ABSENCE OF GENDER DIVERSITY WITHIN THE MANTECA CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The Manteca City Fire Department has 50 firefighters, all being of the male gender. The problem was no research had been conducted to evaluate the need for the Manteca City Fire Department to become gender diverse. The purpose of this research project was to evaluate the need for the Manteca City Fire Department to become gender diverse. This research project employed historical research supported by descriptive research methodologies in an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. How does the gender makeup of the Manteca City Fire Department compare to other like-size fire departments throughout California?
2. What is the perception of the female workforce about the career of firefighter within the City of Manteca?
3. What is the opinion of the female workforce, who would consider a career as a firefighter, as to what would be effective recruitment practices?
4. What are the recruitment practices of like-size fire departments throughout California that may contribute to gender diversity?
5. What benefits have like-size fire departments throughout California realized by being gender diverse?
6. What liabilities or obstacles have like-size fire departments in California realized by being gender diverse?
7. What are the current recruitment practices of the City of Manteca for the position of firefighter?
8. What is the opinion of the Manteca City Firefighters about becoming gender diverse?
The procedures employed to conduct the research included a review of the published literature, three operative surveys, and two expert interviews. Research concluded like-size fire departments throughout California were actively engaged in recruitment practices that contributed to gender diversity. Survey results revealed the local female workforce was interested in the career of firefighting but was unaware of it. Several benefits of gender diversity were identified including enhanced female recruitment ability, improved patient care for women and children, improved public education ability, and superior leadership skills. Several liabilities or obstacles were recognized including inadequate facilities, poor attitudes of male coworkers, lack of policies in place, and difficulty maintaining physical ability and fitness standards. Effective recruitment practices were identified including targeting specific areas, utilizing female firefighters in recruitment practices, and providing pre-employment orientation or training.

Recommendations were made for the Manteca City Fire Department to expand its' recruitment practices. They included establishing a recruitment team, preparing the department's facilities, reviewing current policies, and providing gender diversification training.
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INTRODUCTION

Picture yourself watching your 13-year-old daughter through a window at a career day in high school. As the "fireman" takes his turn addressing the students, you notice her yawn and doodle an attempt of Sponge Bob. Compare that to the excitement you see in her eyes as a female "firefighter" addresses the students. You notice she stops doodling and listens as the firefighter shares her testimony of how rewarding a career in the fire service has been to her. You can almost see her brain processing the information she is receiving: helping people, teamwork, physical fitness, and diverse working conditions. You know these are all elements she would enjoy. She is probably visualizing herself in the yellow turnouts helping at the scene of an emergency. Finally, the female firefighter explains to the children that the reason the career title has been changed from “fireman” to “firefighter,” is because girls can grow up and be firefighters too.

Researchers agree that one of the most effective ways to create a more gender diverse fire service is by utilizing female firefighters in public education and the firefighter recruitment process (Dozier, 2000). However, this practice can be quite difficult to apply in a fire department that has no female firefighters. For example, even though the Manteca City Fire Department is a medium-sized fire department, it has no women within its ranks.

The problem is that no research had ever been conducted to evaluate the need for the Manteca City Fire Department to become more gender diverse. The purpose of this research paper is to evaluate the need for the Manteca City Fire Department to become
more gender diverse. This research project employed historical research supported by descriptive research methodologies in an attempt to answer the following questions:

5. How does the gender makeup of the Manteca City Fire Department compare to other like-size fire departments throughout California?

6. What is the perception of the female workforce about the career of firefighter within the City of Manteca?

7. What is the opinion of the female workforce, who would consider a career as a firefighter, as to what would be effective recruitment practices?

8. What are the recruitment practices of like-size fire departments throughout California that may contribute to gender diversity?

5. What benefits have like-size fire departments throughout California realized by being gender diverse?

6. What liabilities or obstacles have like-size fire departments in California realized by being gender diverse?

7. What are the current recruitment practices of the City of Manteca for the position of a firefighter?

8. What is the opinion of the Manteca City Firefighters about becoming more gender diverse?

**BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE**

In 2002, research was conducted for the Manteca City Fire Department to evaluate the customer satisfaction within the department's public education program. The research found that customers were dissatisfied with the absence of female firefighters participating in the programs. This was particularly stressed in a survey conducted to
evaluate the department’s Fire Awareness in the Schools (FAITS) program. The teachers expressed that having female firefighters occasionally teach instead of the usual male firefighter, would help establish role models for the female students. Teachers expressed this to be a way to improve service by the fire department (Waters, 2002). Unfortunately, the fire department is unable to implement the feedback from the teachers and improve service because there are no female firefighters within the department. Further, there have never been any female firefighters in the Manteca City Fire Department.

Even though leaders in the Manteca City Fire Department have been actively researching ways to improve service delivery to its' constituents, such as evaluating first-responder advanced life support delivery, soliciting customer feedback, and service level studies; no research has ever been conducted to determine the need for the Manteca City Fire Department to become gender diverse. Experts believe that this less than proactive approach and lack of foresight is far from being prudent. FEMA (1999) teaches that it is no longer acceptable for fire chiefs to say, “We’ll hire anybody who meets our standards” (p. 1). Further, it is believed that this “if it isn’t broke, don’t fix it” attitude will eventually catch up with the department in the form of legal or financial ramifications (Davis, 2000).

