

NFPA 1710

The International Association of Fire Fighters is strongly advocating the implementation of NFPA 1710 across the United States and Canada. Our International continuously lobbies politicians on the federal level to recognize the standard, and attempts to gain the needed support to make it a federal requirement.

At the same time, the IAFF encourages all affiliate locals to pursue the implementation of NFPA 1710 at the local level. To assist locals in their efforts, the IAFF has provided each local with manuals, cd's, and videos on NFPA 1710. These materials are designed to address the implementation requirements of the standard, and give ideas for a campaign towards gaining public and local government support.

Implementation of NFPA 1710 ensures safe staffing, as well as many other things. It sets parameters for the correct number/locations of fire stations, response times, and operations at emergency scenes of all types.

While we have benefited from 4 handed staffing recently, the sad reality is that we have to defend it everyday. Sometimes it is threatened by philosophy, and other times by possible budget shortfalls or cuts.

During our last contract negotiations we took a major step in gaining an executive order from the Mayor supporting 4 handed staffing. It is something that we didn't have before and we had to take a firm stand to get it. It was not a "given".

But its not enough.

We need more. And there may not be a better resource (other than out of the kindness of a city's heart) than NFPA 1710 to help us move closer to what the standards should be for emergency response/operations.

The Local 1645 Board has watched the development of this standard over the past few years, and believes that it is achievable within the next few years.

We have reviewed all of the material available from the IAFF on NFPA 1710, and compared it to where the Salt Lake City Fire Department is as an emergency service provider. We have taken into consideration staffing, number of stations and their locations, dispatch protocols, response times, and emergency scene operational guidelines. Believe it or not, we are close to being in compliance with the standard.

Anytime is the right time to pursue full compliance with NFPA 1710. We have nothing to lose by trying to make things better. Doubters say it won't work because of the economy, but I don't seem to remember anyone trying to make a solid run at it when the economy was at its all time high a few years ago. I do seem to remember a lot of 3 handed rigs back then.

With that in mind, the Local 1645 Board has already got the ball rolling. We have developed a plan of attack that starts with education. We want to educate our members, our administration, citizens, business leaders, and city leaders on the benefits of full compliance with NFPA 1710.

Several months ago members suggested that we form a public relations committee within the local. At that time it did not seem necessary. However, with an unstable economy and the pursuit of NFPA 1710 compliance in mind (as well as future projects such as negotiations), the board has agreed that it could be an asset. As a result, a public relations committee is being formed. Initially, this committee will assist the Local 1645 Board in the NFPA 1710 campaign efforts. There after their role is to be determined. The committee will not supersede the Department PIO efforts or the Local 1645 Board in media relations of any kind.

In February the Union Board will meet with the committee and bring them up to speed on what has been developed so far on the NFPA 1710 campaign. At that time the committee will provide input. Once out of the chute, the NFPA 1710 campaign should take off fast, and be around for a long time. And it probably will take a long time. It will be labor intensive for those on the Board and the committee. Anyone else that can give an hour or two here or there is welcome to help. Everyone is invited.

If you think it is not worth the effort, or that it is a line of crap-fine. There are plenty of other fire fighters that can carry the load. We will do it for you. If you think it won't work, it probably won't. If you think it will, then it might. That should be enough motivation to participate. Or in the least support it.

Included with this letter is a fact sheet that we developed highlighting the major points of NFPA 1710. It obviously is not all inclusive, but is 1710 in a nutshell. Most materials that we produce will be a derivative of the fact sheet, depending on the target audience. Also, there is a short video that the IAFF produced on the subject. Please take the time to watch it.

We will post information on our website as the campaign develops. Visit our website at www.1645.org. Or visit the IAFF website at www.iaff.org to find more information about NFPA 1710. From there search the site index.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact one of the Local 1645 Executive Board members. Thanks.

Jack Tidrow, President