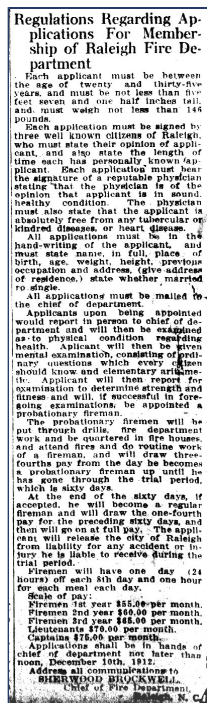


Help Wanted

04/17/07 61 W, 1 I - + 15 - 7

When Raleigh's first full-time firefighters were hired in December 1912, the following notice appeared in local papers. Note the work schedule (one day off every eight days), the hour for meals each day, and three-quarters salary drawn during probation. They hired 15 positions (two Captains, three Lieutenants, and ten FFs) to augment the paid Chief and Asst. Chief. Click to enlarge:



Any idea when RFD went from calling their drivers "engineer" to "lieutenant"? And, why did they change?

Silver - 04/17/07 - 15:25

RFD went from Lieutenant to Driver to Firefighter II (AKA Engineer) to Lieutenant, the last changed on September 25, 1992. If memory serves, the change was intended as a morale-booster. I think.

Legeros - 04/17/07 - 18:26

Typically a Lieutenant is a company officer designation, so why would anyone use it in another context? I have heard the stories about it being a morale-booster, don't agree with that approach. I would be willing to guess no other fire department in the county uses a company officer designation as a driver designation. Yes a driver may fill-in as a officer, but that is what a drivers job description calls for. As most ranks in the fire service allow for filling in a rank above. Calling a driver a Lieutenant is against fire tradition and is confusing. Two company officers on the same apparatus? I would like to see this position changed back to engineer.

T. Saunders ([Email](#)) - 04/20/07 - 13:56

Todd, I couldn't agree with you more! I know Apex has the true position of "Lieutenant" and "Captain", and they call drivers "Engineers". Some smaller, county departments mimicked the city back in the day and did the same as RFD. However, now that we are in the days of NIMS, we should be just like every other department in the US; Lieutenant is a C.O., an Engineer is a Driver.

When it comes to filling in as Captain, that's what the term "Acting Captain" is for. It's funny, I've been to classes all over the U.S., and my brother is a "Lieutenant" in NJ. When I try to explain that we call our drivers "Lieutenant", you should see the looks of confusion I get!!

Silver - 04/20/07 - 14:40

Perhaps this model would work: single Captain over all three shifts, two Lieutenants (on the other shifts), three Engineers, three First Class FFs, three FFs.

Legeros - 04/20/07 - 17:05

That model is used in lots of places. In my former department (Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue, in Oregon), which has about 25 stations and 400 personnel, lieutenants were company officers and captains were station officers. The captain was responsible for "the house" across all 3 shifts, and the lieutenants reported to the captain administratively and their battalion chief operationally. I think FDNY uses the same thing. And when you have a two-piece house, the captain usually rode the ladder rather than the engine.

Skip

EMS100 ([Email](#)) - 04/20/07 - 17:33

For everyone who does not like the way Raleigh designates Lieutenant and Captain I say lay off the Black over red fire trucks! I recently finished the NIMS class for 300 and 400 and I can assure you there was never any talk about the different verbage. You want to be the same or do you want to be your own entity? Make a choice please! If the choice is the same as our brothers to the north then give your spot to someone who wants it.

Porter ([Email](#)) - 04/20/07 - 18:58

Porter, I don't think that those previous comments were intending to say that NIMS required or even suggested such a change in verbage. Rather, I believe the point was that, in the spirit of such concepts as NIMS, it might be wise for RFD to adopt a rank structure that reflects the structure of other departments providing the same services that RFD does. Asking a lieutenant in Raleigh what his duties entail would get you a far different answer than if the same question were posed to most other fire lieutenants.

[bombero.loco] ([Email](#)) - 04/20/07 - 19:12

I really like Mike's suggestion for station rank structure, have heard this thrown around before. This offers structure and continuity. Not real sure I understand all of Porter's response. However the part about the northern way, these large departments have been doing things for a long time and a lot of it (meaning calls and daily operations). No need for other departments to re-invent the wheel! If I'm not mistaken Philadelphia has this kind of rank structure.