This research project was completed in accordance with the applied research requirements of the National Fire Academy’s Executive Fire Officer Program. The research project related specifically to Unit 2: The Developing Self as a Leader section as presented in the Fire Service Executive Leadership course. Transformational leadership was taught in the coursework as a leadership style that needs to be both visionary and principled. It was emphasized that a principled leader values action over
maintaining the status quo. On a similar note, the curriculum illustrated that a visionary leader proactively plans rather than being reactive when a problem arises. Conducting research to evaluate the need for the Manteca City Fire Department to become more gender diverse supports both of these leadership characteristics.

This research project relates to and supports one of the operational objectives of the United States Fire Administration. By evaluating the need for gender diversity and considering the benefits and liabilities therein, the Manteca City Fire Department will be more comprehensive in its service delivery to the citizens of Manteca. Further, appraising the need for gender diversity will help promote within the community a comprehensive, multi-hazard risk-reduction plan led by the fire service organization. Finally, the results of this research paper will be used to determine if the Manteca City Fire Department should make an effort to become more gender diverse. It is hopeful the research conducted will be useful to other municipal fire departments in considering the need for gender diversity within their organizations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Need for Gender Diversity

Several authors advocate the need for fire departments to actively strive to improve in the area of gender diversity. FEMA (1999) teaches that it is no longer acceptable for fire chiefs to say, “We’ll hire anybody who meets our standards” (p. 1). In England, the fire service has been publicly castigated for the poor level of opportunity it offers to women:

The Fire Service is letting itself down in the area of equality. That must change.

To be the best, the Fire Service has to reach out and attract people of the highest
caliber from across society. There is a large pool of talent among people from ethnic minorities and among women. The Fire Service is not taking advantage of the opportunities for recruiting that talent. (O’Brien, 1999, p. 12)

Rukavina (1995) advocates that fire departments need to carefully develop affirmative action plans which include gender diversity. He states “principles of affirmative action are clear” (p. 19). Further, he recommends the plans be based on direct or indirect past discrimination, have specific goals, distinguish the gender balance from the balance in the general population, have a specific timetable, and a plan that is accompanied by training and clear guidelines for the hiring decision-makers. On a similar note, researchers believe those departments who are not proactive in equal opportunity issues related to women could face financial consequences. For example, in Spokane Washington a less than proactive approach to gender diversity cost the department severe financial consequences. When two females had resigned from the fire academy, they were replaced by two males, one from the minority list and the other from the open list. Consequently, a female candidate on the eligibility filed a lawsuit to challenge that replacement of the women with men. The matter was settled when both parties agreed that she would be given a seat in the next class, seniority status and $20,000 (Davis, 2000). Some fire departments suggest that they cannot address their departments barriers to gender diversity because of the financial obstacle. However, Chief Rocco Forte of the Minneapolis Fire Department points out:

The money we’ve spent is almost a joke compared to what we’ve saved in lawsuits and we’re getting a better, more qualified department into the bargain. I can’t imagine any fire chief going to the city council and being turned down when
they ask for money to diversify their department. Likely the council is asking them why they’re not making the changes. (Willing, 2001, p. 15)

The susceptibility to charges of discrimination on the basis of sex may present an unwelcome liability for the department. The hiring of women is significant. “In the years from 1993 to 1999 approximately 4 million dollars were paid from the City of Los Angeles in settlements to women who filed cases of wrongful hiring practices”.

Many researchers believe that gender diversity is unavoidable. Gray (1996) also emphasizes the importance of the fire service getting on board with the gender diversity issue. He references a study by the United States Department of Labor and suggests that the fire service is falling far behind. “In the year 2000, every group of 100 potential workers will include almost 50 women” (United States Department of Labor, 1988, p. 19). Likewise, studies in 2001 support this concept confirming that women accounted for 46.6 percent of the United States workforce and interestingly held almost half the managerial and leadership positions at Fortune 500 companies. Further, Gray (1996), in examining a female recruitment study conducted in Southern California, concluded that women in fire service professions were the one group that has been most discriminated against in public safety services. For example, less than ten years ago the second largest agency in Southern California, the Los Angeles County Fire Department, had only 14 females among its 2,259 personnel (American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, 1994, p. III).

Finally, many feel that having a gender diverse fire department is the law. The Civil Rights Acts of 1964, Title VII, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Act, 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender and other diversities. It
covers all employers with 15 or more persons including public and private, state and local governments, and more. In 1991, Congress passed a new Civil Rights Act. In part, the purpose of this Act was to provide appropriate remedies for intentional discrimination and unlawful harassment in the workplace (Civil rights Act, 1991). One of the most important provisions of the new act amended Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Bill to allow monetary compensation for victims of harassment and other forms of intentional discrimination based on gender, religion, or disability (Hammer, 1993, p. 115-116).

Some suggest that fire departments that are not proactively becoming more gender diverse could be mandated to hire quotas as female firefighter candidates become more aware of diversity and discriminatory practices. One example of this was demonstrated in a pubic safety department in Charlotte, North Carolina:

A black police officers’ association filed suit against the Charlotte Police Department charging discrimination in hiring and promotions. The court found in favor of the black officers, and as part of a consent decree, the Charlotte Police Department had to agree that 40 percent of its new openings and 20 percent of its first-tier promotions would go to minorities. (Varley, 1991, p. 4)

In the same city, the fire department noticed that their diversity was not much better. Consequently, fearing the same type of penalty, the got on board with the police department’s consent decree. “So what they wanted to do was emulate what was happening in the police department and get personnel involved. The fire department decided to try and make 40 percent of its new hires minorities, too” (Varley, 1991, p. 4).

