



# NEWS

**JB Pritzker, Governor**

**Jane R. Flanagan, Acting Director**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 12, 2022

**Contact:**

Paul Cicchini 217-785-1719

[Paul.Cicchini@Illinois.gov](mailto:Paul.Cicchini@Illinois.gov)

## **Illinois Department of Labor, IL OSHA Release Report Following Investigation of Firefighter Death in Northwestern Illinois**

**SPRINGFIELD** – The Illinois Department of Labor’s (IDOL) Division of Occupational Safety and Health has released the results of an investigation detailing the factors that led to the death of a firefighter in a single-story house fire in December 2021.

The [report](#) aims to serve as a learning resource for the Illinois Fire Service and details an incident where accountability of a firefighter inside a house on fire was lost. The firefighter was later found unresponsive and out of breathing air in the basement.

Key factors that contributed to the fatality include the presence of a basement that was not identified during initial and ongoing assessment of the house, interior firefighter teams did not always stay together, and a mayday call was received but the caller was not identified or located.

In addition to 11 indirect causes of the incident, the report provides 15 recommendations to reduce the chances of a similar outcome in the future. The affected employers, two municipal fire departments, were issued citations for violations of the Illinois Occupational Safety and Health Act, with two of these citations classified as willful violations that carry monetary penalties. The municipal fire department employers have since addressed and abated the violations and the inspections were closed by IL OSHA.

“This firefighter fell into the basement of a single-story house and for over 30 minutes it was not known that he was missing. By the time he was located, it was too late. A strict accountability system must be implemented for interior firefighters at every fire, regardless of the size of the structure. Additionally, fire officers must speak up if something does not seem right or a policy is violated. It is my hope that fire departments use this report as a learning tool for their incident commanders,” said IL **OSHA Acting Division Manager Erik Kambarian**.

IL OSHA inspects municipal fire departments and fire protection districts across Illinois due to the highly hazardous environments in which firefighters work. The Division also investigates incidents where firefighters are seriously injured or killed and determines if any violations of the Illinois Occupational Safety and Health Act occurred.

Enforcement of occupational safety and health standards in Illinois is a shared responsibility between the U.S. Department of Labor (federal OSHA) and the Illinois Department of Labor (IL OSHA). Federal OSHA, an Administration under the U.S. Department of Labor, covers all private sector workplaces while IL OSHA, a Division of the Illinois Department of Labor, covers all state and local government workplaces.

For more information about IL OSHA, click [here](#).

###