July 2014 Meeting:
1. General – There is really no substitute for performing in house safety walk around inspections. Consider planning these inspections so that each facility gets a good look every year. In so doing, hazardous conditions can be identified early and injuries can be avoided.

2. Common recurring themes:
   a. Ensure nonskid is placed on the floor adjacent to apparatus to prevent falls and injuries. Replace the nonskid if it is severely worn. Nonskid mats can also be used.
   b. If planning to use overhead storage areas or ceiling areas above offices, the load capacity (based on design limits) must be posted.
   c. Ensure emergency exit signs are posted in facilities.
   d. Axes were stored in holders on the side of the apparatus, but there were no covers over the pick head.
   e. Core requirement deficiencies: No program for medical evaluations, no SCBA fit testing, no training for use of respirators or fit testing, and no certified record for breathing air.
   f. Ensure to maintain MSDS’s for all hazardous materials used. This can be either hard copy or an electronic database. This is part of a sound hazard communication system.
   g. Be sure to have a functioning Safety Committee. This is an important step to overall safety of your department.
   h. Check shop machinery to ensure belt guards, grinder guards, etc. are in place.
   i. Do not place material in an area which blocks emergency exits or sprinkler heads.
   j. Ensure breathing air is sampled and certified quarterly.
   k. Electrical safety – Ensure electrical cords are not damaged, no conductors are exposed at junction boxes and temporary wiring (extension cords) are not used in place of permanent wiring. If breakers are removed from a breaker box, ensure a blanking plate is installed protecting personnel from the energized circuits inside. Do not cut off grounding lugs from equipment power cords.
   l. Place emergency eyewash stations in area where caustic substances are used.

3. Live fire training is required once every three years for personnel who perform interior structure firefighting.

4. If bunker gear is repaired, it must conform to the manufacturer’s specifications and be inspected by qualified personnel.

5. CO detectors are required in sleeping quarters. Place the detectors in areas where CO may be generated or enter a space.

6. Ensure fall protection is provided for maintenance or training function where a fall condition over 10 feet exists. This also applies to trenches over 10 feet deep or maintenance/training on a roof. Portable barriers can be used if properly anchored.

7. Grinder wheels should be replaced when damaged or obvious grooves are worn in them. Exploding grinder wheels can throw particles at high velocity. Do not allow material to build up in a grinder wheel. Use a dressing wheel if necessary to true up the grinder wheel.

8. If using an air nozzle, ensure there are relief ports in the nozzle.

9. Fire department recordkeeping should be sufficiently detailed to ensure the qualifications of department personnel are maintained.

10. Be sure to track repairs to PPE/bunker gear and document accordingly. Ensure semiannual inspections are performed.

11. Hazmat physicals should be performed and documented.

12. Appoint an infection/exposure control officer to oversee department personnel. Ensure department personnel review annually the infectious disease plan.
**March 2014 Meeting:**

1. Sometimes it never hurts to double-check that hazardous sources have been isolated and secured. This is especially true for electrically charged conductors that may contain voltages sufficient to immobilize or kill a firefighter. An ounce of prevention may save your life.

2. Common recurring themes:
   a. Ensure nonskid is placed on the floor adjacent to apparatus to prevent falls and injuries. Replace the nonskid if it is severely worn.
   b. Be sure to have a functioning Safety Committee. This is an important step to overall safety of your department. Document these safety meetings and maintain a file of the minutes.
   c. Chaps are not required for chain saw use during structure fires, but are required if chain saws are used during training and wildland clearing.

3. Know the hazards that exist in your fire district, develop accurate pre-fire plans, ensure you have the appropriate protective equipment for each hazard and personnel are properly trained. Good incident response management will quickly identify the hazard at the scene, take action to protect people who may be trapped as well as the first responders, initiate measures to eliminate the hazards. With the broad range of chemicals in use today, response plans must identify specific techniques to combat each release.

4. Logging operations present many hazards to workers as well as first responders. It is important for the incident commander to identify these hazards, control access to the site and take appropriate actions with due consideration for all risked posed to first responders.

5. With the legalization of marijuana for recreational use and the increased number of grow operations, new hazards to first responders may be present:
   a. Optimal growing environment requires increased Carbon Dioxide levels so CO2 cylinders may be present and may be displacing oxygen in grow areas.
   b. Butane burners are used to extract hash oil from the marijuana and may be an additional fire or explosion hazard. In fact, there have been recent explosions reported involving illegal hash oil sites.

6. Hard copies of the new WAC 296-305 standard are now available in limited quantities from L&I.

**November 2013 Meeting:**

1. We do not hear much about asbestos these days. It has not been used for many years and we have (or should have) remediation plans in place. However, asbestos is still present in older buildings and can cause problems if those buildings are donated for fire training. There are a host of regulations associated with asbestos exposure from annual physicals, records maintenance, area sampling, PPE, etc. Before using an older structure for training, be sure it is certified to be free from asbestos. It will save you a lot of grief later.

