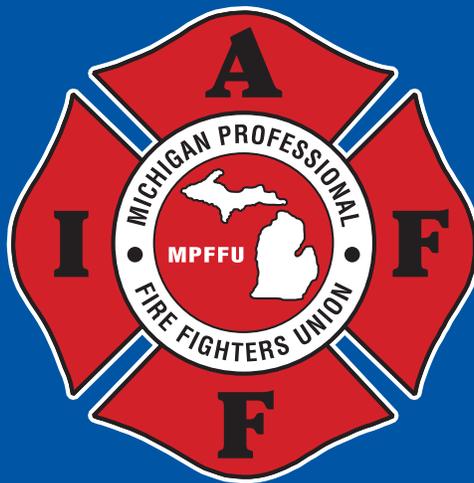


MICHIGAN PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS UNION



MPFFU

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



www.mpffu.org

Michigan Professional FIRE FIGHTERS UNION

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The Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union (MPFFU) represents full-time, career fire fighters, paramedics, and other emergency service professionals that are working in 147 different cities and townships throughout the State of Michigan.

Our 8,000 active and retired members and their families reside and vote in every legislative district throughout the State.

The mission of the Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union is to be an advocate for our members by sponsoring, promoting, and protecting all forms of legislation that advance the interests and welfare of our members as well as those that improve the emergency services we provide to the citizens of this great State.

The issues listed in this book are of great importance to the members of our organization. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like additional information about our organization or any of these issues.

Respectfully,

Matthew Sahr, President
Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union

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FIRE SERVICE/MUNICIPAL FUNDING

The Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union (MPFFU) represents the men and women who protect our communities across the entire state of Michigan. We are composed of members from the International Association of Fire Fighters' (IAFF) local unions who deliver over 80% of the state of Michigan's 911 response for Fire, Emergency Medical Services and Rescue work.

The fire service plays an essential role in ensuring public safety across Michigan, providing **vital services such as fire protection, emergency medical assistance and rescue operations**. In addition to responding to fires, **fire fighters are trained to handle a variety of emergencies, including floods, extreme weather events, underground incidents, hazardous materials and rope rescues. Dedicated sustainable funding to improve these operations are needed from the state of Michigan**. This funding is vital for enhancing the fire service's ability to respond effectively to emergencies and protect the lives and property of Michigan residents.

Without consistent financial commitment, fire departments struggle to maintain and improve their operations, which can lead to slower response times and reduced service quality. Sustainable funding would not only ensure the availability of necessary resources but also facilitate ongoing training and equipment upgrades for fire fighters. As the state faces increasing challenges from natural disasters and complex emergencies, it becomes imperative to prioritize the fire service in budget allocations. By investing in sustainable funding for fire department operations, Michigan can significantly enhance its emergency response capabilities and ensure a higher level of safety for all its constituents.

Our success and failure hinges on municipal funding, resources and staffing, along with recruitment, retention and training. Shortfalls in funding and staffing greatly reduce our ability to meet the public's expectations of a positive outcome for their emergency.

Municipal Funding is the catalyst behind many decisions made at the local level. Simply put, when the funding doesn't exist, local leaders are forced to make tough decisions; frequently choosing between what is needed and what can be afforded. These decisions often result in the reduction of staffing, limiting the ability to effectively manage an incident. Every incident outcome will be impacted by municipal funding, and the decisions made prior to the onset of the incident.

The safety of the residents of the State of Michigan is driven by **municipal funding levels** local governments have at their disposal. Providing a seat at the table to the men and women of the MPFFU, the frontline employees of the daily emergency incidents across the state, ensures that best possible outcomes are achieved, and the safety of the population is secured.

STAFFING FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

The State of Michigan lags well behind other states when it comes to the total number of full-time professional fire fighters.