T. Saunders - 04/20/07 - 22:15

Other rank structures:

Tokyo (scroll to bottom of page): <http://www.tfd.metro.tokyo.jp/eng/outlin..>

United Kingdom: <http://www.fire.org.uk/ranks/RANKs.htm>

New Zealand: <http://www.fire.org.nz/photo/uniforms/un..>

Germany: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Firef..>

Legeros - 04/20/07 - 22:21

Yeah, the other bigger departments are doing it so it must be better than our way! You have to do what works for your department or else you're just a cat chasing your tail.

pal - 04/20/07 - 23:03

There are so many other things wrong in this county than what the jobs rfd's Lts do compared to others.

wake - 04/20/07 - 23:51

I'll add in; no Porter and Pal, it's not just because it's the Northern way. Take the North vs South out of it, be rational for a sec. Go to California or Maryland, go to Seattle or Phoenix, Houston or Chicago, heck even Virginia. If someone says they are a Lieutenant, then that means they are a head of a company, not a driver. Same goes for a Captain, in many places they are known as the "Company Commander". Typically, when you have a "company", there is one person who is the "numero uno man" of it. Take a model like a gentleman from MD I just talked with recently, 3 Lieutenants and 1 Captain assigned to "Ladder 1". They are all on different shifts, but when a decision is to be made regarding anything that affects "the company", the Captain has the overall say so. Also, if a Lieutenant is unsure of something, he takes it to the Captain, hopefully reducing the calls to the Batt. Chief for minor stuff. It really doesn't seem like the RFD has caught on to the "company" concept, rather the "station". Just look at peoples auto-signature on city e-mail; you see more "Station 30" than you do "Engine Company 30". Just an observation, which I think might also contribute to the minimal "companies" that show off their pride (t-shirts, flags).

I'm sorry guys, it has nothing to do with the North vs South. In my previous post, I know NIMS doesn't specify verbage, but "bombero loco" summarized what I was trying to say.

Hey "wake", we realize that, with all the crying about closest unit response and full time staffing, but let us (RFD) get a discussion in from time to time.

And "pal", with your comment I ask; why wouldn't that concept work here? Is it because some people's feelings would be hurt and they won't be able to stick their chest out, toting that they are the "Lieutenant" with one speaking trumpet (bugle). Oh the humanity if I had to refer to myself as an Engineer!!!

Silver - 04/21/07 - 11:20

Silver, just out of curiosity how would you go about changing captains to Lts. and Lts. to engineers and keep the same pay structure? Plus if they make a station Captain (which will not receive any extra compensation) is that not moving into a certain direction. Sounds like something the union could look into but you have to make sure that the majority understands what going on and that their pay wouldn't be changed and recognition. You also have to remember Raleigh is Raleigh good with the bad the majority should win out.

guest1 - 04/21/07 - 12:26

The point of my comment is everyone is so quick to throw stones at what they deem incorrect. Like the County depts buying black over red rigs. The ranking structure in Raleigh is just that no more no less. Is there really supposed to be a model? Look at the military, big difference between a Marine captain and a navy captain. Enjoy where you are and show some pride in your dept, something that is lacking in a big way. I am not a tow the company line guy but if Raleigh wanted to call me a duck it would not bother me one bit.

Silver if you do not have pride in your company then fix it do not air your laundry. I would love to work with you and assure you that we would stick our chests out together.

Porter - 04/21/07 - 21:28

Different = wrong. Also blogged on <http://www.legeros.com/ralwake/photos/we..>

Legeros - 04/21/07 - 21:55

Before people judge from Porters comment I'll defend myself. Last time I checked, I have taken initiative to create company t-shirts as well as pay money out of my own pocket for art work to design a t-shirt (back at #8). On top of that, I've created a website to make trading time easier for all members of the RFD for free (rfdtimetrades.com) as well as bring in equipment for all members of my company to use (NY Hooks, radio straps). Company pride is this, either you have it or you don't. I have it, but I've realized you can't force it on others. Unfortunately, there are too many "paycheck people" and they could give two s%#ts about company pride.

As far as the union goes, if they tried to take money from "us" (which I doubt they would), we'd fight it tooth and nail. But, to make simple title changes, it can be done without moving money at all.

Silver - 04/22/07 - 00:52

I have to point out that yes company t-shirts are nice but this is Raleigh F.D. You will be moved every 3-5 years. Take pride in the department as a whole not just because you are in a certain part of the city, you won't be there long. USAR, Hazmat are different entities, yes have t-shirts or such that identify that but why individual companies? Personnel will be in and out, every year will be different. Besides most of the people you call paycheck people have families and kids, still love the job but family is first. When the brotherhood is the only thing you have than splurge on it just like you do, buy all the extra fire equipment you want thats your choice. Do i give two #s# about "company pride" no, do i like my crew and the company I am on yes, but it will change all to soon. City of Raleigh pride yes, the good and the not so good.

