

BROOME COUNTY FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION

BROOME COUNTY, NEW YORK

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR CONDUCTING FIRE DEPARTMENT PESH INSPECTIONS

New rescue rope law compliance being reviewed

The New York State Department of Labor has been out doing PESH (Public Employee Safety & Health) Inspections and is citing fire departments who are not in compliance with state requirements.

Recent inspections have concentrated on firefighter safety and health. Inspectors have looked primarily at turnout gear and whether it is compliant, annual fit test records for members, the dates of each person's annual SCBA training, dates of physicals and training records on bloodborne pathogens and "Right to Know" training.

One of the big things PESH is looking at is compliance with the new rescue rope regulations. A Fire Department in Onondaga County was recently fined because they were not in compliance with the new rescue rope law. The law requires that each fire department do an assessment of structures in their response area and the areas where they "normally" do mutual aid and decide what type of rescue rope and harness is right for them. This department had not done the necessary assessment and had no rescue rope equipment which resulted in the fine.

If your fire department is not yet in compliance with the new rescue rope regulations, the Department of Labor recommends that you contact them for a consultation. They will come in and provide you with information on the new law and assist you in understanding the regulations. Following the "consultation" PESH cannot do a reinspection for another 3-6 months, to give you time to implement your program. Some have cautioned, however, that if you still are not compliant after this time, you could be fined even more because you are now willfully violating the law.

One Broome County Department was recently inspected. The inspectors showed up on a meeting night when they said they "knew someone would be at the fire station". They did an inspection that night and followed up with two visits in the following weeks. This fire department was cited because several members had not attended required annual training for bloodborne pathogens and "Right to Know" training. Two members also had not had the required annual SCBA requalification.

After several reversals by the Labor Department saying first it was required, then it was not required, and finally deciding it was required, the fire department was also cited for not having a "workplace violence" training.

Fire departments are urged to be ready for the PESH inspections by ensuring that they are in compliance with all health and safety regulations.