2. Common recurring themes:
   a. Ensure nonskid is placed on the floor adjacent to apparatus to prevent falls and injuries. Replace the nonskid if it is severely worn.
   b. Check to make sure your accident prevention program is current. If you "borrowed" a plan from a neighboring district, be sure to tailor it to your district.
   c. PPE maintenance is important. Keep accurate records to ensure required maintenance is performed regularly.

3. Be sure to have a functioning Safety Committee. This is an important step to overall safety of your department.

**July 2013 Meeting:**

1. Modification of facilities is important and structural additions must be properly engineered to ensure firefighter safety is not compromised. We can all think of creative ways of improving our ability to enhance our training environment or perform our daily functions, but before we make a modification, go through the proper channels to ensure design and life safety requirements are met.

2. Common recurring themes:
   a. Ensure MSDSs are available for all chemicals and compounds used in the fire station.
b. Weight & height limits need to be posted in the cab of each apparatus in view of the operator. Sometimes these are placed on windshields. If the windshield is replaced, be sure to repost the information on the new windshield. New apparatus will also need to have this information posted.
c. Electrical breaker panels need to have free access to them in case of emergencies. Maintain good housekeeping practices to keep areas in front of electrical panels free from obstructions.
d. Ensure nonskid is placed on the floor adjacent to apparatus to prevent falls and injuries. Replace the nonskid if it is severely worn.
e. Unprotected fluorescent light fixtures in facilities need to have guards installed if mounted in an area where the bulbs can be broken.

3. Electrical systems need to be properly installed and maintained. Exposed electrical energized wiring and broken switch and outlet covers can present an immediate shock hazard. Ensure that repairs or modifications to building electrical systems are performed by qualified electricians in accordance with the National Electric Code.

4. If planning to use overhead storage areas, the load capacity (based on design limits) must be posted.

**January 2013 Meeting:**
1. Use of approved equipment by firefighters is important and modification of that specialized equipment or vehicles must be properly engineered to ensure firefighter safety is not compromised. We can all think of creative ways of improving our ability to perform our functions, but before we make a modification to any piece of equipment not authorized by the equipment manufacturer, pause, take a deep breath, and go through the proper channels to ensure design safety requirements are met.
2. Modification of facilities falls into a similar category. Adding sleeping quarters may expose firefighters to hazards or limit avenues for escape. Prudent design reviews need to be conducted to ensure all life safety requirements are met before modifications are performed.
3. Ensure bunker gear and SCBA’s are maintained and disinfected in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.
4. Ground ladders need to be tested annually. The new NFPA standard does not require annual ladder tests, but that standard will not be in effect until January 2014.
5. Item for future consideration:
   L&I drafted a finding that a department did not have an eye wash station in a wash room where liquid bleach was being used. That caused a lot of discussion in the meeting about the concentration threshold of acids, caustic substances and hazardous materials which would require an eye wash station to be present. L&I was asked to go research the requirement and present their findings at the next meeting.

**July 2012 Meeting:**
1. Several common themes again this month. Weight of engines and tender were not posted in view of the operators. Both weight and height of apparatus are required to be posted. Be sure to have a checklist for this when new equipment is purchased, windshields are replaced, or make sure permanent labels are installed so they do not fall off.
2. Ensure your respirator program is kept up to date, physicals are conducted and periodic maintenance and training requirements are met. This also applies to Chief Officers who may be required to use an SCBA as part of their assigned duties. There also needs to be an annual evaluation of your department's respiratory program conducted.
3. In areas where the SCBA compressor is located and bottles are filled, it is a good idea not to store gas powered equipment. Hydrocarbons can be evaporated. Most compressors have filters to ensure the contaminants are removed, but it is still a good idea to prevent any potential contamination in the first place.
4. Be sure to conduct and document your department's safety meetings.
5. Electrical safety is important. Be sure to repair any exposed wires or electrical connections.
6. WAC 296-305 update:
   a. July 31st is the filing date for the new proposed language.
   b. There will be two public hearings in September, one in Spokane and one in Tumwater.
November 2011 Meeting:
1. Height and weight of engines were not posted in view of the operators. Both weight and height of apparatus are required to be posted. We see this again as a recurring item. Be sure to have a checklist for this when new equipment is purchased, windshields are replaced, or make sure permanent labels are installed so they do not fall off.
2. Electrical safety is important. Breaker panels must have filler plates when breakers are removed or otherwise missing. Energized bus bars are exposed without the filler plates installed. Also ensure all electrical outlets have faceplates installed.
3. Ensure locations of fire extinguishers are clearly identified with signs in fire stations. This is a recurring item.
4. If axes are mounted on the outside of apparatus, there must be safety covers over the picks. This is a recurring item.
5. All containers of chemicals must be labeled even if it is a common household cleaning agent like Windex. Ensure MSDSs are available for all chemicals.
6. Exit signs need to be posted at all exit locations in fire stations.
7. Ensure adequate preplanning for all hazards in your fire district. You need to know the potential hazards your firefighters may be exposed to. Once hazards are identified, firefighters need appropriate training to deal with the hazards, ensure roles are assigned to all team members, list specific Hazmat items for each location, procure the correct chemical agent PPE, and document emergency response procedures and the use of monitoring equipment. Firefighter protective clothing should not be used for primary Hazmat protection except as noted in the Emergency Response Guidebook. For example, ammonia refrigeration systems are used in many commercial operations. Responding to a refrigerant leak must include protective equipment to protect all body areas from vapors and liquids. Fire departments responding to Hazmat incidents must comply with WAC 296-824.
8. WAC 296-305 update. The Governor extended the rules moratorium through 2012. However, there is a very good chance L&I will be granted permission to move forward with changes to this rule after January 1, 2012. The stakeholder committee will probably get back together in the December - January timeframe and there will be two more public comment periods if the rulemaking takes place.