As far as title changes its not so simple, Lts to Engineers yes simple, Captains to Lts. not so simple you have to then create Roughly 100 new captains positions with a new job description which just furthers the chain of command and adds to micro-management.

guest1 - 04/22/07 - 09:24

WOW!! this is going to get ugly! #1 our rank structure is not broke!!!! I don't know who you talk to Todd and Jeff but I have been all over taking classes and teaching and traveling and I have meet ff's from Chicago, New York and even Florida and when they ask what I do I tell them I am a driver and that we call them Lt's. The ff's I have meet have treated it just what it is "A TITLE". they didn't frown or look confused. It doesn't make a SH*T!!!!!! If we are worried about this than why not bitch about Lt's and Firefighters and even civilians wearing white shirts in certain divisions of RFD. #2 On station pride and FD pride, I agree about the paycheck employees, you will never change them! To the guest1 it has nothing to do with family first!!!! there are more guys with families that love the job more than single guys, it has to do with how

you treat the job and your brothers and sisters everyday. I know more guys and girls that are about the brotherhood that have 1-3 kids at home. How can you like your crew but not have pride in it???? I know crews out there that have family cook outs and even some have made sure there crew was there when babies were born, birthday parties and I could go on! That builds company pride and dept. pride, it it extending your family. Anyway I don't see what the big deal is I know I am a driver (LT) and some times an acting Capt. I still think they are titles leave them alone but that is my opinion. Jeff and Todd y'all keep studying. Stay safe and keep the brotherhood alive on C shift!!!!!! Later your Engine 7 A shift brother with a 2.5 year old son and a little girl on the way, a loving wife and loving the job more than I did 11 years ago. Leather forever!!!!!!

Jason Lane - 04/22/07 - 10:16

Silver I am not attacking your love for the Job. We have had that discussion before. I would love to be around guys who had the same passion you do. My point is What the the dept we work for decides to call different positions is their choice. There is no standard on job titles. I like the idea of having my own traditions god knows the city has very few left. I myself do not want to be the same and enjoy the oppurtunity to explain the way my dept does things. You hear over and over about other depts and the way they operate. If it is that great and Raleigh is that bad then put in an application.

Back to the NIMS It does not use deptmental rank structure.

Scott - 04/22/07 - 10:19

Nice spelling don't you think? Sorry for the name change

Scott - 04/22/07 - 10:21

If it gets ugly, or too personal, I will close the thread to additional comments. No problem.

Extreme (or is the better word polarized?) thinking seems a common trait in discussions like this.

Criticism or a negative opinion of something results in the reaction that the person with the opinion should either stop expressing their opinion or take their marbles and go elsewhere.

There appears (broadly generalizing, here) to be less tolerance for a range of opinion (debating?) styles. As if the following options are not all mutually exclusive:

1. I have an opinion that I wish to state and nothing more.
 2. I have an opinion that I wish to state, and defend, and nothing more.
 3. I have an opinion that I wish to state, and defend, and attempt to affect change.
 4. I have an opinion that I wish to state, and defend, and attempt to affect change, and I feel so strongly about this opinion that it might affect my staying in the group.
 5. I have an opinion that I wish to state, and defend, and attempt to affect change, and I feel so strongly about this opinion that it does affect my staying in the group, and I will probably find another group if the change is not affected.
- etc.

Civil conversation is always a challenge when voiced* opinions are met with strong responses. There is also the issue of the forum, and those reacting may feel that some opinions (and discussions therein) should not be expressed in public. In their opinion, I suspect, talking about this topic in an RFD station is different than talking this topic on a public blog. End of meta-comments.

*Voiced opinions, versus strong opinions. Perhaps in the eyes of the blog audience those things are equal. If it is blogged about, it may be considered a strong opinion.