It should be noted that not all authors agree that there is a need for improved gender diversity in the fire service. Ritchie (2001) argues, "the culture of the service is
more suited to men” (p. 10). On a similar note, others liken the fire service to professional basketball players. They compare the introduction of gender diversity into the fire service to that of the lowering of standards for participation in the National Basketball League:

It was unfair to expect male firefighters to carry their female colleagues, they argued: it was unfair for a man to be paired with a woman who might not, if push came to shove, be able to pull him out of a fire. One could use the same logic, suggested a columnist for Time Magazine, to force the NBA to lower its baskets to five feet and accept a quota of dwarfs. (Varley, 1991, p. 3)

The conclusion of a study conducted in Scotland claims the differences between men and women make it unrealistic to expect equal numbers of male and female candidates to apply for firefighting posts.

Recent wide-ranging research into the brain differences of females and males emphasizes that males, in using their visual right-brain skills, have advantages in solving manipulative and mathematical tasks. This would affect Fire Service operations such as pitching ladders, parking vehicles, sensing directions etc, whereas females using both hemispheres of the brain, are better with words and at recalling landmarks to find their way over a journey, using verbal skills to tackle visual tests. (Hoffman, 1999, p. 3)

The review suggests: “It may result, therefore, that the Fire Service should try to recruit females not as firefighters per se but specifically for disciplines that use their brain differences and aptitudes to best advantage such as community education, fire investigation, control room operations and media relations” (Hoffman, 1999, p. 3). Last,
one author calls for some common sense. “It is only fair that every woman should have the opportunity to be a firefighter. However, not every woman can be one. We have always accepted that this holds true for men, but when gender becomes involved, the word “discrimination” rears its ugly head”(Clayton, 1995, p. 5). Clayton (1995) advocates often departments change their standards to transform opportunity for woman to guarantee. Consequently, they end up with firefighters who have trouble performing the job and keeping up with the rest of the crew. “It is not unfair or discriminatory to recognize this fact. Nor does it render a fire service career unobtainable for any woman” (Clayton, 1995, p. 6).

**Summary:**

Most fire departments and authors will agree gender diversification is needed, if not required by law. Many fire departments related their motivation for diversification as financial, fearing lawsuits based on violation of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972. Yet, some author and fire departments state the role of firefighter is too physically challenging for women, rather, women should be recruited for more community outreach programs. Common sense seems to be the best solution for this dilemma as stated by Clayton (1995), "It is only fair that every woman should have the opportunity to be a firefighter. However, not every woman can be one" (p. 5).

**Benefits of Gender Diversity**

Although most of the literature focused on the obstacles and liabilities to a more gender diverse fire department, several benefits of having female firefighters in the workforce were identified. They included improved patient care for women and children,
improved leadership potential, enhanced public education, and superior female firefighter recruitment ability.

First, the female firefighters enhanced ability to provide patient care to women and children was evident. Staley (1997) illustrates this female advantage at many emergency incidents by sharing two powerful examples:

I can remember incidents when I wanted the partnership of women firefighters on the calls. In one such incident, I responded to an emergency medical call for a woman who had been raped. I arrived and found her cowering in a corner, surrounded by well-intentioned, burly cops who were trying to talk her into coming out. I broke through the hovering gathering of blue uniforms and knelt in front of her with my medical kit. She took on look at me and screamed, “It’s him! He did it! He raped me!” One of the officers said, “Now ma’am. This can’t be the guy. This is Mike.” She screamed, “It is! It’s him!” I was being accused of rape! I looked around frantically for a female officer or fire rescue worker. This woman was seriously traumatized and when she looked up, all she saw was a wall of male faces. What she needed to see was a woman, someone to trust. Sadly, it was too early in the evolution of our profession for us to have enough females to be on every call. (p. 154)

In the second example, he describes that although women firefighters do an equal job for equal pay, they bring a unique perspective to the work:

I remember the women firefighters in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew in Miami a couple of years ago. Not only were they side-by-side with the men in disaster control, but they were the glue that held the evacuation centers together.
Shattered families and frightened kids found strength and comfort in the company of women firefighters, who were able to balance control with compassion and sensitivity. I’m not saying that men couldn’t or didn’t exhibit the same skills, but the women distinguished themselves. There was something comforting about having women nurturing and maybe mothering just a little in the centers that helped foster a calming sense of community and family. (Staley, 1997, p. 154)

McNally (1996) agrees that children and women respond better to the “caring aspect” associated with female firefighters. Further, she concludes the sense of satisfaction female firefighters can feel from their advantage can be tapped into recruiting more women into the fire service. Finally, experts recommend that female firefighters not masquerade as the stereotypical tough male firefighter. Gentleness and sensitivity are important characteristics of a good firefighter and should be utilized by women to enhance their capability (FEMA, 1999).

Second, authors feel women may bring many characteristics to the table that can improve their ability to lead people. Berkman, Floren, and Willing (1999) emphasize these leadership characteristics:

Women may also have some distinct assets as fire service leaders. Women with diverse backgrounds bring valuable skills to the position of fire officer. Women who felt insecure as firefighters because they didn’t know how to tear apart a diesel engine may suddenly find that written and verbal communications skills, the gift for organizing, the ability to teach effectively, and other skills of this type are more important in the officer’s position. (p. 78)
On a similar note, additional leadership characteristics were emphasized as a benefit. He explained that women use different communications skills that often aid in conflict resolution and problem solving (McNally, 1996). Finally, one can conclude leadership qualities that are effective in the private sector will be beneficial within the fire service. Book (2000) points out that there has been significant success of women in the Fortune 500 where 12 percent of senior executive positions are held by women. He contributes their success to rejecting mimicry of leadership styles of men in authoritarian roles and developing feminine leadership traits and styles.

