



Department of Fire Services  
Massachusetts Firefighting Academy

**May 3, 2016**

**Course Number:**  
200-014-SOI-2016-SP-A

**Location:**  
Massachusetts  
Firefighting Academy  
One State Road, Stow, MA  
MFA - Link

**Time:**  
1000-1500

**Course Fee:**  
\$20.00  
Check or money order  
made out to "MFA Trust  
Fund"

**Notes:**  
Application deadline is  
April 25, 2016.

Applications must include  
payment.

Walk-ins and day-of  
registrations will not be  
allowed.

Lunch will be provided.

## **SENIOR FIRE OFFICER FORUM**

### **WHY FIREFIGHTERS DIE?**

*Presented By: Assistant Chief Matthew Tobia, Loudoun County VA Fire Rescue*

In the age of instant access where the events of a firefighter's death are all too often memorialized in video and audio recordings posted on the internet faster than families can be notified of the circumstances of the their loved one's loss, it is more important than ever to learn from these case studies.

Through an interactive conversation, this program will explore several instances of firefighter fatalities and near misses to look beyond what is seen to what is not seen. This program will offer an opportunity to look deeper than the proximate causes of an event into the root causes and problems lying in wait that can contribute to an environment of suffering a Line-of-Duty Death (LODD).

We will examine a concept known as "standardization of deviance" and its role in contributing to a culture of tolerance for complacency. We will examine the role that command officers play in the pursuit of perfection. While it is absolutely possible to be doing everything right and still suffer an LODD, far too often our firefighter fatalities are predictable and therefore ... preventable.

If you believe in the brotherhood of the fire service, do not miss this program.

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#### **Registration –**

Register at [List of Current MFA Courses](#) by completing a standard [DFS/MFA student application](#) and mail with the \$20 course fee payment to: Registrar, Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, P.O. Box 1025, State Road, Stow, MA 01775.



## **Presenter Biographies**

Matthew Tobia is the Assistant Chief of Support Services and Volunteer Administration with the Loudoun County, VA Fire and Rescue Department, a metropolitan combination department of over 1300 members located in Northern Virginia just west of Washington, DC. With over 27 years of diverse experience, Matt has served as a firefighter, paramedic, company officer and chief officer. Chief Tobia began his career in Anne Arundel County, MD where he retired at the rank of Battalion Chief.

Chief Tobia holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Maryland, is a nationally certified Fire Officer IV, Instructor III, and is a graduate of the Executive Fire Officer program through the United States Fire Administration. He teaches extensively throughout the United States, and is a contributing editor and back page columnist for Fire-Rescue Magazine. He has served on the faculty at both the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and the Maryland Fire Rescue Institute.

Chief Tobia is a member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and is a past-Chairman of their Safety, Health, and Survival Section. Matt is active in supporting the families of fallen firefighters, serving as a member of the Command Team for the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend. And in his spare time, he is a counselor at the Mid Atlantic Burn Camp for children who are survivors of burn injuries.

Matt resides in Loudoun County, VA with his wife Jeanne and two children, Hanna and Doc.

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