Legeros - 04/22/07 - 10:32

Gee, this sounds like the same discussion we have all the time just a different subject. Some ask why does RFD call it a Major working fire instead of asking for a second alarm. Like I have said before who gives a crap, that is what our white helmets have decided and that is what we will do. I mean dang we are setting up command on EMS calls, weather I agree, like it or not, that is what we will do. " why ask why try Bud Dry"

Jason Lane - 04/22/07 - 10:50

I'm done on this thread. I've said my share, voiced my opinion(s), and defended my honor. It's not worth it to me to keep going, but get replies from those that are scared/upset/embarrassed to put their name(s). People who think that you have to pick either family or company

pride obviously have NO IDEA what company pride is. Lane, you described it perfect (company picnics, showing up for a new baby, the occasional night out, birthdays, hockey games). "Guest1", there's more to it than buying equipment, it's called Research and Development. Rather than talking about golf, fishing, or our off duty jobs, lets open our eyes a little more about our fire department job!! I love sharing new ideas, whether it's tools or tactics, with anyone. Turns out, a certain services Chief asked me where he could get a certain tool. Now, they're on every ladder company and the engines are getting them as well.

UGGGHHH!!! Capt. Porter, I know NIMS doesn't go into rank structure, I'm just saying that, for lack of better words, a Lieutenant is a Lieutenant is a Lieutenant, no matter where you go. Same for Engineer, no matter where you go, it's the same. Clear as mud?

Jeff - 04/22/07 - 12:09

Jason, you explained it a lot better than i could. Don't misinterpret what i meant about pride with my crew. Do i need a different t-shirt or something that relates that to every company i have been on? No. The majority of people that i socialize with are firefighters, police, and their families. Not just my current crew but good friends from past crews where we had more than just the fire department in common. Again, personally i feel it is more of a department pride than crew, just for the fact that sometimes you are with a crew where there is nothing more in common except working with RFD. I agree with you that our rank structure is not broke, but if new good ideas come up and the majority is for the changes than i am all for them to (or if the white hats change anything whether popular or not it's their decision). Jason you are a "company man" and to me that should be applauded. As far as other guys always wanting to compare and change our department because of what other departments are doing, i say study, work hard, and get to the positions that have a say so, don't sit and b@\$%# about it.

P.S. I meant to put "some of the so-called paycheck people" instead of "most". Also over the years i have learned that just because you think you know someone because you work with them 24hrs. you may never know what truly is going on in their lives.

guest1 - 04/22/07 - 12:20

Just for future reference what exactly meant by a paycheck employee? I am not as passionate as Silver but i love my job, use to do it for free but just took up to much time from the family. I definitely am not use to communicating like this and one reason i posted was to maybe start improving that. Scared to use a name, not going to lie i am, not because of the people here but have heard rumblings of discontent from good sources with white helmets, sorry but i dont want to piss off a future boss. I have seen some good discussions but can see that tempers can flare if something is not agreed upon or misunderstood. Also nothing against the brotherhood but i have run into some bad apples and when they stab you in the back, it makes you think twice about who you can trust within the family.

guest1 - 04/22/07 - 14:02

Guest1, I also use to do it for free but like many others, as our home family grows it comes down to a no brainer home family over volunteer!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Also we think our work family is tough at times some volunteer families do not and will not understand the passion of some paid firefighter!!!!!!!!!!!!!! You just listed one of the many definition of a paycheck firefighter "some bad apples and when they stab you in the back"!!!!!!!!!!!!!! We just had a firefighter get transferred from my station and he assumed who got him moved, but he has no idea!!!!!! " it was not me it was the one armed man"!!!!!!!!!! But anyway ya'll stay safe and protect the brotherhood.

PS guest1 I am listed in the phone book please feel free to give me a call at home!

Jason Lane - 04/22/07 - 16:01

Since I helped open this "can of worms" I will try and explain myself further. My thoughts are strictly my opinion(s)no more no less, no intention was ever made to insult anyone, job postion or my department. I made a choice to apply with Raleigh and really enjoy my job (and thankful for it), I am very serious about my job. So thanks for the offers to give up my postion to someone else. It appears some of the most opposition came form the "lieutenant" postion (present or past) for whatever reason and thats OK, you have your right as I do. I am in NO way saying RFD is broke, but everything should be looked at from time to time and see if improvements can or need to be made. Jason, not sure what you mean by who Jeff and I talked to, maybe some of this comes from observations also. For whatever reason as a general rule southern tradition is not as strong as it is in the north. Everyone has their level of tradition, work ethic,and so on and thats OK. As far as the talk around about renaming the drivers postion is talk, maybe it will happen maybe not. Appearantly talk about this possible change has been around before these postings. Change is preceived different by each individual. Sometimes change is good,its just hard in the begining. Also Jason, I know "study hard". I am not jealous, sorry. I will there one day and remember you started at the bottom also.