Third, it is felt that female firefighters have attributes that can make them good public educators. One reason that female firefighters make good public educators is female students will be better able to identify with them. One should consider a typical audience would consist of 50 percent females. By having both male and female firefighters, the chance of reaching both audiences will be enhanced. Case in point, in his research of customer surveys Waters (2002) found that having female firefighters servings as instructors during their Fire Awareness in the Schools Program was a benefit. Teachers complained all of the firefighter instructors were male. They felt female firefighters would serve as good role models for the female students. Additionally, they stated the students would pay better attention during the firefighter’s class if both male and female firefighters were present.

Fourth and finally, benefits of utilizing female firefighters in the recruitment of female firefighters has been well noted. For example, in his research to improve gender diversity in the Fort Worth Fire Department, Burns, (2001), recommended their public education recruitment task force include female firefighters. Likewise, Bartley (2002) in
her research in the Reedy Creek Emergency Services recommended a female firefighter be the lead person in teaching fire service career opportunities at the high schools and other targeted facilities. Similarly, Booth (1987) found that the most successful female firefighter recruitment strategy (by a large margin) was “organizing current minority and female firefighters into a task force” (p. 50). Another author suggests the departments that have been successful in integrating women into their departments have utilized females in their public education recruitment practices. “It is observed that one of the most effective methods has been to use current female employees to assist in recruitment” (Dozier, 2000, p. 7). Finally, in his research to improve gender diversity within the Honolulu Fire Department Neves (2001) suggests that a fire departments female recruitment through public education goes on all year around. “Women currently on the department should be included in all of the department’s public activities. Firefighters self-recruit and attract people like themselves because of their visibility. Every time a department is in the public eye, and especially when the press is covering it, its diversity should be visible” (p. 10).

**Summary:**

The four outlined benefits of gender diversification clearly describe the advantages of having a strong female presence. Female firefighters are able to communicate and connect in a unique way with female patients and young children. They are also a unifying force in the department, with their distinctive ability to lead people. When firefighters are involved in public education, the advantage of having a female firefighter as part of the education team increases the chance of reaching both male and female members of the audience. Finally, having female firefighters in a
visible, active role will help recruit more female firefighters. These four benefits depict only the main benefits stated in the literature and many more benefits are sure to be found.

**Liabilities or Obstacles of Gender Diversity**

Four main liabilities or obstacles of creating gender diversity in the fire service were discussed in the literature. They include physical ability standards, attitude of male co-workers, lack of policies, and inadequate facilities.

First, several authors raised the issue of gender diversity and the physical ability standards for firefighters. In the fire service in England, one author discusses the challenge of recruiting female firefighters without lowering the standards (Lynch, 2001). Yet, other authors feel departments are already accommodating male firefighters who can’t meet the initial physical standards; so, why is there an issue with accommodating the female firefighter with lesser physical ability standards? Varley (1991) raises the issue:

What’s more, it was clear that, as they aged, many male firefighters gained weight and lost physical strength and stamina. It was widely speculated that many of them would not be able to pass their department’s physical agility test, themselves, if they had to take it over and yet they were somehow accommodated within fire department staffs. How credibly was it, therefore, to claim, as many fire officials did, that fire departments were unable to cope with staff members of different physical abilities? They were already doing so quietly, without fuss, as a matter of course. (p. 4)
Other authors advocate not lowering standards for women. Rather, assure the physical entrance exam reflects the firefighter skills and is completely job-related, thereby, not discriminating against anyone including women. Ritchie (2001) agrees that the physical tests need only be necessary, reflect the job and provide accurate measurements. He supports the tests should not include unnecessary physical demands that could be potentially eliminated. A case in New York City illustrates the importance of assuring one’s fire department entry-level physical exam is valid and job related.

During the course of a class action suit on behalf of the 410 women who had failed the city’s physical agility test, the plaintiffs brought in a female firefighter from Chicago. She testified that the 120-pound, canvas-covered cylindrical dummy used in the city’s test was so awkward to handle that she had not been able to hoist it, as required in the test. She did however, leave the stand, stride across the courtroom, and hoist the 180-pound attorney for the plaintiffs across her shoulders. This bravura performance, together with evidence that certain other test equipment had not been appropriately sized for women’s bodies, led the federal district court judge to find in favor of the women’s complaint. He ordered the department to devise a new test and to set aside 45 positions in the department for these women. (Varley, 1991, p. 4)

Similarly, in another part of the country, a female firefighter filed and won a sexual discrimination charge after she was unsuccessful at passing a fire district’s entry-level physical agility exam. The fire district had arbitrarily set a time limit based on the time it took a few of their current firefighters to complete the exam. The court found there was
no evidence the time limit had anything to do with the actual requirements of the job (Banks, 2001).

