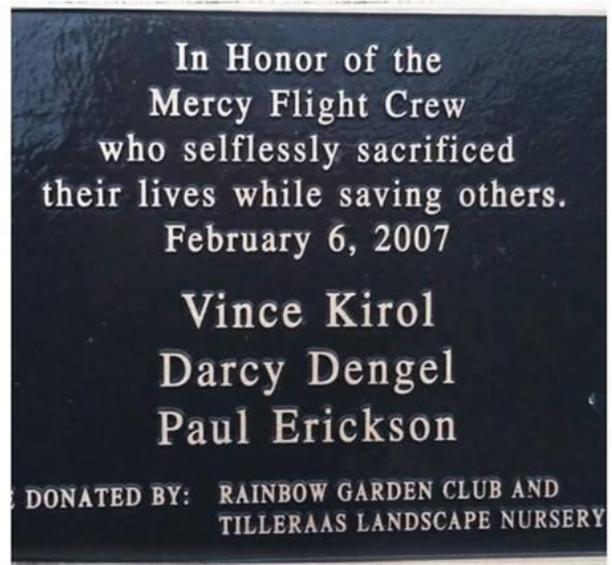




8 years ago today, Montana lost a beloved Mercy Flight Crew. They took off from Great Falls and did not make it home. Darcy Dengel a flight nurse who was engaged to GFPD officer Rob Beall. Paul Erickson a flight paramedic and firefighter with Great Falls Fire Rescue along with GFPD's HRU team as a medic. Vince Kirol who was the pilot of N45MF.



In this Edition:

Around Montana

[2015 FSTS Staff And Command Coming In April](#)

[Confined Space Rescue Began Thursday In Kalispell](#)

[Fire Destroys Fiberglass Tank Plant In Laurel](#)

[Great Falls Firefighters Ready For Annual Stair Climb For Charity](#)

[Missoula Firefighters, First Responders Train For Urban Avalanches](#)

[IAAI Training Opportunity Coming to Great Falls](#)

[NFA Decision Making for Initial Company Operations Miles City Location Change!](#)

Around the Nation

[Ill. Fire Chief Fatally Struck by Apparatus](#)

[Pa. Crews Rescue Residents from Fire](#)

[Man Dies When Calif. Medics Delayed by Protesters](#)

[School Bus, Tanker Collide In Butler County, PA](#)

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Around Montana

2015 FSTS Staff And Command Coming In April

MSU Fire Services Training School will be presenting the Staff and Command seminar Saturday, April 18st through Sunday, April 19nd at the Hampton Inn, 2301 14th St SW, Great Falls Montana. Class will begin at 8:30 a.m. Saturday morning.

This seminar is intended to assist chief fire officers, trustees, fire service area board members and administrative officials with the leadership and management of effective fire service organizations. This seminar will provide current or newly appointed chief officers, trustees, fire service area board members, administrative officers, and city/county commissioners' exposure to the fire protection challenges they face and the range of skills required for success. Participants' interest and needs will determine the content of the presentations which are informal and highly interactive.

Tuition is \$129.00 for members of a public Montana Fire Department and \$200.00 Private for private or out-of-state individuals. This includes 2 lunches, 1 dinner and handout materials.

To register please contact:

