



Mark C. Denney, Chief of Police



Frank W. Cook, Fire Chief

Remembering Our Fallen

Ten years ago this April 4th, the Colerain Township Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (Colerain Fire and EMS) suffered one of its worst days in its history when Captain Robin Broxterman and Firefighter Brian Schira died at a residential structure fire at 5708 Squirrelsnest Lane in the Dunlap neighborhood of Colerain Township. Their deaths occurred when the first floor collapsed into the area of fire origin, which was located in the basement. At exactly 6:11:23 A.M. this Wednesday, the time of the initial alarm, Colerain Fire and EMS will pause for a moment of silence in tribute to Captain Broxterman and Firefighter Schira.

Family members, firefighters, and others will also pay tribute to these two brave firefighters with a private visit to Squirrelsnest Lane, then on to Station 102 located at Colerain and Kemper Roads, and finally to a private gravesite visitation at Spring Grove Cemetery.

During these ten years, the department has honored the memory of both Captain Broxterman and Firefighter Schira while also attempting to prevent additional firefighters from facing these same dangers while fighting basement fires. In addition to the study conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Colerain Fire and EMS issued both a preliminary report and a final comprehensive report, "Investigation Analysis of the Squirrelsnest Lane Firefighter Line of Duty Deaths". A presentation has also been developed on the dangers of basement fires that the department's leadership have presented and discussed at training seminars both near and far. There have been many departments that indicated the lessons learned from Squirrelsnest Lane have helped them avert a similar tragedy including Defiance, OH and Fishers, IN. The department has also led and participated in fundraising efforts for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) to honor and remember America's fallen firefighters. The NFFF provides resources to assist the fallen firefighter's survivors in rebuilding their lives and work within the fire service community to reduce firefighter deaths and injuries. During the past nine-years the department's efforts has contributed over \$126,000.00 to the foundation.

Recently, the International Society of Fire Service Instructors (ISFSI) convened a panel to create and develop a national curriculum on strategies and tactics entitled, "Understanding and Fighting Basement Fires". Colerain Fire and EMS Chief Frank Cook was not only named to their committee as a technical advisor, but also traveled several times to Philadelphia, PA in order to view the fireground experiments necessary for the proposed and now formally adopted curriculum.

Later this April, Assistant Chief Allen Walls will also make a presentation at the Fire Department Instructors' Conference in Indianapolis, IN to compare and contrast the Squirrelsnest Lane fire with another from November 19, 2016 that also occurred in Colerain Township. At this incident, the many lessons learned from the Squirrelsnest Lane tragedy came full circle and a similar tragedy was possibly averted by the first arriving fire officer, Captain Grant Burns. He conducted a 360-degree size-up, recognized that crews faced a well-involved basement fire, changed tactics to attack the fire through a rear lower level window by means of a transitional attack, and within minutes reported the fire as being under control.

It is the hope of Colerain Fire and EMS that the last ten years of research and professional knowledge sharing will help avert future tragedies and Firefighter Line of Duty Deaths from basement fires. Any and all success with these programs will serve to honor the memory of Captain Broxterman and Firefighter Schira all the while saving others from suffering a similar tragedy.

For further information, please contact Chief Frank Cook at 513-923-5043 or at cook@colerain.org

The Colerain Township Department of Fire – EMS holds the prestigious Class 1 Public Protection Classification from the Insurance Service Office (ISO), an organization that independently evaluates municipal fire protection throughout the United States. Colerain is the only department to achieve such a ranking in the Greater Cincinnati area, and is one of less than 200 Fire / EMS departments to achieve this ranking nationally.

Colerain Township Department of Fire – EMS
"Fully Involved – Fully Engaged"