



CITY OF HARRISONBURG
FIRE
DEPARTMENT

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For Immediate Release: Aug. 28, 2025

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Walker, Snyder Earn Promotions in HFD Fire Marshal's Office

HARRISONBURG, Va. – The Harrisonburg Fire Department is pleased to announce two recent promotions in the Fire Marshal's Office for Luke Walker and Chris Snyder.

Walker, previously the captain in the Fire Marshal's Office, has been promoted to the rank of battalion chief. Walker's promotion comes after Deputy Fire Marshal Mike Armstrong retired in July, having served more than 11 years in Harrisonburg.

Walker is a 13-year HFD veteran and a second generation HFD firefighter, having followed in his father's footsteps. Walker is a certified firefighter/paramedic, fire inspector and fire

investigator, and is a nationally certified Fire Officer III. He previously served as a firefighter, company officer on an engine company and was promoted to the rank of captain in 2023. Walker holds an Associate of Applied Science degree in EMS from Piedmont Community College and has completed advanced coursework at the National Fire Academy. He is a sworn law-enforcement officer, and his brother, Joseph Walker, serves as a lieutenant at Fire Station #2.



(Above, from left) HFD Battalion Chief Luke Walker and Captain Chris Snyder.

Chris Snyder, a 20-year veteran of HFD, has been promoted to the rank of Captain to fill the vacancy after Walker's promotion.

Snyder recently completed the rigorous 14-week training course sponsored by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs State Fire Marshal Academy and is a sworn law enforcement officer. Snyder is certified as a fire inspector and fire investigator and holds extensive credentials in technical rescue and hazardous materials management. Snyder has spent the majority of his career assigned to the Operations Bureau, operating as a member of Tower Company #1.

The Fire Marshal's Office oversees a broad range of responsibilities under the umbrella term of Community Risk Reduction (CRR). CRR includes application and interpretation of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code, Life Safety Education, Injury Prevention Programs, Child Passenger Safety Seat inspection and installation program, Smoke Alarm and Carbon Monoxide Alarm installation, and investigation of all fires and explosive incidents in the city. Fire Marshals have the authority to act as sworn law enforcement officers in the course of investigations and are authorized to bring charges against individuals who violate applicable state and federal laws pertaining to fires and explosives. The Fire Marshal's

Office also works very closely with the Harrisonburg building official, Department of Community Development and elected and appointed officials.

“We are thrilled to announce these promotions,” HFD Chief Matthew Tobia said. “Succession planning is an indispensable component of organizational success to ensure continuity of operations for our community. We are deeply grateful to Chief Armstrong for his commitment to preparing the next generation of division leaders and in particular to Chief Walker and Captain Snyder for accepting the challenge of directing our Fire Marshal’s Office into the future.”

The Fire Marshal’s Office is comprised of six full-time personnel and six part-time personnel responsible for accomplishing the mission of the division.

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 or on Facebook[®] and Instagram[®].

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 56,879 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.

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