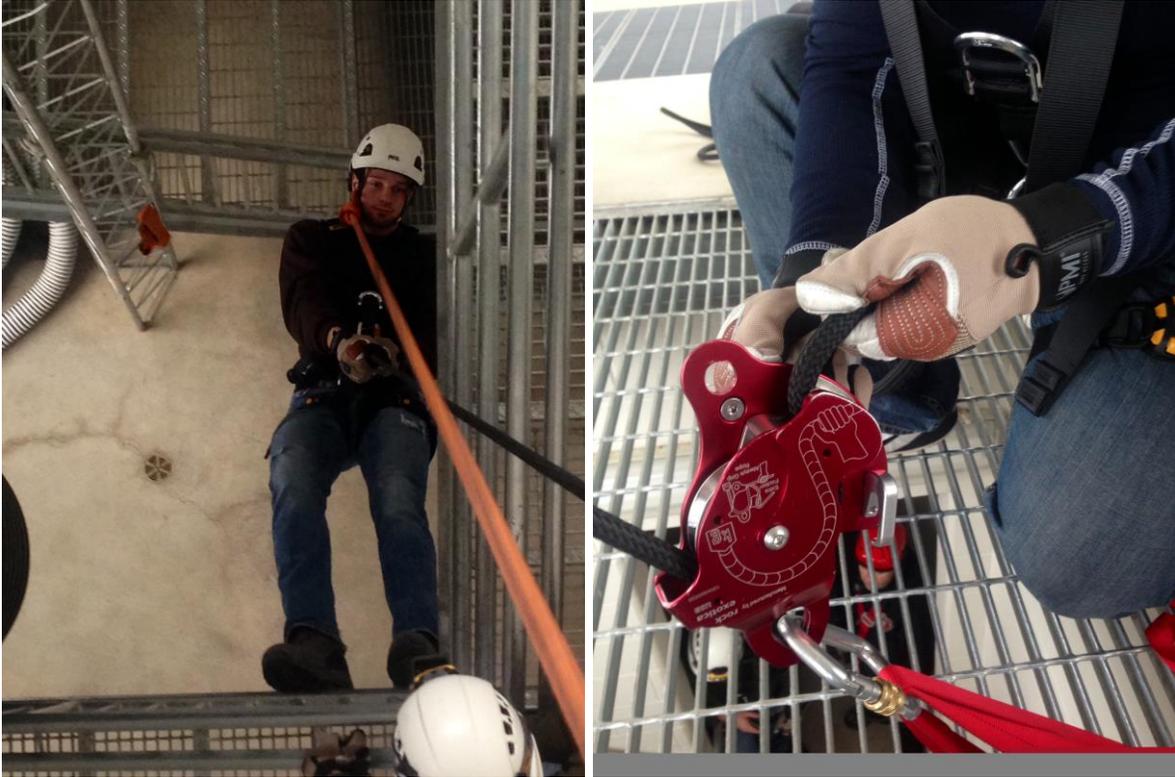
Jon Marshall at jonathan.marshall@montana.edu (406) 771-4338

Or Kathy Craig at katheryn.craig@montana.edu (406) 771-4335

[Top of the Document](#)

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Confined Space Rescue Began Thursday In Kalispell



Confined Space Rescue began Thursday in Kalispell hosted at Kalispell Station 62. 14 participants from around the state will be involved through Sunday to complete this portion of the Technical Rescue series. Fire Services Training School works in conjunction with departments throughout the state to host the popular series.

[Top of the Document](#)

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Fire Destroys Fiberglass Tank Plant In Laurel

http://billingsgazette.com/news/local/fire-destroys-fiberglass-tank-plant-in-laurel/article_8ba37be8-06c4-5a56-9d5b-6e0844bb5f57.html



A manufacturing plant in Laurel that produces storage tanks for Bakken oil fields was destroyed Thursday after fire broke out inside the production facility.

More than 20 employees evacuated safely after the fire was discovered at Fiberglass Structures Inc. on East Railroad Street. Ten minutes later, the roof began to collapse.

"Once it got going, it was totally unstoppable," said Rob Harris, the company's president. Nearly 30 firefighters from Laurel, Billings and the CHS Refinery responded to the call just before noon.

Laurel firefighters arrived three minutes from the call to find the building fully on fire, said Fire Chief Brent Peters.

Crews could only contain the fire and try to keep it from spreading to other buildings on the site.

They fought the blaze for several hours from trucks and on the ground. Eventually, the primary production facility crumbled.

Peters said that he'd heard one worker at the plant received minor injuries in the fire but noted that the worker wasn't taken to the hospital by Laurel emergency crews and didn't have information on the person's condition or injuries.

The company sales office, attached to the structure but separated by a firewall, was also damaged by flames that could be seen traveling along its roof.