State	Population	Number of Full-Time Professional Fire Fighters
Michigan	10,070,000	5,125 (50 per 100,000)
Illinois	12,812,000	13,067 (102 per 100,000)
Ohio	11,800,000	13,080 (111 per 100,000)
Indiana	6,785,000	7,800 (115 per 100,000)

It is time to bring staffing back to the conversation between fire fighters and their municipalities using the time tested and proven Public Act 312.

- **Restore state legislation** that allows staffing to be a mandatory subject of bargaining.
- **Restore local control** to communities and allow those that respond to the daily emergencies and incidents to discuss the needs of the communities to ensure the 911 system is built to meet the needs and demands of their local community.
- **Restore and give voters** the ability to establish staffing language to ensure public safety.

Staffing, as mentioned above, is one of the biggest drivers of an outcome. Fire fighters are required to meet the **OSHA Standard CFR 29 1910.134 (g)(4)**, otherwise known as the “**two in – two out**” rule.

This rule simply states that for two fire fighters to make entry into a burning structure, two fire fighters need to be outside that structure to help remove the fire fighters inside in the event of a fire fighter becoming trapped, disoriented, injured, or otherwise having an emergency themselves while attempting to extinguish the fire. In addition to this national standard, response times are strived for by departments and fire fighters. These are often the data points by which communities measure their “safety” levels and advertise their ability to respond to an emergency in a short time.

- **National standard response times**
 - **Intake and dispatch to turn-out time: 80 seconds** (How fast an incoming 911 call can be answered, the proper information obtained, the appropriate resources identified, the resources dispatched, and finally, the dispatched resources leave the building.)
 - **Travel time: 4 minutes** (From the fire station to the incident [pumpers/fire engines/ladder trucks].)
 - **Full assignment : 8 minutes** (Appropriate number of fire fighters needed to adequately handle the incident.)

Fires today, in our homes furnished with synthetic materials, reach flashover eight times faster than fires 40 years ago. This dramatic shift in heat release rates (HRR) with natural materials no longer dominating the consumer market means fires can go from 250°F to 1500°F in less than 10 seconds, dramatically impacting survival profile for the public we protect. This information from Underwriters Laboratories (UL) reinforces the importance of a rapid response with appropriate staffing to make a positive impact on outcomes.

Additionally, in the event of a medical emergency, response time can greatly impact the outcome. Staffing levels drive the fire fighters' and their department's ability to respond in a timely manner. As we all know, emergencies are not scheduled or planned. Departments need to be able to handle incidents as they arise. Oftentimes multiple incidents occur at once where frontline resources stationed in a local response area may already be out handling another incident and the department's staffing levels are challenged. Several organizations such as the **National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA)**, **Underwriters Laboratories (UL)**, **National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)** and their partners, International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), Commission of Fire Accreditation International (CFAI), Urban Institute, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), have conducted staffing and deployment research in both the low hazard residential and high hazard/high-rise fire ground environments.

The **National Fire Protection Association**, specifically **NFPA 1710**, outlines minimum staffing levels. Single family dwellings require a minimum of 14 fire fighters on scene and 15 fire fighters if an aerial apparatus is required. The standard is applicable to all career fire departments and provides the minimum requirements for resource deployment of suppression, EMS and Special Operations. The City of Dearborn is an example of a community where residents supported a charter mandating staffing of 1.24 fire fighters for every 1,000 residents, empowering fire fighters to better meet the needs of the community.

Video information (see links below).

- [NFPA 1710 Basic info](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MCZoZ3baaY) – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MCZoZ3baaY>
 - Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments
- [NIST Study](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNm3sYeXoAwFirefighting) – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNm3sYeXoAwFirefighting>
 - Study: Impacts of Crew Sizes and Arrival Times



PA 312 - BINDING ARBITRATION

Fire fighters perform essential services, protecting the safety of the public, therefore, it obviously is unlawful for fire fighters to use a labor stoppage as a tool in collective bargaining. As a way of leveling the playing field, Michigan adopted Public Act 312 in 1969. PA 312 provides for binding arbitration to settle disputes between labor and management. When an impasse occurs at the bargaining table between labor and management, PA 312 is utilized to break the impasse. An arbitrator will hear evidence from both sides and then issue an award to one side or the other, resolving the impasse. This award is binding on both parties. While 95% of all contracts are settled without the need for binding arbitration, it still remains a very important tool for labor, management and, ultimately, the safety of the public. This method has worked very well through the years, which is why the MPFFU strongly advocates that this act remain in place.