On a similar note, fire departments researchers believe departments should avoid ranking candidates based on physical agility test scores. Rather, the physical agility exam should be used as a pass or fail test to assure candidates have the minimum physical ability. Osby (1991) explains that:

Departments that rank candidates based on this phase of testing will unavoidably experience an adverse impact on female and Asian candidates. Certain target groups will on the whole, score lower, particularly with regard to reaching (height) and upper body strength. Since training in techniques and alteration of equipment specifications can dramatically improve performance, it is difficult to justify a ranking based on agility test scores. Departments with the best success rates for females did not rank by score on the agility portion. (p. 53)

Finally, experts reveal that although developing a physical agility exam that is job-related and maintains standards will prevent liability and discrimination, it is not without a burden to the fire department. Many fire chiefs have found establishing the validity of a physical test to be lengthy, difficult and expensive. The employer must justify all aspects of the test, from the selection of tasks to be performed to the time allowed for completing the tasks. Regardless of who wins in court, the enormous expenses of time, money and morale can produce a no-win situation for both sides in a legal challenge. (Federal Emergency Management / United States Fire Administration, [FEMA/USFA], 1999, p. 26)
Second, the attitude of male co-workers has been identified in the literature as an obstacle to a more gender diverse fire department. Studies show that negative attitudes of coworkers and problems with acceptance are the two major obstacles to successful performance of a female firefighter (McNally, 1996). Further, it is reported that many female firefighters have left the ranks because of the attitude of their male co-workers. Willing (1999) explains that “many women are leaving the fire service, perhaps due to the sense of isolation women still feel on the job. After serving long term careers in the fire service, women express that fellow firefighters were mean, tampered with their gear and at times they had received physical as well as verbal harassment” (p. 29). She goes on to emphasize that:

Women complain of having to prove themselves even after many years on the job. Upon leaving, women firefighters complain both psychologically and physically with regard to self-esteem, anxiety, and other forms of stress that attribute to a sort of post-traumatic disorder. Many women complete their firefighting career with the feeling that a huge amount of bad came with the little amount of good.

(Willing, 1996, p. 21)

Firefighting is usually seen from the perspective of male values and a stereotype stemming from old firefighting traditions. An all-male workforce creates beliefs that firefighting requires only those characteristics that are commonly thought of as masculine, such as firefighters must be tough and women are not tough. “Women joining fire departments often feel out of place, their knowledge seems useless and the way they behave seems wrong” (FEMA, 1999, p. 21). Staley (1997) shares, “There are thousands of stories of equipment tampering, bed short-sheeting, schedule rearranging, and other
mean-spirited shenanigans intended to discourage these early female invaders” (p. 154). He later explains “Every female firefighter I have known or spoken with has had a story to tell about being unwanted and having to prove herself” (Staley, 1997, p. 154). This negative attitude of co-workers impacts not only the new firefighter, but also the up and coming female fire officer:

Women firefighters that aspire to be officers often face obstacles that many of their male counterparts do not experience. The most obvious is that women do not look the part of a traditional fire officer. Women often experience a doubting public that looks for a big strong male to be in charge and has difficulty seeing a woman in a position of authority. Too many citizens think women do not look the part of a firefighter, and such people will find it even less credible that a woman would be in command of a fire crew or fire scene. (FEMA, 1999, p. 555)

Authors suspect part of negative attitude towards female firefighters not only originates from the male firefighters, but also from their wives. Hirschman (1993) illustrates this double negative in the following statement. “Men assume female firefighters are tough tomboys, or lesbians, simply because they’re not pursuing feminine, ladylike careers. On the other hand, some male firefighters and their spouses or girlfriends, think if a female firefighter is young and good-looking she’s 'husband shopping' and not really serious about her career” (p. 65). Staley (1997) concurs that dealing with the attitude from the firefighters wives has always been an issue. “They have had to fight the male firefighters’ wives. When pioneer career female firefighters entered the fire service, one of the first problems they encountered was the jealous wife who was incensed that her husband was sleeping with another woman. It was understandable” (p. 153). The
attitude and prowess of the firefighters wives was illustrated in Charlotte, North Carolina. Where the Fire Chief had began an aggressive recruitment campaign to lure women to the Charlotte Fire Department. They had sent out notices to places like the National Organization of Women and about a half-dozen feminist support groups or organizations in Charlotte. Additionally his staff sent notices to women’s athletic programs. They even began airing public service announcements! “And then, on one fateful day, the Fire Chief participated on a local radio talk show called “Hello Henry,” announcing that the city of Charlotte was looking for female firefighters, in particular. This kicked off a contentious three-hour debate over the air waves, with women’s rights advocates trading barbs with firefighters’ wives” (Varley, 1991, p. 7). Interestingly the next day the local newspaper wrote a story asserting that the city had deliberately made its physical agility test easier so that women could qualify for fire service (Varley, 1991).

Finally, one author believes the fact that most departments are failing in their efforts to recruit, hire, and retain women is linked to the poor attitudes of male firefighters and the corporate culture of the fire service.

Women will have a hard time becoming firefighters to the extent that to be a firefighter means to be a man…. I do not argue here that women are by nature unsuited to the work of male-dominated occupations, but I argue instead that this occupation and its culture have been crafted in a way that reflects and enhances the social construction of gender in the society as a whole, exaggerating the barriers to sexual integration. (Chetkovich, 1997, p. 36)
Third, is the liability or obstacle of not having policies in place to address a gender diverse workforce. Neves (2001) explains why policies have to be in place before women are recruited into one’s fire department:

This helps the existing workforce understand the importance of gender based diversity and sends a message to the newly recruited that the organization’s values and cultures embrace this diversity. Policies such as pregnancy leave and grooming standards are examples of changes that need to be addressed. Having these policies already in place reduces the situation where incumbent women employees are targeted for blame for an unpopular new policy. (p. 25)