Firefighters were seen about 2:30 p.m. carrying computers and smoke-damaged cardboard boxes from the office, which Peters said was also considered a total loss.

The fire was mostly contained by 3 p.m., Peters said. Crews continued to walk around the rubble extinguishing hot spots.

By about 6 p.m., the fire was out and firefighters were bringing in heavy equipment to get to the interior of the fire scene. Peters expected 15 to 20 firefighters to remain overnight to put out hotspots and watch out for any flareups.

"It's just salvaging, overhaul and mop-up right now," he said. "We'll be working most of the night until we're comfortable and I'll then I'll turn it over to our fire marshals to investigate the cause."

The cause of the fire remains unknown, but it was fueled by chemicals used to produce the 17,000-gallon fiberglass tanks, Harris said.

The tanks, dozens of which lined the site, are shipped to the Bakken oil fields where they are used to capture hazardous wastewater from the fracking process.

As the fiberglass resin inside the plant burned Thursday, it emitted thick smoke into the sky. The cloud extended northwest from the site, snaking toward the Rimrocks in Billings as the fire continued to burn throughout the afternoon.

The heavy black smoke was toxic if inhaled, although a steady wind helped dissipate it, Peters said.

While local health officials couldn't be reached on Thursday afternoon, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality's hourly air-quality monitoring data on particulate concentration in Billings showed an upward spike from noon to 1 p.m.

However, the particulate levels reached a high of 20 micrograms per cubic meter of air, still well within the DEQ's "good" level, which is 33.5 or less. The numbers fell to 15 by 2 p.m.

Employees watched crews battle the flames from across the street. Several said they have worked for the company for decades and described the loss as devastating.

Bob Degele, one of the plant's supervisors and an employee of 25 years, was inside when the fire alarm sounded. Degele said he couldn't see where the flames were coming from, but said "it took off pretty quick."

The plant is located across a field from the Laurel Walmart. The shopping center's parking lot was lined with dozens of vehicles that stopped to watch the flames.

Harris said he purchased the manufacturing plant in 2001 and had it converted into fiberglass production. The company has since ridden the ebbs and flows of regional oil exploration. He recently added to the site another shop about 40 yards from the burned facility. That building was undamaged by the flames.

Harris expects to shift some production to the company's other Laurel facility at 119 South Washington Ave., just a mile away, while determining how to proceed at the Railroad Street plant.

Fiberglass Structures Inc. has a history of fire safety violations and was fined in December 2012 by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

The company, a subsidiary of Texas-based L.F. Manufacturing Inc., ended up paying \$49,000 in fines in a settlement over alleged violations that were exposing workers to fire and explosion hazards, said Art Hazen, OSHA assistant director at its Billings Area Office.

Inspectors found 11 serious violations, which carried a maximum \$63,000 penalty. Among OSHA's findings were spray booths which exposed workers to possible fire and explosion; various electrical hazards; improper storage of chemicals; confined space deficiencies; inadequate eyewash facilities; failure to use and require personal protective equipment and to provide adequate training, according to an agency press release from the time.

"Something is seriously wrong when an employer repeatedly disregards specific safety standards required to protect workers from serious injuries or death," said Jeff Funke, director of OSHA's Billings office. "Neglecting the safety of workers is simply unacceptable."

All of the 2012 violations were remedied by the company and brought back into compliance, Hazen said. OSHA hasn't inspected the facility since the issues were resolved, he said.

An OSHA crew was on scene Thursday and will begin investigating the fire soon, which Hazen said is standard procedure.

Harris said Thursday the company had recently installed a fire suppression system in the roof, which employees reportedly saw activate after flames erupted. Employees may have briefly tried to contain the flames using handheld extinguishers, but Harris said the fire quickly escalated.

"They just wouldn't get a handle on it," he said of the plant's fire suppression devices.

"It's just too early to tell where it came from or where it started," Harris added.

Harris, a former member of the Laurel Fire Department for 33 years, knows fire well.

"But when it hits this close to home, it's gut-wrenching," he said.