September 2011 Meeting:
1. Weight of engines and tender were not posted in view of the operators. Both weight and height of apparatus are required to be posted. We see this again as a recurring item. Be sure to have a checklist for this when new equipment is purchased, windshields are replaced, or make sure permanent labels are installed so they do not fall off.
2. Electrical safety is important. Breaker panels must have filler plates when breakers are removed or otherwise missing. Energized bus bars are exposed without the filler plates installed.
3. Ensure locations of fire extinguishers are clearly identified with signs in fire stations.
4. If axes are mounted on the outside of apparatus, there must be safety covers over the picks.
5. Ensure anti-skid flooring is placed at the entry point to apparatus. The whole floor does not need to have anti-skid, just the immediate area around the apparatus entrances.
6. If planning to use overhead storage areas, the load capacity (based on design limits) must be posted.

July 2011 Meeting:
1. Weight of engines and tender were not posted in view of the operators. Both weight and height of apparatus are required to be posted. This seems to be a recurring item. Be sure to have a checklist for this when new equipment is purchased or windshields are replaced.
2. Unprotected fluorescent light fixtures in facilities need to have guards installed if mounted in an area where the bulbs can be broken.
3. One firefighter was injured when he fell through a roof during training for cutting ventilation holes. Be sure to have a safety plan for all training evolutions and maintain situational awareness.

4. PPE assessments and response to civil disturbances should be documented in district policies.

5. WAC 296-305 update: L&I plans to reconvene the stakeholder committee in October to review changes to the WAC with plans to initiate public hearings/rulemaking in January once the ban on new regulations is lifted.

**May 2011 Meeting:**

1. Two different inspections revealed the use of PVC pipe for compressed air systems that had been modified in fire stations. Compressor oils plus the heat from compressing air can cause a failure of the PVC pipe and when it fails, it breaks into shards causing a significant safety concern. Districts should be reminded about the dangers of PVC piping when used in compressed air systems.

2. One district that had excellent results from L&I inspections in the past, but was now found to be without a chief after the city went through a mill closing and now had only volunteer firefighters. Many of the fundamental firefighter safety programs were nonexistent and even basic safety requirements were not known by the firefighters (such as how to put on a respirator, fit testing, etc.). Districts should be reminded of the resources available through WFCA and the Chiefs association to get them equipped with essential safety requirements. This could be a good proactive approach before someone gets seriously hurt.

3. Weight of engines and tender were not posted in view of the operators. Both weight and height of apparatus are required to be posted.

4. Ensure emergency exit signs are posted in facilities.

5. Electrical modifications were made to a station that left exposed electrical energized wiring and junction boxes without covers. Ensure that repairs or modifications to building electrical systems are performed by qualified electricians in accordance with the National Electric Code.

6. Axes were stored in holders on the side of the apparatus, but there were no covers over the pick head. This condition had already caused damage to bunker gear when caught on the pick head.

7. Core requirement deficiencies: No program for medical evaluations, no SCBA fit testing, no asbestos training, no training for use of respirators or fit testing, no training associated with exposure to infectious diseases, no hose testing, and no certified record for breathing air.

8. WAC 296-305 Update -- Currently the standard is in limbo since L&I did not want to challenge the governor's suspension of rulemaking. L&I did receive very good public comment and would like to get the stakeholder group back together a couple of times later this year to possibly resubmit the standard in January 2012.