

## ***Special Message from EMS Director Jeffrey Leaming***

### **National Fire Prevention Week (October 9-15)**

During National Fire Prevention Week, attention is focused on promoting fire safety and prevention to our citizens; however it is also an opportunity focus on the prevention and reduction of serious and fatal line-of duty firefighter incidents.

The *first responder* community of EMTs, firefighters, law enforcement and emergency professionals serve as Ohio's first line of defense in our comprehensive public and traffic safety efforts.

But this first line of defense can be compromised, endangering the safety of others, when standards and procedures for emergency response are not properly implemented or followed.

A routine response can turn tragic for a patient, a paramedic or a firefighter if a critical step in safety is overlooked.

Properly trained and equipped first responders have the greatest potential to save lives and limit casualties after a catastrophe.

In recent years, Ohio has suffered senseless tragedies in the fire and EMS community ... bringing to mind the painful loss of fire and EMS personnel in the Colerain Township area of Cincinnati and the Antwerp area of Paulding County.

Team efforts like the *16 Life Safety Initiative* program are critical in preventing injuries and deaths in Ohio's fire and EMS community ... and strong partnerships are the key to success.

The United States Fire Administration reports that approximately 100 firefighters lose their lives each year in the line of duty across our nation.

One death is one too many ... as we all work toward prevention through training and awareness to ensure that "everyone goes home."

During the past two and ½ years, the Division of EMS has taken steps to optimize the level of service of our firefighters by establishing training and education standards and certification and renewal requirements for firefighters, fire safety inspectors, fire instructors and fire charters.

I encourage fire agencies to continue to participate in firefighter life safety training. Take the lead in your local agencies to *ensure* that the *16 Life Safety Initiatives* and the "*Everyone Goes Home*" campaign are implemented into your charter programs.

As someone who has worked on the front line of the fire service for more than 30 years, including serving as fire chief, I know first-hand the risks and challenges of the first responder.

If we change the culture of firefighting by educating our firefighters with these *16 Life Safety Initiatives* and save one life, we have succeeded.

Together we can pledge that no family or community has to experience another preventable tragedy.

For more information on the *16 Life Safety Initiatives* and the "*Everyone Goes Home*" campaign visit: [www.everyonegoeshome.com](http://www.everyonegoeshome.com).



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey Leaming". The signature is stylized and cursive.