[Top of the Document](#)

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Great Falls Firefighters Ready For Annual Stair Climb For Charity

<http://www.krtv.com/story/28038487/great-falls-firefighters-ready-for-annual-stair-climb-for-charity>



GREAT FALLS -- Several Great Falls firefighters are preparing to participate in the annual stair-climb challenge to raise money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

The annual event, called the Scott Firefighter Stairclimb, is held at the Columbia Center in Seattle, and challenges firefighters to race up 69 flights -- a total of 1,311 steps.

Great Falls Fire Rescue has been competing in the stair climb for seven years.

Great Falls firefighter J.D. Kulbeck was a part of the original group to compete in the event and has gone out to Seattle every year since.

Kulbeck said, "It's a good deal to keep in shape, also to compete with other firefighters throughout the county and also throughout the world. They have guys from Germany, New Zealand, and Canada come."

He noted, "Last year about 1,800 guys raised two million dollars, so it's just a good idea to

help raise the money. That's what it's all about."

The firefighters have to be in full bunker gear and wearing a Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus while doing the climb.

"Typically the gear weighs between 50 and 60 pounds. It kind of all just depends on what type of gear the guys are wearing and if they want to climb with a half an hour bottle or a 60 minute bottle," Kulbeck said.

"The most fun is getting to see the honorees that come. The people that are actually fighting leukemia or have just gotten over leukemia and lymphoma. And the camaraderie of all the guys throughout the country," he added.

The Great Falls team will be having a fundraiser at The Front Brewery in downtown Great Falls on February 20th from 5 until 10 p.m.

For every pint of beer people buy, a dollar will go to the Great Falls team.

You can also donate to the event at the [LLSWA website](#).

The Great Falls team includes: J.D. Kulbeck, Nolan Eggen, Adam Marsh, BJay Perry, Joseph Tinsley, Steven Tucker, and David Van Son.

So far, the team has raised \$3,020 toward its goal of \$7,500.

[Top of the Document](#)

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Missoula Firefighters, First Responders Train For Urban Avalanches

http://missoulian.com/news/local/missoula-firefighters-first-responders-train-for-urban-avalanches/article_af8a8fe1-eea7-5ac5-8d38-7495cbd09f4c.html

Should an avalanche with the disastrous magnitude of last year's Mount Jumbo slide hit Missoula again, first responders plan on being prepared.

The Missoula Fire Department is hosting a two-day training Friday and Saturday conducted by urban avalanche expert Tom Mattice, who will instruct law enforcement, firefighters, search and rescue, and other emergency workers on the proper response to an urban avalanche.

Fire Chief Jason Diehl said Mattice has ties to the Missoula community and currently works as the emergency programs manager in Juneau, Alaska, where avalanches are more common.

"(Last year's avalanche) made me realize that we have never trained for avalanches here at the fire department," Diehl said. "Going through that experience, I realized it was something we could do to improve our capabilities, in case this ever happened again."

The chances of such a catastrophe happening again in Missoula are rare, Diehl said.

He described last year's conditions of increased snowfall, along with strong winds, a "perfect storm" of wintry weather that created ideal conditions for an avalanche.

The slide claimed the life of one woman, buried her husband and a small boy who lived next door, and left a two-story house destroyed in its wake.

All three victims were pulled from the snow alive by emergency responders and an army of volunteers who descended upon the Rattlesnake neighborhood. Michel Colville ultimately died of injuries suffered when the avalanche hit her home.

"What was really eye-opening about the Jumbo avalanche is it was chaos initially," Diehl said.

"Citizens were responding, wanting to help, and that was something we weren't expecting."

Normally, if you have structure fire, you want to get people away. In this case, the community members were a valuable resource. I don't think the rescues would have been possible without that additional effort."

He said part of the training will be learning how to manage volunteers, many of whom were armed with their own avalanche rescue tools and offering their services.

Another part of the training will take place Saturday at Montana Snowbowl, where Mattice will instruct responders in search methods, shoveling and extrication.

