactive for cold weather operations. Find your happy place between too cold and too warm until it is just right in your fire clothes. Pay extra attention to the apparatus, and keep the hydrants in your district accessible and in service.

Stay toasty, friends.

## NYSAFC SEMINAR TRUCK SKILLS BEYOND THE TEXT BOOKS

with Lieutenant Mike Ciampo, FDNY  
2/9/23 at SVHS

Early in our firefighting orientation, we're taught basic skills and tactics from textbooks. In addition, we'll drill and be tested on many of these skills at fire academy buildings to attain our firefighting certifications. It's a good process, but our learning shouldn't stop there because we haven't been exposed to many of the situations we'll encounter at fires and emergencies. Plus, the buildings in the academy aren't conducive to allowing us to operate with tools to open the walls and ceilings, pull suspended ceilings, remove baseboard and window trim, or even cut open tongue and groove sheathed roofs. This interactive lecture strives to go beyond textbook learning and bring alive street skills, tips, and tactics of truck work in: portable ladders, overhaul, forcible entry, roof ventilation, tool use, and more.

### Registration:

NYSAFC Individual and Department Members: \$35 •  
Non-Members: \$50 • per person

On-site registration will be accepted if space permits.

Pre-registration is encouraged.

Michael Ciampo is a lieutenant and 32-year veteran of the FDNY. Previously, he served five years with the Washington, D.C. Fire Department and as a fourth generation volunteer firefighter with the Wyckoff (NJ) Fire Department.

Ciampo is a nationally recognized instructor, the lead instructor for FDIC's "Truck Essentials," and a NYSAFC instructor. He has a BA degree in fire science from John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Ciampo wrote the ladder and ventilation chapters for Fire Engineering's Handbook for Firefighter I and II, cowrote the Tools of the Trade textbook, is featured in the Bread & Butter Operations: Ground Ladders training DVD, and writes the monthly column "ON FIRE" in Fire Engineering magazine. Recently, he self-published the textbook Tower Ladders, Tactics, Tips & Tales

This seminar will be offered in Broome County on Thursday, February 9, 7:00 pm, at Susquehanna Valley High School, 1040 Conklin Road, Conklin.

Seminar Sites Registration area opens 30 minutes prior to starting time.

The registration form can be found online at [https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/files/Events\\_Training/2023%20NYSAFC%20Seminar%20Series%20Form.jpg](https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/files/Events_Training/2023%20NYSAFC%20Seminar%20Series%20Form.jpg)



## CHENANGO WELCOMES TWO SQUADS

Chenango Fire is excited to introduce their newest addition to the Chenango Fire Company...TWINS!!

SQUAD 1 AND SQUAD 2 arrived late December 16, and will be placed into service at the beginning of the new year. The twins were designed to handle any call for service we may receive and will be our first due apparatus out of each station. Thank you to 4 Guys Fire Trucks, Firehouse Apparatus, Inc. and our members for their hard work over the past couple years in bringing this idea to life. Stay tuned for more to come as we equip, train and place them into service to better serve our community!

## FIRE COMMISSIONER TRAINING

A reminder that New York State Law requires each fire commissioner to attend and successfully complete a commissioner-specific state-approved training course within two hundred seventy days of the taking of such office. The course will contain training related to legal, fiduciary, financial, procurement, and ethical responsibilities and such other disciplines as may be prescribed by the state comptroller. Such course shall be prescribed and certified in rules promulgated by the state comptroller. The manner, frequency, and duration of such course shall be established by such rules. When approved by the board of fire commissioners in advance of a commissioner attending such training course, the actual and necessary expenses incurred by a commissioner in successfully completing the training required by this section shall be a charge against the fire district.

The Association of Fire Districts is sponsoring an "in-person" class on Saturday, March 18, at 8 am at Endwell Fire Station #1. The cost is \$125 and registration can be done online at:

[https://mms.afdsny.org/members/evr/reg\\_event.php?orgcode=FDNY&evid=33145207](https://mms.afdsny.org/members/evr/reg_event.php?orgcode=FDNY&evid=33145207)

There is also an online training class that you can take, information is available at

[https://www.afdsny.org/commissioner\\_training.php](https://www.afdsny.org/commissioner_training.php)

1 purposes, such portion shall be subject to taxation and the remaining  
2 portion only shall be entitled to the exemption provided by this  
3 section; and

4 (d) the applicant has been certified by the authority having jurisdic-  
5 tion for the incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, or  
6 voluntary ambulance service as an enrolled member of such incorporated  
7 volunteer fire company, fire department, or voluntary ambulance service,  
8 as determined by the governing body of a city, village, town, school  
9 district, fire district or county; provided, however, that such govern-  
10 ing body shall establish a minimum service requirement for each appli-  
11 cant between two years of service and five years of service. It shall be  
12 the duty and responsibility of the governing body of each municipality,  
13 school district and/or fire district which adopts a local law, ordinance  
14 or resolution pursuant to this section to determine the procedure for  
15 certification.

