



NEWS

JB Pritzker, Governor

Michael D. Kleinik, Director

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Addison Fire Protection District Recognized with National Safety Award

Fire Department's work with Illinois OSHA leads to SHARP designation

SPRINGFIELD --The Illinois Department of Labor has announced the Addison Fire Protection District has received the national Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP) designation. It is just the fourth fire department in Illinois to earn this recognition.

The department earned the elite SHARP status after completing a thorough health and safety evaluation by Illinois OSHA's On-Site Consultation Program.

"The Addison Fire Protection District has gone above and beyond to prove its dedication to workplace health and safety," said Michael Kleinik, director of the Illinois Department of Labor. "They earned this prestigious designation and have set an example for health and safety that other departments should follow."

By earning SHARP status Addison Fire Protection District is exempt from routine Illinois OSHA inspections while the SHARP certification remains valid through December 2021. Addison Fire Protection District provides fire and emergency medical services to the approximately 39,000 residents of Addison and the area. The Fire Protection District operates three fire stations that are staffed by a paid force of approximately 70 personnel. In addition to firefighting activities, the district provides contracted paramedic services with advanced life-support ambulances.

Fire Chief Scott Walker said his department has long taken health and safety seriously and have made some significant achievements in recent years. In 2018, The Illinois Public Risk Fund, which is the largest self-insured pool for workers compensation coverage in Illinois, named Addison Fire Protection District its "Member of the Year."

Chief Walker notes that besides keeping workers safe, a focus on health and safety can pay off in other ways as well, especially for taxpayers. "In the last little less than a decade, we've cut our workers compensation insurance cost in half," said Walker.

It wasn't until the Troy Fire Department earned the SHARP designation in 2016 that Addison became aware of the possibility. Walker said the main appeal of pursuing SHARP recognition

was to have an independent third-party evaluation of how his department was doing on health and safety matters.

“We basically wanted to have (Illinois OSHA) in to validate that what we were doing was right,” said Walker, who said working with the On-Site Consultation Program went smoothly. On the heels of the SHARP evaluation, the department is doing some restructuring that will create a battalion chief position responsible for training, health, safety and compliance.

“So, we will have a chief officer that will be even more focused on the health and safety of our employees,” said Walker.

Addison joins the fire departments in Troy, Staunton and Posen in earning the SHARP distinction so far in Illinois.

Illinois OSHA offers free and confidential safety and health onsite consultations for private and public employers with up to 500 employees. The Illinois On-Site Safety and Health Consultation Program can help Illinois businesses meet the federal OSHA health and safety regulations and can assist those companies interested in pursuing SHARP status.

If you have questions about Illinois OSHA’s on-site consultation program or SHARP, you can call 800-972-4216 or visit www.labor.illinois.gov for more information.

The On-Site Consultation Cooperative Agreement is funded by a federal grant which constitutes 90 percent of the overall budget. Ten percent is financed by state funds