The firefighters will also learn how to use tools in their new avalanche packs, which include beacons, probes, shovels and other equipment. In total, there are 10 new packs that firefighters will be able to take with them in the unlikely event an urban slide happens again. The firefighters didn't have access to those tools through the department last year, Diehl said. However, many firefighters are outdoor and backcountry enthusiasts who had their own avalanche gear in their personal cars. They were able to grab their own equipment before hopping on the fire engine.

Overall, the Jumbo avalanche shifted emergency responders' attitudes toward avalanches. "I think everyone has a healthy respect for the avalanche," Diehl said. "It just was one of those things that you didn't expect to occur in town, and so from my perspective, it means it is a potential threat. It happened once and it could happen again."

He plans on repeating an in-house training every year and possibly invite an expert back for a refresher course every few years. The training is not open to the general public, but Diehl said there may be other opportunities for people to learn about avalanche safety through the West Central Montana Avalanche Foundation.

"I hope we will never see that again, but from the fire department's perspective, with some minimal effort, we can be prepared to deal with it should it ever happen again," he added.

[Top of the Document](#)

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IAAI Training Opportunity Coming to Great Falls

Electrical Aspects of Fire Investigation

Instructor: Dave Cusatis IAAI-CFI, IAAI-CI

Where: Great Falls Fire Rescue Charles C. Carrico Regional Training Facility, 1900 9th Street South Great Falls MT, 59405

When: Thursday March 12th, 2015 8am-5pm Lunch Provided

Description:

This course addresses the critical skills essential to the effective investigation and evaluation of fires involving potential electrical causes. This course utilizes state of the art techniques, practices, protocols and standards to assist investigators to properly and effectively evaluate electrical systems and associated components to ascertain their role in a fire.

Students will be provided with a basic knowledge of electrical faults and failures of electrical components and circuits, as well as a working knowledge of the National Electrical Code (NEC) and how it applies to the fire investigations.

The use of 'Arc Mapping' will also be discussed and how it can be effectively used to assist in fire origin determination. Participants will also be able to demonstrate a general knowledge of

electricity, electrical circuits, systems and arc mapping principles through a series of instructor led 'hands-on' practical exercises.

Register online at firearson .com

Click on training and certifications.

Scroll down to classes and events.

Click on Electrical Aspects of Fire Investigation

Or to register by phone call 1-410-451-3473

Cost:

Montana Chapter Members: \$100.

Montana Non-Members: \$200.

[Top of the Document](#)

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NFA Decision Making for Initial Company Operations Miles City Location Change!

****New Location: Miles City Fire, 2800 Main St, Miles City****

Decision Making for Initial Company Operations is designed to develop the decision making skills needed by Company Officers (COs) to accomplish assigned tactics at structure fires. All activities and scenarios used in this course are based on structure fires. As a Company Officer (CO) with the real possibility of being the first to arrive at an incident, the CO's initial decisions will have an impact throughout the entire incident. It is vital that they be able to make good management decisions that have a favorable impact on the eventual outcome. In addition to a possible role as the initial Incident Commander (IC), the CO may well be assigned a subordinate position within the ICS organization. COs need to have a clear understanding of the system, the position they are assigned, and their role in the organization if they are to function effectively and help make the system work.

New Location: Miles City Fire, 2800 Main St, Miles City

Times: 9 am to 6 pm both days

When: February 7th & 8th 2015 9 am to 6 pm

[Top of the Document](#)

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Around the Nation

III. Fire Chief Fatally Struck by Apparatus

<http://www.firehouse.com/news/11833826/medora-fire-chief-dies-after-being-backed-over-by-fire-truck>



Medora Fire Protection District Fire Chief Kenneth Lehr.

Photo credit: Medora Fire Protection District

MACOUPIN COUNTY -- The fire chief of the rural Medora Fire Protection District in Macoupin County was killed Tuesday afternoon when he was struck by a fire engine that was driven by one of his own firefighters.

Kenneth Lehr, 59, of Fidelity, in Jersey County, was pronounced dead at the scene.