On a similar note, Floren (2001) emphasizes how important it is for the department to send a message to it's members and the public by setting policies and by the use of language itself. He considered the recent events in New York City when the World Trade Center collapsed; the use of the word “fireman” was detrimental to female members of the fire service and the recruitment therein. “It is difficult at best to perceive that one can grow up to be a hero like a fireman when in fact you are a young girl destined to become a woman” (p. 20). Interestingly enough, FEMA (1993) recommends establishing and enforcing policies to maintain a consistent commitment to non-sexist attitudes and language. They suggest using and encouraging gender-neutral language is an important statement. For example, if a local newspaper is still referring to firefighters as “firemen,” they suggest that a letter to the editor from the fire chief will not only help get the practice stopped, but willing itself demonstrated the department’s commitment to fairness and diversity (p. 13). In his research conducted in Hawaii, Neves (2001) recommended that several policies would need to be developed prior to becoming more
gender diverse in the Honolulu Fire Department. They included policies to address properly fitting protective equipment, reproductive health of mothers and fetus, chemicals in breast milk, childcare, and diversity based training. His research concluded that “policy development and documentation must be handled expeditiously but not rushed” (p. 33) It is recommended that fire departments have pregnancy policies in place and at least are aware of the laws that govern pregnancy in the workplace. For example, the issue of pregnancy in the fire service has been assisted by the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 which was clarified in 1987 and explains employers must do for the pregnant worker at least as much as they do for the worker who is injured off the job. Further, in 1991, the Supreme Court restricted employer’s rights to make decisions about the welfare of the employee’s potential offspring and extended women’s right to work in hazardous jobs. The law provides that people are employed on their ability to perform the job, not their ability to become pregnant or the fact that they are pregnant (FEMA, 1999). Another policy to address is in the area of childcare. “More than a third (36%) of women firefighters have children living at home, most with no other parent at home to provide child care. Almost as many women (32%) are married to or are involved with other firefighters; 43% of these couples have children at home. One out of every twelve women firefighters is a single parent. Clearly, these issues have a significant impact on the ability of women to work as firefighters” (FEMA, 1999, p. 44). Finally, there is the obstacle or liability of sexual harassment. It is agreed that sexual harassment policies and training be on board well before a department’s addition of gender diversity (FEMA, 1993). Case in point, Ritchie (2001) conducted research that revealed “a significant amount of harassment of women and bullying by men within the Fire Service. Forty
percent of the female firefighters interviewed nation-wide had been harassed in the last 12 months. Indeed, 60 percent of women mentioned harassment having occurred at some point during their career” (p. 10).

Fourth, a topic which surfaced numerous times in the literature concerned the lack of proper facilities for women firefighters. In fact, many authors feel it is the biggest obstacle to a more gender diverse fire department. A survey conducted by Dozier (2000) of the female workforce in Abilene, Texas revealed that the top two obstacles preventing survey respondents from considering a career in the fire department were related to fire department facilities. “The top concern was the practice of sharing bathroom facilities (male and female using the same bathroom and shower at alternating times). The second highest concern indicated by the survey was the open dorm/sleeping areas” (p. 36). This remains consistency with comments made by Germann (1992) who stressed the point that fire stations must be remodeled if necessary to include separate sleeping, rest room and bathing facilities for men and women. He states, “It is important that the work environment be inviting to females, or all other recruiting methods then become useless” (p. 12). Mathis (1999) concurs suggesting that consideration must be given to facility changes; appropriate changes must be made to the showers, locker rooms, and bathrooms to accommodate both men and women. “If a department wants to increase the representation of women they have to make it a place where they want to come” (p. 22).

In 1994, members of the Los Angeles Fire Department compiled a report addressing issues of equity, inclusion and accountability. This committee was named the Human Relations Development Committee and their report was in response to issues raised by the Los Angeles City Personnel Department in their study of Human Resource
Management in the LAFD. The report addressed steps LAFD must take to ensure that all candidates, once recruited and hired, are provided the greatest opportunity for success. One of the key steps identified was to provide a working environment that was comfortable by installing separate restrooms, showers, and changing facilities (Los Angeles City Fire Department, 1995). Further, it was identified in the literature that providing separate facilities is not only recommended, it might not be a choice.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidelines forbid an employer to refuse to hire or adversely affect the employment opportunities of applicants or employees in order to avoid provision of restrooms for that sex. The Office of Federal Contract Compliance provides that unless and employer can prove excessive expense or lack of space, they must provide appropriate physical facilities to both sexes. (Bartley, 2002, p. 15)

Interestingly, in California a state law makes the decision for the fire department. Section 2350 of the California Labor Code requires that business establishments that have five or more employees must provide separate bathrooms for each sex, and that no person may use bathrooms designated for the opposite sex (FEMA, 1999). The literature was not without suggestions or recommendations to help fire departments prepare facilities for a more gender diverse workforce. For example, it is suggested a five or 10-year plan be developed for remodeling firehouses. All new stations and any significant remodeling of existing stations, should include adequate facilities for a two-gender workforce (FEMA, 1999). Another author's approach was not addressing common sleeping areas as a gender issue but as a privacy issue. She suggested a design that featured cubicles containing a bed, desk, lamp and three or four lockers; on for each person on each shift, provide
privacy and a reduction of sound or light from others in the room. "This solution does not pit women against men and respects the privacy and individuality of all” (Bartley, 2002, p. 16).