Public Act 312 was amended in 2011 to require the arbitrator to consider a community's ability to pay as the first factor in the negotiation. PA 312 has served communities over the years to provide a responsible and balanced approach to resolving disputes.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS/PERA

The Public Employment Relations Act (PERA – PA 336 of 1947) allows for collective bargaining, which is a process where employee representatives, through their unions, negotiate contracts with their employers to determine their terms of employment, including pay, benefits, hours, leave, job health and safety policies.

Collective bargaining has a long and successful history in the fire service. When fire fighters and fire chiefs work together to address issues, it makes for a more productive workplace and improves public safety. Studies show that communities which promote labor-management cooperation, enjoy more effective and more efficient delivery of emergency services. Despite productive labor-management cooperation in most of our communities across the state, the legislature has eroded these rights through multiple amendments to PERA over the last several years. In a short-sighted attempt to reduce costs, some policymakers want to abolish collective bargaining to make it easier to cut pay and benefits.

RETIREMENT SECURITY

Retirement Security is a cornerstone of career attraction and longevity for fire fighters, who dedicate their lives to protecting our communities. The physical demands and inherent risks of firefighting make retirement security especially critical, as fire fighters face higher rates of job-related cancer, injuries, illnesses, and early mortality. By ensuring comprehensive retirement benefits, we not only honor the service of these professionals but also create a powerful incentive for future talent to enter the field. Robust retirement benefits give fire fighters peace of mind, knowing their commitment to public safety will be reciprocated with a secure future. Offering such support makes the profession more sustainable and appealing, encouraging skilled individuals to pursue firefighting as a viable, long-term career.

Pensions are essential for fire fighters' retirement security because they provide reliable, predictable income after years of dedicated service. Many communities are replacing traditional defined benefit pensions with defined contribution plans, forcing fire fighters to work longer and increasing the average age of the workforce. While older fire fighters bring valuable experience, they may face physical limitations that can affect endurance and agility, critical factors in emergency situations where every second counts. Ensuring a younger, more physically capable firefighting force enhances both safety and response effectiveness for the community. Unlike defined contribution plans, defined benefit pensions offer steady monthly income, providing the stability fire fighters need in retirement. By maintaining defined benefit pensions, we show a commitment to the well-being of those who risk their lives to protect us, ensuring they, too, are secure as they age.

Retirement Healthcare is vital for fire fighters' retirement security due to the unique health risks they face throughout their careers. Fire fighters are exposed to hazardous conditions, including smoke, chemicals, and intense physical exertion, which increase their risk for chronic illnesses such as respiratory diseases, cardiovascular issues, and certain cancers. Without reliable healthcare in retirement, these dedicated professionals may struggle to access the ongoing medical care they need, placing a financial burden on them and their families. Ensuring comprehensive retirement healthcare not only provides peace of mind but also supports fire fighters in managing the long-term health impacts of their service. By prioritizing retirement healthcare benefits, we affirm our commitment to the well-being of those who have served our communities selflessly, offering them the stability and dignity they deserve in retirement.

We respectfully urge you to collaborate with communities to implement revenue-sharing measures that support sustainable funding for pensions and Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB), including retirement healthcare. Additionally, we ask for your leadership in exploring innovative approaches to secure these essential benefits, ensuring that those who have dedicated a lifetime to public service receive the support and stability they deserve in retirement. By prioritizing these initiatives, you can help create a future where our fire fighters and public safety professionals are honored and protected as they age.