16 3. Any enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire  
17 department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service who accrues more  
18 than twenty years of active service and is so certified by the authority  
19 having jurisdiction for the incorporated volunteer fire company, fire  
20 department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service, shall be granted  
21 the ten percent exemption as authorized by this section for the remain-  
22 der of his or her life as long as his or her primary residence is  
23 located within such county provided that the governing body of a city,  
24 village, town, school district, fire district or county, after a public  
25 hearing, adopts a local law, ordinance or resolution providing therefor.

26 4. Un-remarried spouses of volunteer firefighters or volunteer ambu-  
27 lance workers killed in the line of duty. Any local law or ordinance  
28 adopted pursuant to this section may be separately amended, or a local  
29 law, ordinance or resolution may be separately adopted to continue an  
30 exemption or reinstate a pre-existing exemption claimed under such stat-  
31 utes by an enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company,  
32 fire department, or incorporated voluntary ambulance service, to such  
33 deceased enrolled member's un-remarried spouse if such member is killed  
34 in the line of duty; provided, however, that:

35 (a) such un-remarried spouse is certified by the authority having  
36 jurisdiction for the incorporated volunteer fire company, fire depart-  
37 ment or incorporated voluntary ambulance service as an un-remarried  
38 spouse of an enrolled member of such incorporated volunteer fire compa-  
39 ny, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service who was  
40 killed in the line of duty; and

41 (b) such deceased volunteer had been an enrolled member for at least  
42 five years; and

43 (c) such deceased volunteer had been receiving the exemption prior to  
44 his or her death.

45 5. Un-remarried spouses of deceased volunteer firefighters or volun-  
46 teer ambulance workers. Any local law or ordinance adopted pursuant to  
47 this section may be separately amended, or a local law, ordinance or  
48 resolution may be separately adopted to continue an exemption or rein-  
49 state a pre-existing exemption to an un-remarried spouse of a deceased  
50 enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire depart-  
51 ment, or incorporated voluntary ambulance service; provided, however,  
52 that:

53 (a) such un-remarried spouse is certified by the authority having  
54 jurisdiction for the incorporated volunteer fire company, fire depart-  
55 ment or incorporated voluntary ambulance service as an un-remarried  
56 spouse of a deceased enrolled member of such incorporated volunteer fire

1 company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service;  
2 and

3 (b) such deceased volunteer had been an enrolled member for at least  
4 twenty years; and

5 (c) such deceased volunteer and un-remarried spouse had been receiving  
6 the exemption for such property prior to the death of such volunteer.

7 6. Application for such exemption shall be filed with the assessor or  
8 other agency, department or office designated by the municipality,  
9 school district and/or fire district offering such exemption on or  
10 before the taxable status date on a form as prescribed by the commis-  
11 sioner.

12 7. No applicant who is a volunteer firefighter or volunteer ambulance  
13 worker who by reason of such status is receiving any benefit under the  
14 provisions of this article on the effective date of this section shall  
15 suffer any diminution of such benefit because of the provisions of this  
16 section.

17 8. Any city, village, town, school district, fire district or county  
18 that currently, through local law, ordinance or resolution, provides an  
19 exemption from taxation for an enrolled member of an incorporated volun-  
20 teer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance  
21 service, such enrolled member and spouse, or an un-remarried spouse  
22 shall be authorized to continue to provide such exemption, provided  
23 however, such city, village, town, school district, fire district or  
24 county shall adopt a local law, ordinance or resolution to conform to  
25 the provisions of this section no later than three years after the  
26 effective date of this section.

27 9. Notice to affected municipalities. On or before December thirty-  
28 first, two thousand twenty-two, it shall be the duty of the commissioner  
29 or her or his designees to notify or cause to be notified, in a manner  
30 prescribed by the commissioner, the chief executive officer of each and  
31 any municipality in which former sections four hundred sixty-six-a, four  
32 hundred sixty-six-b, four hundred sixty-six-c, four hundred sixty-six-d,  
33 four hundred sixty-six-f, four hundred sixty-six-g, four hundred sixty-  
34 six-h, four hundred sixty-six-i, four hundred sixty-six-j, and four  
35 hundred sixty-six-k of the real property tax law apply, of the  
36 provisions of the chapter of the laws of two thousand twenty-two that  
37 added this section.

38 § 2. Sections 466-a as added by chapter 617 of the laws of 1999,  
39 466-b, 466-c, 466-d, 466-e, 466-f, 466-g, 466-h, 466-i, 466-j and 466-k  
40 of the real property tax law are REPEALED.

41 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately; provided, however, that  
42 section two of this act shall take effect three years after the effec-  
43 tive date of this act.