**Summary:**

With any change of the status quo, liabilities are a given with four being discussed in detail. The physical demands of firefighting are an integral part of becoming a firefighter. Physical dissimilarities between men and women are well documented and can limit many women from joining the fire service. However, many firefighters complain that the physical agility testing prior to consideration for hire does not truly reflect the physical requirements of the job. The importance of a physical test that was encompassed only tasks specifically job related was well documented. Others complain that many men who have been in the fire service for many years, now lack the physical ability to pass the test that can exclude many women trying to join the service. Second, some male firefighters have negative attitudes towards female members of the fire service, resulting in female firefighters suffering verbal abuse, harassment, and isolation. Often this in not only from male firefighters, but can include their wives. Another stumbling block towards gender diversification is the lack of working policy and procedures to deal with a diverse work force, such as maternity leave, female grooming standards, and limitations during pregnancy. Finally, the lack of many firehouses to provide proper physical facilities for female firefighters was addressed. Many firehouses are equipped with one bathroom and a communal sleeping area. Many solutions were suggested from extensive remodeling to the use of individual cubicles for each
firefighter. Of the four liabilities listed, most have workable solutions that require dedication on the part of the fire department and the people involved.

**Recruiting Methods**

In order to accomplish the goal of having more women in their fire department, various recruiting efforts have been developed throughout the country. Regardless of the various efforts being conducted, it is evident without special recruitment efforts the fire service will continue to be dominated by white males. “In almost all cases, if there is no assertive intervention in the recruitment process, the great majority of applicants will be white males” (Osby, 1991, p. 52). Several important recruitment methods aimed at improving gender diversity in the fire department were repeated in the literature. They included establishing a recruitment coordinator or team, utilizing female firefighters in recruitment, recruiting by "word of mouth", developing recruitment literature, targeting the right audiences, and using the media, pre-employment orientation or training and management commitment.

First, establishing a person or team to conduct recruitment is thought to be beneficial in creating a more gender diverse workforce. Further, it is thought this recruitment person or team must be organized and have a plan in place to improve gender diversity. For example, Bartley (2002) in her research for the Reedy Creek Fire Department recommended a recruitment coordinator be appointed and the coordinator would be responsible for developing a long-range recruitment program which included organizing and planning. Laabs (1991) research yielded a similar recommendation. She concluded that planning and organization by a recruitment team was vital to the success of a minority female recruitment program. One example of a fire department
demonstrating the use of an organized recruitment team that emphasizes planning is in Fort Worth Texas. Their recruitment team boasts 20 uniformed personnel that focuses on a year-around recruitment plan. The team is organized into four groups, with each responsible for a specific geographic area of the city. “Each recruiter is responsible for attending events and/or activities in churches, schools, community centers, neighborhood associations, etc. within their designed geographic areas” (Burns, 2001, p. 30).

Researchers suggest that the recruitment coordinator and team members be carefully trained and selected. Bybam (1998) emphasizes the importance of training the recruiters in the development of skills that will enhance recruitment efforts and public relations for the organization. He advocates recruitment team members must be enthusiastic, dedicated, motivated, and sold on the recruitment process. On a similar note, Gray (1996) in his research of recruitment methods for female firefighters in Southern California, recommended that recruitment teams be established. Further, he recommends that departments “assemble a high caliber recruitment team that is motivated and shares the goal of hiring and retaining qualified women firefighters” (p. 15).

Second, along with establishing a recruitment team that is organized and has the right qualities, the use of female firefighters as recruitment team members is highly recommended. Booth (1987) emphasizes the benefits realized by departments who have used female firefighters in recruitment practices. “The most successful (by a large margin) was organizing current minority and female firefighters into a task force” (p. 50). The point is made there are so few women employed in the fire service as a career, they are not as visible in the media and other sites where firefighters are shown. Again, this was made blatantly clear after the September 11, 2001 World Trade Center attack.
Brenda Berkman, a lieutenant with the New York City Fire Department stated, “Everywhere on television in newspapers and in magazines, workers at the World Trade Center site are referred to as men – firemen, policemen- with little or no effort to include the women who have been at the site since the first moment of the disaster” (Miller, 2002). With women being underrepresented by the media, the importance of using women in the recruiting process is paramount. “Recruiters should include firefighters who represent target groups and go out into the community where there are high concentrations of potential target group candidates” (Kornberg, 1991, p. 3). Finally, a survey conducted in Wisconsin of the career female firefighters emphasized the importance of using female firefighters on the recruitment team. “When asked which recruitment efforts were the most successful in attracting women, the respondents felt using women in the recruitment programming was paramount” (Marohl, 2002, p. 30). Additionally, Kornberg (1991) suggests the recruitment team will determine which strategies will be used and of these strategies, which will be short-term and on-going strategies. “The key to increasing diversity lies in developing appropriate recruitment strategies. Through a combination of short-term and long-term strategies, efforts should concentrate on attracting potentially qualified target group populations” (p. 3). Finally, Marohl's (2002) research to improve gender diversity in the fire service in Wisconsin not only recommends strongly the use of women in the recruitment effort, but suggests that female firefighters playing an active role as fire service instructors will enhance female recruitment.

Third, and surprisingly, success through word-of-mouth recruitment was identified. Although many departments have gone to elaborate recruitment efforts, many
have noted that one of the most effective means of recruiting is by word-of-mouth. For example, FEMA (1999) suggests the utilization of word-of-mouth recruitment through the current firefighter workforce is key:

Use your current personnel as recruiters, not only with the public but with people they know personally. Family members and friends of current firefighters and police officers, and non-suppression employees of the fire department, are two key sources of potential recruits. These people are already somewhat familiar with the demands and rewards of the job, and often with how the department functions. (p. 12)