T. Saunders - 04/22/07 - 17:17

Todd, I was not talking crap to you 2 about your ranks! I was just saying to keep studying! I also said "Stay safe and keep the brotherhood alive on C shift!!!!!!!!!!" I have not nor will ever forget where I came from! Hell it took me 4 times to get to drive and act! you never have to apologize to me I never said you are jealous! While we all begin our career at the bottom, traditions and teaching or spreading the pride for

the job must start at the top! In the past year we all have seen a different approach to a lot of stuff, and changes we don't understand or are excited about. You are right change is good. Change is not bad it is just growing pains for some! Heck look all the stuff we are doing today we didn't do yesteryear. The new Chief is definitely about pride and tradition look at the promotional ceremonies and graduations. That I am jealous about because for a couple of years we didn't even have promotional ceremonies!!!!!!!!!!!! Oh yeah the new dress uniforms that only the honor guard used to have! Anyway FTM-PTB later

Jason Lane - 04/22/07 - 17:48

Sometimes you just have to agree that we disagree. Todd, you put it perfect. I love my job, and am serious about it. I find it sickening though, that I am made fun of for wanting to be buried in my uniform in the event of a line of duty death.

I agree with Todd as well, I appreciate the offers to give my position to someone else. For now, I'll say "no thanks", and stay around and try to make positive changes as well as continue to learn more basics about my job, maybe change the mindset a little. What I've stated here and in previous threads was my opinion, and my opinion only. You don't have to like it or agree with it, but it doesn't make me an "@\$\$hole" because I have one.

Silver - 04/22/07 - 19:03

Silver I never attacked you or anyone else. I was and am like everyone else stating opinion. I like the traditions raleigh has and hold my head up in pride with the job I do and have. I would love the chance to wear shirts that reflect my house and the pride I have with my co workers, but alas I get no such joy. I will say this though I have 17 more years to go and will finish them with the same dept I started with. Nothing but love for the brothers and am glad we have different opinions, otherwise we would be robots.

Scott - 04/22/07 - 22:35

Amen my Brother....

Jeff - 04/22/07 - 23:04

You talk about department pride, and I understand that, thats how most vollie houses in the south are. But in a paid fd where your assigned to different companies I find it hard to believe that you can't have company pride. Pride in your company is good, it leads to good competition between your company and other companys for who can get the best reputation, this forces you to train harder and therefore do you job better. Say your on ladder 30 and someone says oh ladder 30 can't do there job very well, well you just saying thats bs and defending yourself is company pride. If you are apart of a company I can't see how you can't have any company pride.

DearGuest1 - 04/23/07 - 16:53

If Raleigh was a department where you spent the majority of your career on one company or at one house for that matter than thats one thing. At the rate at which people are now to be moved around, Captains every 3yrs, Lts every 4 and firefighters every 5 (and to be honest alot get moved more frequently than others) its just not going to be the same as some departments up north. Some of the firefighters want to compare Raleigh too. Look, I dont mean you should not have pride in your company, I'm just not going to go and buy a t-shirt for every company I have been on. I just think that some want Raleigh to be like N.Y., Chicago, or other departments like that and Raleigh is not, Raleigh isnt that large. Do i take pride if our company does a good job, always. Like I said learning to get what i mean across and i obviously have done a poor job. In the beginning i was just wondering why you want to change Captains to Lts. and saying its not as easy as changing a title but i got off track, sorry.

guest1 - 04/23/07 - 20:52

Guest1, company pride is one thing where "size doesn't matter".

Actually Guest1, if you were to just change titles, from "Lt." to "Engineer", it would take a slip of the pen. Keep the same job description, just a title change. When you get in to adding positions (Lieutenant as a C.O., Sr. Captain, House Captain) is when you get into \$\$\$\$.

Guest2 - 04/23/07 - 22:28

Im coming in a little late on this conversation but thought I would just add something. I have found alot of departments that use both captains and Lts. In a dual piece house rescue and an engine they have the following engine capt engineer two ff's rescue Lt engineer 2 ff's why wouldnt something like that work? just a thought.

Adam Brown - 04/23/07 - 22:39

Name: (real name
preferred)
E-mail: (optional)
Web Site: (optional)

Remember personal info?

Yes

No

Comment:

/ [Textile](#)

Comment moderation is enabled on this site. This means that your comment will not be visible on this site until it has been approved by an editor.

To prevent spam we require you to answer this silly question

What are the FIRST TWO LETTERS of the word 'fire'?

[\(Register your username / Log in\)](#)

Notify: Yes, send me email when someone replies.

Hide email: Yes, hide my email address.

Small print: All html tags except and <i> will be removed from your comment. You can make links by just typing the url or mail-address.