The MPFFU is in full support of defined benefit pensions to ensure that our members can retire with dignity. With the demands of the job of firefighting and para medicine, our members are unable to work thirty-five to forty years to obtain enough money in a defined contribution plan or 401K to ensure retirement security.

PA 152 - PUBLICLY FUNDED HEALTH CARE

Michigan Public Act 152, otherwise known as the Publicly Funded Health Insurance Contribution Act of 2011, was legislated to provide for specific limitations on the maximum amount that a public employer may contribute toward the annual cost of their employees' medical benefit plans.

There are three options for public employers to choose from to determine the funding measures for public employee healthcare premiums.

The first option is the "hard cap" which is based on marital status and number of dependents (single, two-person, family). Each year, the hard cap is established by the state, and the employee is required to pay the difference between the cost of their health insurance plan, and whatever the hard cap maximum is. A major issue that has occurred over the past several years is that the "hard cap" value has not increased to keep pace with the rising cost of healthcare plans. For instance, the increase to the "hard cap" for 2025 was only .2%, while many public employers saw 10% or higher increases to the cost of their offered healthcare plans. The metrics used to determine the "hard cap" need to be closely examined and restructured to align with the actual healthcare premium increases in Michigan.

The second option allows the public employer to opt out of the hard cap and instead implement an 80/20 split where the employer pays 80% of the healthcare premium and the employee is responsible for 20% of the premium; in addition to any deductibles, co-insurance, or out-of-pocket costs. The same issues for employees are present with the 80/20 split, as the health care premium cost increases, the amount the employee is required to pay increases.

Lastly, a public employer is permitted to opt out from the hard cap or the 80/20 provisions, designated in PA 152, with a 2/3 vote of the local governing body on an annual basis. However, it should be noted that very few public employers elect this option.

Employee health care benefits are a mandatory subject of bargaining; and while unilateral changes are not permitted, an uneven playing field is created by PA 152, where public employees are forced to accept concessions to their healthcare plans. The end result is higher costs being passed on to public employees as healthcare costs continue to rise. We will rapidly reach a breaking point where any wage increases that are negotiated by employees will immediately be consumed by the cost of their healthcare insurance. This will drastically impact the recruitment and retention of quality candidates seeking Michigan public sector employment.

It is our belief that every local bargaining unit should be permitted to negotiate what is best for their members and the community they serve, without undue influence from the state.

The Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union supports the repeal of, or significant changes to PA 152. The MPFFU supports local control on issues that pertain to employees' benefits.

CANCER PRESUMPTION

The Christopher R. Slezak First Responder Presumed Coverage Fund provides our members throughout Michigan coverage for occupational related cancers. It has become evident that a policy of prevention and wellness initiatives for cancer screening is needed for the state of Michigan. By their occupation, fire fighters have an increased risk of mortality and morbidity. A topic recently brought to light is the evidence of cancer causing PFAS-laden gear. Per the IAFF, the most effective reduction technique is removal of PFAS containing Fire Fighter Turn-out Gear and replacing it with non-PFAS containing gear. Our members can also receive cancer screenings from licensed health care providers, specialized in this field. Although this is vitally important, many municipalities offer little to no job-specific cancer screenings for our members.

MILITARY LEAVE

To ensure that our military members serving our country are not subjected to significant loss of wages and benefits, we must advocate for stronger protection in Michigan. Currently, due to our 24-hour work schedule, our members face an average loss of \$300 - \$400 each day they report for military service. It is essential that these dedicated individuals are allowed to retain the average \$140 they receive for reserve training, along with any employer benefits, as a token of appreciation for their service.

While we understand that extended leaves may occur, we propose a balanced approach: a cap of 20 days of fully compensated leave, with an additional 5 days of sick leave available to mitigate the financial impact on our service members. This framework aligns with existing provisions that allow public employees to take military leave without loss of pay or benefits, ensuring they are supported during their time of service.