The incident happened at about 2:30 p.m. in the rural Chesterfield, Ill., area.

The Medora firefighters were responding to a call for a man who had broken his leg when a tree limb fell on him, said Earl Nixon, president of the fire district.

They were attempting to close the road for a medical helicopter to land, state police said.

Lehr was struck by the fire engine, driven by firefighter Patrick Cullum, 46, of Medora, as it was backing up.

The department has about 23 firefighters and one firehouse, Nixon said. Thursday night, they were waiting for a crisis management team to come and talk with them.

Lehr had been the department's chief for about eight years, Nixon said.

"He was very involved in the community, he was also an EMT, he was also one of the board members of the fire district," said Nixon. "He's been very active in the community a lot of years. We'll miss him."

[Top of the Document](#)

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Pa. Crews Rescue Residents from Fire

<http://www.firehouse.com/news/11833852/firefighters-rescue-occupants-from-norristown-fire>



Photo credit: Dave Jackson/ Plymouth Fire Co.



Photo credit: Dave Jackson/ Plymouth Fire Co.



Photo credit: Dave Jackson/ Plymouth Fire Co.



Photo credit: Dave Jackson/ Plymouth Fire Co.



Photo credit: Dave Jackson/ Plymouth Fire Co.



Photo credit: Dave Jackson/ Plymouth Fire Co.

A woman died and three others, including a firefighter, were injured in a massive overnight blaze at a Norristown apartment complex. Montgomery County dispatchers said the four-alarm fire at the Norris Apartments on the 600 block of Swede Street was reported at 12:45 a.m.

The blaze was initially reported in the basement, but firefighters encountered heavy flames throughout the building and had to make rescues from all four floors, fire officials said. "Crews had their hands full when they got here," Norristown Fire Chief Thomas O'Donnell told reporters at the scene.

Officials said the fire apparently spread through a trash chute.

A woman died despite efforts to rescue her from her fourth-floor apartment, the fire department said. Her name was not released.

Three others were taken to area hospitals for treatment of various injuries, dispatchers said.

O'Donnell said one of the injured was a firefighter who cut his hand.

Firefighters battled the four-alarm blaze, during which the roof and fourth-floor walls in the rear of the building collapsed, for several hours.

The fire was under control early this morning, though crews remained on the scene damping down embers and flames.

The fire department said the collapsed roof and walls, as well as icy streets and sidewalks, posed significant challenges as the firefighters worked to extinguish the blaze.

Anthony Tornetta, spokesman for the Red Cross of Southeastern Pennsylvania, said the agency was assisting 21 people displaced by the fire at Norristown Area High School.

The Salvation Army of Greater Philadelphia was also helping fire victims. The agency said it was planning to serve meals to 45 people, including residents and emergency responders, at the temporary shelter through Thursday morning. The agency said it would provide other assistance as needed.

Portions of the building will need to be taken down, the fire department said.

Officials are investigating to determine the cause of the fire.

Several SEPTA bus routes were detoured while emergency crews responded to the blaze.

[Top of the Document](#)

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Man Dies When Calif. Medics Delayed by Protesters

<http://www.firehouse.com/news/11833827/protesters-delayed-berkeley-firefighters-to-deadly-heart-attack>

Paramedics took nearly a half hour to reach a stricken 62-year-old man, who later died, because they were told to wait for a police escort as a result of a protest over police brutality in downtown Berkeley, city records show.

It would have taken just a couple of minutes for Berkeley firefighters to drive from Station No. 2 on Berkeley Way to Alvin Henry Jones Jr., who had collapsed near an elevator at an apartment complex at 2175 Kittredge St. on the evening of Dec. 7.

But hundreds of people had gathered downtown to protest against police killings of unarmed black men in Missouri and New York.

Berkeley firefighters, following protocol, were instructed not to go directly to the scene.

Instead, they were required to stay at the fire station and wait for police to accompany them, according to Fire Department records first released to the Berkeleyside website through a state Public Records Act request.

It was at least the second time in recent years that a protest in Berkeley caused a departure in emergency response in a case that ended with someone's death.

