

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS



Effective Use of Labor Management

**Demetris Alfred
Tom Hanify**

**Shorty Bryson
Steve Westermann**

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LMA History

- Initially the Labor Management Initiative (LMI)
- Started as a better way to do business
- Made up of Fire Chiefs and Union Presidents
- In 2016 the program was retooled and named the Labor Management Alliance (LMA)
- A resource to try and improve poor LM relations



What does a Poor Relationship look like?

- Win/lose relationship
- Poor communications between Labor and Management
- A membership opposed to meaningful change
- A city administration and Fire Department administration with a lack of respect for the Rank and File.



Motivation for Change

- Catastrophic Incident
- Change in Political Leadership
- Change in Chief/Local Union Leadership
- Goals are not being achieved



Making the Decision to Change

Initiating a better LM Relationship and
putting it into practice



Establishing Ground Rules

- An open discussion of concerns with a focus on interests
- Listen actively - seek to understand before being understood
- Each person to speak without interruption, allowing everyone an opportunity to speak
- Acknowledge the viewpoint of others, but it is okay to disagree constructively
- Accept mistakes in good faith
- Treat each other with respect
- Other??



Roles and Responsibilities

- **Union:**
 - Act as advocates
 - Provide representation
 - Support members in work-related matters
- **Fire department:**
 - Serve to educate public
 - Prepare city forces for disaster response
 - Provide some emergency medical assistance



Points to Ponder

- Your relationship is not a competition
- Quit fighting your last battle
- If you continue to do what you're doing, the future will look like the past



Commitment

What am I personally willing to do that will improve or eliminate the conflicts and improve our working relationships?

“You either do or you don’t, there is no try” -Yoda



What do Effective Teams Look Like?

- Shared Leadership
- Clear Assignments
- Open Communications
- Consensus
- Agree to Disagree
- Listening
- Clear Task
- Full Participation
- Informal



LM Guidelines

- Make sure all views are heard
- Share information, ideas, opinions and feelings
- Treat differences as a strength
- Equalize opportunity for full participation
- Avoid ownership
- Yield to reason, not pressure
- Avoid voting, horse-trading or bargaining
- Test for agreement
- Ensure follow through



Common Problems

- Polarized factions
- Endless discussion
- Low quality decisions
- Low participation by some
- Dominated by others
- Not supporting group decisions
- Attacking people not problems



Case Study 1

Random Drug Testing



Case Study 2

The Untrusted Union



Case Study 3

Negotiating a CBA, facing a budget crisis.



Why Utilize Labor-Management?

- Builds group unity
- Maximizes individual input
- Produces quality decisions
- Achieves Goals
- Fosters commitment and satisfaction
- Allows for buy in
- Improves department morale



Guiding Principles




IAFC/IAFF Labor-Management Initiative Guiding Principles


The following principles have been developed and agreed to by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) in the true spirit of cooperation for the enhancement of the fire/EMS service and the communities it serves. We recognize that mutual adherence to these values requires the constant effort of labor and management representatives.

Guiding Principles:

- To recognize that labor and management have a mutual goal of ensuring the well-being and safety of fire/EMS personnel and providing high quality service to the public.
- To work together to improve communications, enhance training, increase participative decision-making, and promote a labor-management relationship based upon mutual trust, respect, and understanding.
- To create labor-management partnerships by forming labor-management committees at appropriate levels, or adapting, as necessary, existing councils or committees if such groups exist.
- To provide systemic training to labor and management leaders on collaborative methods of dispute resolution, recognizing that this process allows management and union leaders to identify problems and craft solutions to better serve their members and the public.
- To promote these principles to our respective members at all levels of both organizations.

Signed this 13th day of August, 2008


Chief Steven P. Westermann, CFO
President, IAFC


Harold A. Schaitberger
General President, IAFF



LMA Technical Assistance

- The IAFF and IAFC have expanded the program since its inception in 2008.
- The committees found that at times, both parties need to reevaluate how they conduct their business.
- The LMA Committee now offers technical assistance when the Fire Department and the Local Union do a joint request.
- A request can be made through the IAFF or IAFC offices.



The LMA Conference

- Every two Years
- Last one was in Denver - April 2018
- Next one ???



Contacts

James Ridley
Program Manager, IAFF
jridley@iaff.org
202-824-1551

John Woulfe
Program Manager, IAFC
JWoulfe@iafc.org
(703) 273-9815 ext 383