By implementing these changes, we can honor our service members while maintaining fairness for both employers and employees. It is time for Michigan to step up and ensure our military personnel are adequately supported and compensated for their invaluable service to our country.

All FIRE FIGHTERS, including those in the Michigan National Guard, deserve protection from wage loss when they fulfill their military duties.

EMS BILL OF RIGHTS

Protecting Those Who Serve: The Case for an EMS Bill of Rights in Michigan

Across Michigan, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers serve as the frontline of public health and safety. They answer the call, often placing themselves in harm's way, to deliver life-saving care in the most unpredictable of environments. Yet despite the critical role they play, Michigan's EMS professionals lack some of the most basic rights and protections afforded to other unionized public servants.

The Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union (MPFFU) is working to change that. We are currently developing an **EMS Bill of Rights**, aimed at addressing systemic gaps in the way EMS providers are treated under Michigan law—particularly concerning legal representation, due process, and disciplinary protections.

Today, an EMS provider in Michigan can face **multiple licensure actions stemming from a single incident** - a situation that amounts to **double jeopardy** in practice, if not in law. Moreover, the vast majority of Medical Control Authorities (MCAs) across the state maintain protocols that **explicitly or effectively prohibit fundamental union rights**, such as:

- The **right to representation** during investigatory meetings (Weingarten Rights); and
- The **right against self-incrimination** in administrative interviews (Garrity Rights).

These protections are long-standing pillars of fair labor practice, enshrined in federal case law and honored across numerous public safety sectors. Yet, in the world of EMS, they remain out of reach - leaving providers vulnerable to administrative overreach, legal exposure, and professional jeopardy, often with no recourse.

Proposed Solution:

Amend MCL 333.209 to establish a formal EMS Bill of Rights, guaranteeing:

- Representation during interviews (Weingarten);
- Protection against self-incrimination (Garrity);
- Due process safeguards; and
- A single-action disciplinary standard for the same incident.

Benefits:

- Aligns EMS worker rights with other first responders;
- Protects against arbitrary or duplicative punishment;
- Strengthens workforce morale, retention, and legal consistency; and
- Enhances procedural fairness without limiting MCA oversight authority.

This is not just a matter of labor law - it is a matter of **justice, respect, and professional dignity** for those who dedicate their careers to the well-being of others. EMS providers must not be left behind.

Let's work together to ensure that Michigan's EMS professionals are not only respected for the work they do - but protected under the law while doing it.

The MPFFU urges legislators, labor leaders, healthcare professionals and the public to stand with us in support of the EMS Bill of Rights.



CROSS TRAINING OF POLICE AND FIRE FIGHTERS

In a misguided attempt to consolidate services, some communities turn to a model that attempts to cross train police officers as fire fighters and medical first responders. This is a dangerous concept that operates on the assumption that one individual is available to address police emergencies, fire fighter emergencies, and emergency medical situations simultaneously. Simply put, one individual is expected to be proficient in all three services with limited training and experience on the fire fighter and emergency medical services side of the equation. This creates a chaotic, confusing incident with tough decisions. For example: In the event of a motor vehicle accident caused by a drunk driver hitting a family vehicle resulting in multiple trapped individuals, what takes precedence? Attending to the injured trapped family? Securing the drunk driver to prevent further harm to the public? Who goes to get the fire truck with the equipment needed (jaws-of-life to begin extrication; emergency medical treatment equipment for those injured)? What if there is a vehicle fire as a result? Where do police officers secure weapons when operating as a fire fighter? Will the community be vulnerable during incidents when all police officers are no longer able to respond to additional police matters, such as a home invasion, due to handling a non-police matter? Anyone plotting illegal activity can obtain a dispatch feed with their cell phone and time their crime accordingly for when an incident happens which removes the police from responding to police business.