In 2012, Peter Cukor, 67, called police about an intruder on his property in the Berkeley hills, but no officers showed up before the stranger bludgeoned him to death. Police said they had been responding only to emergency calls while girding for what turned out to be a small Occupy march.

Cukor's family resolved a wrongful-death lawsuit against the city after police agreed to tell people calling for help that officers might be delayed.

Some protesters have said the cases reveal serious missteps by police and paramedics, with blame shifted to them in a bid to stifle their message.

In the December incident, Berkeley police had issued advisories stating that 500 to 600 people were marching downtown. "Traffic is heavy in the area, please avoid," one alert said. "It was reported to the crews a large group of protesters were within a block of the call, and the medical response were to stage in quarters until a police escort to escort us to the call," said a Fire Department memo.

Although the 911 call about Jones --who had collapsed, and was having difficulty breathing -- came in at 6:39 p.m., police didn't arrive at Station No. 2 until 7:03 p.m., around the time that other officers were monitoring protesters who were reaching police headquarters on Martin Luther King Jr. Way.

The tandem police and fire team didn't reach Jones until 7:07 p.m., far longer than the Fire Department's average response time of 5.5 minutes.

Police stayed on the scene "for protection" as paramedics reached Jones, who was "quickly brought to ambulance due to protest getting closer," the Fire Department memo said. A battalion chief told the ambulance crew that "immediate transport (was) needed due to volatile protest and scene safety."

Jones arrived at a hospital 52 minutes after the 911 call. He died two days later from natural causes, according to the Alameda County coroner.

The 911 call was placed a little more than an hour before paramedics were called to help a man who was hit by a hammer while trying to stop protesters looting the RadioShack store at Dwight Way and Shattuck Avenue in downtown Berkeley.

Protesters, angry about the police killings of Michael Brown and Eric Garner -- and the use of tear gas by Berkeley police a day earlier -- would go on to smash the windows of other businesses, set fires, throw objects at police and climb onto Highway 24 in Oakland.

"In any situation where there's a potential for violence to a patient or to others, it's standard protocol to work with law enforcement agencies to make sure the scene is what we call 'secure' for firefighters and paramedics to enter," Berkeley Fire Chief Gil Dong said Thursday. "Until a scene is safe for people to enter, you don't risk another human life to save another human life."

The chief said there have been instances in which fire crews in Berkeley have been pelted with rocks and bottles, and that it would be inaccurate to assume firefighters would automatically be greeted by protesters "with open arms."

[Top of the Document](#)

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School Bus, Tanker Collide In Butler County, PA

<http://www.wtae.com/news/school-bus-damaged-in-butler-county-crash/31092250>



SUMMIT TOWNSHIP, Pa. —The driver of a school bus was flown to a hospital after a collision with a tanker truck Wednesday in Summit Township, Butler County. Sky 4 showed emergency responders working through a large hole in the front of the damaged school bus on Route 422 in Summit Township. Sky 4 helicopter video showed emergency responders working through a large hole in the front of the damaged school bus at Route 422 and Bonniebrook Road. Firefighters also carried a patient out of the bus through the rear emergency exit and put the person onto a stretcher. State police Trooper Dan Kesten said the tanker truck was stopped on Route 422 when it was rear-ended by the westbound school bus. The driver of the bus had to be removed from the vehicle by emergency responders.

GALLERY: [View photos from Sky 4 over the accident](#)

"Seat belts do a terrific job a lot of times keeping people safe. This crash here is definitely a good depiction of exactly how a seat belt can help somebody," Kesten said.

Indiana Area School District Superintendent Dale Kirsch said four students were on the bus, which was headed to an all-district orchestra event at Hickory High School in Hermitage. He said the children were taken to an area hospital as a precaution, but any injuries were believed to be very minor.

State police are investigating the cause of the crash. Kesten said the tanker seemed to be stopped at a red light, but that was still being investigated. He said it's not yet clear how fast the school bus was going.

[Top of the Document](#)

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