



VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF FIRST RESPONDERS

STRONGER TOGETHER. ALWAYS READY

VAFR Training & Education Newsletter – January 15, 2026

Virginia First Responder Symposium - Record-Setting. Statewide. Built for Every Discipline.

The 1st Annual Virginia First Responder Symposium is set to be the largest and most comprehensive training event ever offered by the Association, marking a historic milestone in statewide first responder education.

The 2026 Symposium will feature over 125 individual classes across nine specialized training tracks, delivering hundreds of continuing education hours for EMS, fire, law enforcement, communications, leadership, and allied public safety professionals. Attendees may build customized schedules ranging from single-day participation to full-week immersion, maximizing both flexibility and training value.

This expanded format reflects the evolving needs of Virginia's first responder community—bringing disciplines together under one unified training experience while still delivering depth, specialization, and practical, job-ready instruction.

Training Tracks Include:

- EMS
- Fire & HazMat
- Law Enforcement
- Technical Rescue
- Leadership & Administration
- Mental Health & Resilience
- Telecommunications
- Public Safety Chaplaincy
- Pediatric Care

By the Numbers

- Over 125 Individual Classes
- 9 Specialized Training Tracks
- Hundreds of Continuing Education Hours Available
- Dozens of Expert Instructors
- The Largest Training Event Ever Offered by the Association

This year's Symposium represents a record-setting expansion in scope, scale, and opportunity—bringing together the widest range of disciplines and training options in the event's history.

Symposium Brochure will be released on February 1, 2026!

 2535 Turkey Creek Road
Oilville, VA 23129

 Phone: (804) 749-8191
Fax: (804) 749-8910

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Rooster Walk 16 – Medical Personnel Recruitment

Ridgeway District Rescue Squad is supporting a coordinated recruitment effort for Rooster Walk 16, a large-scale, multi-day music festival held at Pop's Farm in Axton, Virginia. With thousands of attendees expected throughout the weekend, organizers are seeking qualified medical personnel to support on-site medical operations and help ensure a safe and successful event. If interested, contact Travis Pruitt for more information.

Rooster Walk Medical Operations Contact:

Travis Pruitt

Ridgeway District Rescue Squad

 tpruitt@ridgewayrescue.com

 (276) 226-0409

Training Weekend Update – Spring Board of Governors

Additional information is anticipated regarding a training weekend in conjunction with the Spring Board of Governors meeting. Final details have not yet been released, and further guidance is expected soon. Updates will be shared as soon as they are confirmed.

EVOC Instructor Update Sessions – Winter 2026

The following EVOC Instructor Update sessions are currently scheduled for Winter 2026. These updates are required for current EVOC instructors and are offered across multiple districts.

Questions regarding EVOC Instructor Updates?

Please contact IT Doug Eberhardt at the State Office

 Office: (804) 749-8191

 Cell: (757) 645-8850

 dougeberhardt@vafr.org

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Scheduled EVOC Instructor Updates

- District 1
Staunton-Augusta Rescue Squad
1601 N. Coalter St, Staunton, VA 24401
Instructor Trainer: Steve Rohr
January 17 | 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
- District 2
Williamsburg Fire Department
440 N. Boundary St, Williamsburg, VA 23185
Instructor Coordinator: Doug Eberhardt
February 7 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- District 7
Giles Rescue Squad
175 Industrial Park Road, Pearisburg, VA 24134
Instructor Trainer: Rickey Hodge
February 7 | 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
- District 7
Riner Volunteer Rescue Squad
4171 Riner Road, Riner, VA 24149
Instructor Trainer: Rickey Hodge
February 7 | 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
- District 9
103 Donnie Dean Drive, Castlewood, VA 24224
Instructor Trainer: Rickey Hodge
January 10 | 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
- District 10
Lake of the Woods Fire & Rescue
104 Lakeview Parkway, Locust Grove, VA 22508
Instructor Trainer: Kevin Dillard
February 8 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- State Office – Morning Session
2535 Turkey Creek Road, Oilville, VA
Coordinators: Gary Dalton, Bubby Bish & Doug Eberhardt
January 24 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- State Office – Afternoon Session
2535 Turkey Creek Road, Oilville, VA
Coordinators: Gary Dalton, Bubby Bish & Doug Eberhardt
January 24 | 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Additional EVOC Instructor Update sessions will be offered in each district and posted as they are scheduled.

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