Furthermore, communities continue to see a demand for the 911 system increase across the state. Having fire fighters trained to perform EMS duties, extrication, and fire services allows for police officers to keep the public safe from further harm and address police issues. Additionally, this keeps training focused on the specific skills, issues, needs and incidents so responders are “masters” of their trade being able to perform their duties efficiently and effectively at the highest levels as opposed to being able to perform a wide range of duties with minimal proficiency.

The MPFFU is adamantly opposed to the cross training of law enforcement and fire service professionals.

HEALTHCARE PRESUMPTION

Our members are on the frontlines, responding to frequent calls for service and exposing themselves, their co-workers, and their families to various infectious diseases. Unfortunately, many of our members have not been covered under worker’s compensation, forcing them to use their personal time off even when they have documented exposures. The need for presumptive care for infectious diseases that first responders commonly encounter is crucial, as these can lead to serious health complications, including death or disability.

Currently, many municipalities have the ability to contest claims made by our members who have contracted communicable diseases in the line of duty. These rebuttal clauses have significantly delayed the processing of our members’ workers’ compensation claims. The state of Michigan only provides coverage for a limited number of infectious diseases.

The MPFFU urges the legislature to pursue presumptive coverage for all diseases that can be contracted while performing the duties of the job, including bloodborne pathogens and novel viruses, ensuring that our dedicated members are protected as they work to protect the public.

PTSD PRESUMPTION

The recognition of the emotional challenges facing fire fighters while at work has become more and more prevalent. The fire service has more suicide deaths than in the line of duty deaths. This is unacceptable. The MPFFU has been stepping up to develop greater resources to help our first responders deal with their mental health. Currently, if a first responder is diagnosed with PTSD, it is not considered a job-related injury unless the employee can prove it came from a specific incident. But PTSD is an insidious injury and does not come from just one incident. It's from repeated exposures over a multitude of incidents. It is time our communities recognize that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is the result of the work that first responders do day-in and day-out protecting our communities. Therefore, a presumption is needed to ensure that our fire fighters are taken care of while facing injuries from exposure at work.

In the fire service, PTSD is rooted in job-related stressors and manifests itself in mental health issues such as suicide, depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. These involve the horrific incidents our members face on a daily basis while performing their jobs.

- Studies found that between approximately **7% and 37%** of fire fighters meet the criteria for a current diagnosis of PTSD. PTSD leads to an increased suicide risk.
- Suicide rates among fire fighters are 5 to 10 times higher than the general public.
- Over the past 10 years, more fire fighters have died from suicide than in the line of duty.
- The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) conducted a study of 1,000 fire fighters which found that 47% of those surveyed had thought about suicide; 16% of them had attempted suicide.
- According to the Ruderman White Paper in 2022 (the most comprehensive study of first responder's mental health), "Since the publication of our previous white paper (2012), we have not witnessed a decrease in the rates of suicide of first responders, and the programs and policies targeted to address these issues remain inadequate."
- A study by the Congressional Budget Office based on Veterans Affairs data found that the average cost of treatment for PTSD in the first year was roughly \$4,100 - this is an added stress to someone who is already in crisis.

Clearly, the need for mental health programs for our members is an essential resource to field healthy, resilient fire fighters within the state.



MICHIGAN PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS UNION

Our 147 local affiliates provide services to over 160 cities and townships

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ALPENA TWP
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ANN ARBOR TWP
ARMADA TWP
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MT. CLEMENS
MUSKEGON
MUSKEGON HEIGHTS
MUSKEGON TWP
NILES
NILES TWP
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NORTON SHORES
NOVI
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PLYMOUTH TWP
PORT HURON
PORTAGE

REDFORD TWP
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ROCHESTER HILLS
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ROSEVILLE
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SCIO TWP
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TEXAS TWP
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YPSILANTI
YPSILANTI TWP

MICHIGAN PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS UNION

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