



City of Harrisonburg  
Public Information Office  
409 South Main Street  
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801  
540-432-7701 (office)

For Immediate Release – Aug. 29, 2019

Contact: Chief Ian Bennett  
Harrisonburg Fire Department  
540-432-7703

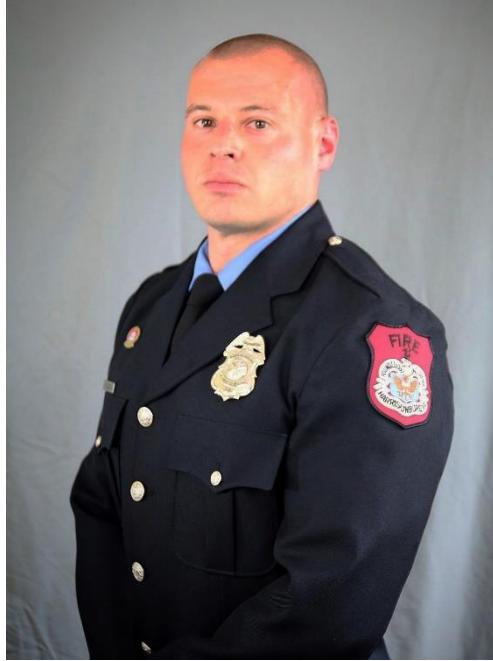
## Harrisonburg firefighter completes Virginia Fire Officers Academy

HARRISONBURG, Va. – The Harrisonburg Fire Department (HFD) gained even more leadership ability recently, thanks to the efforts of one of its firefighters.

Harrisonburg Firefighter Ryan Deola has successfully completed the Virginia Fire Officers Academy (VFOA), a week-long program held at the University of Richmond. The VFOA, hosted, supported and managed by the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association for new fire officers or acting officers, focuses on leadership, encouraging participants to take a more strategic and safety-oriented approach to traditional fireground tactics.

Deola knows his experience will go a long way toward the work he and his colleagues at HFD do every day.

"I am thankful for the opportunity to have attended such a great course that allowed me to expand and enhance my knowledge, skills and abilities to become a better leader within the Harrisonburg Fire Department," Deola said.



(Above) Firefighter Ryan Deola

Established in 2007, the course includes physical training, practical scenarios, team building exercises and speakers from all aspects of the fire service. The goal of the VFOA is to develop leaders in the fire service through intense scenario-based training with a focus on accountability, education, safety and ownership.

"I am extremely proud of Firefighter Deola for his investment in himself and the Department," HFD Fire Chief Ian Bennett said. "We received extensive praise for Firefighter Deola's performance, engagement with his fellow students, and professionalism during the program. He has upheld the core values of our agency and the City."

Deola added, "The knowledge and experience that I took away from the VFOA instantly affected how I face challenging situations in my career. The course provided an outlook I had never been exposed to on such a level in my 13 years as a career firefighter."

The Virginia Fire Officers Academy takes place annually, in June, and is considered one of the premiere officer training programs in the Commonwealth.

**The Harrisonburg Fire Department** is an ISO-Class II All-Hazards agency providing essential emergency and non-emergency life safety services to the public who live, work and travel in Harrisonburg. More information about the Fire Department is available on-line at [www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire) or on Facebook<sup>©</sup>, Twitter<sup>©</sup> and Instagram<sup>©</sup>.

**The City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 54,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).



###