A study conducted in Wisconsin yielded results that support this concept. Marohl (2002) found that "most (70%) of the firefighters had learned of the opportunity to become a firefighter by word-of-mouth" (p. 29). However, the literature also noted some “red flags” to emphasize about word-of-mouth recruitment. Booth (1987) points out that there could be a problem to this approach. If the workforce consists of only male employees, this type of recruitment can magnify the imbalance. “Unfortunately, when fire departments have primarily white-male workforces, word-of-mouth recruiting perpetuates the situation” (p. 49). A last area discussed relating to word-of-mouth recruitment was a familial link. Willing (1994) suggests that firefighting was historically a career that was entered by family members. “In many places it’s (firefighting) been a family tradition. Fathers influenced sons to enter the fire service; brothers, cousins, and nephews often made up a significant portion of the department” (p. 11). This method still may have merit today. One example of this type of recruitment was identified in Alaska where a group of teenage girls headed up the Fire Rescue Team:
In 1993, when Aniak’s volunteer fire department broadened its mission to include emergency medical services, the squad’s average call volume shot from 20 a year to more than 250. ‘We had to have help,’ says Chief Brown. So they turned to the offspring of the adult volunteers. At first they were mostly boys, but the balance gradually shifted, and for the past five years the team has been exclusively female. (Yeager, 2002, p. 30)

Fourth, the development of recruitment literature is thought to have an impact on the successfullness of a department’s recruitment efforts. One methodology widely recommended is a printed recruitment brochure. FEMA (1999) advocates that “a recruitment brochure or insert specifically aimed at women candidates can be highly effective” (p. 10). In her research, Bartley (2002). also advocates the development of written recruitment materials that are intended to target women and explains what to include in the materials.

Materials should include an informative brochure that educated young women on what it takes to be a firefighter and provide contact information for local educational institutes that offer training and education in the fire sciences. Contact information for Personnel Services should be provided to answer additional questions and assist interested candidates in establishing a career development plan to become employed. (p. 47)

Two examples of successful recruitment brochures were found in the literature. First, the United States Army developed a brochure that promotes the idea of women in the armed service (United States [US] Army, 2000). The brochure is colorful and pictures two professional women in uniform on the cover. It concisely describes why the Army is an
attractive option for a career. It also addresses the fact that women are joining the Army "judging from the fact that over 15,000 women joined (the Army) last year" (US Army, 2000). Similarly, an organization known as Women in the Fire Service have created a brochure for young women promoting firefighting as a career. The brochure explains the career of firefighting with an emphasis on the other aspects of the fire service beyond firefighting (Marohl, 2002). Several other medians for establishing written recruitment literature were also identified. One method identified the benefit of using sections of the newspaper usually read by women or the use of advertising in publications that had a predominant female audience (Boomgaarden, 1995). Another department created a career outline for classroom presentations at schools and pre-employment registrations cards to be filled out after the classes. The registration cards are postcard sized and ask for general registration information. Next, they take the information gathered from these cards and enter it into a database with a mail-merging system allowing them to update recruits on program developments and employment opportunities (Bender, 1989). Fyock (1991) offered some creative methods of recruitment, through written literature and reaffirmed strategies recommended by others. For example, she recommended the development of talent scout cards. These cards were a card larger than a business card given to a promising candidate. It included information pertinent to the position and the organization. On a similar note, it was suggested that posters be created and want ads be placed in several sections within the newspaper to attract not only individuals who are seeing employment, but also those who are not necessarily seeking employment (Fyock, 1991).
Fifth, it was emphasized that target audiences should be sought after. Most are in agreement that areas should be sought after which attract women who enjoy physical activity. Neves (2001) explains:

High school and college career job fairs, athletic and physical education departments of colleges, the military, along with health clubs and gyms should all receive the attention necessary to recruit women. I believe if the values and goals of the individual you are attempting to attract parallels the organization it will be both easier to attract, but more important, easier to retain this individual. Women that value physical activity and possess the desire to challenge themselves in the face of physical and mental duress will find a career in firefighting very rewarding and satisfying. (p. 30)

A study done by Osby, referred to this as selective recruitment. His research reflected a similar conclusion:

The study indicated selective recruitment to be a more acceptable approach. Selective recruitment entails focusing recruitment efforts on target groups such as ethnic minorities and females. This form of intervention usually increases the number of target applicants. If the focus is on selectively recruiting those of the target group who are most likely to be competitive, there is noticeable improvement in placing such applicants on the eligibility list. (1991, p. 52)

Boomgaard (1995) identified the benefits of focusing recruitment efforts at target groups in very specific ways. The concept behind his approach was to identify areas where qualified applicants might be located and then targeting those areas with the recruitment efforts. Similar to other researchers, he suggested targeting areas such as
health clubs, college and high school campuses, and women’s organizations. Numerous recruitment strategies were discussed in Martinette’s (2000) study which related to targeting audiences including sending out information regarding possible employment to organizations: colleges, universities, and other sources that may have a high degree of women, distribute brochures to minority civic organizations, and churches. Finally, it was reported that the second most effective category of recruitment strategies, involved activities that reached directly into the community. Examples of such efforts included sending recruiters to job fairs, minority shopping areas and community centers, visiting minority and female organizations and visiting or sending job announcements to health clubs and fitness organizations that women frequent (Booth, 1989, p. 52).

Sixth, it was recommended in the literature that the use of the media for recruitment should not be overlooked.

Some fire departments have gotten the media to cover their recruitment drives by inviting a woman reporter to go through the physical test, or to spend a day in the station. However, this can be a gamble: if the reporter can’t complete any of the test events, the job will seem "off-limits" to women. Providing her with some preliminary training on the events, or suggesting that the station or paper send a reporter who is physically fit and active, may help. Even better, have a woman firefighter go through the events (successfully) at the same time the reporter does, especially if cameras are present. (FEMA, 1999, p. 12)

In Charlotte, North Carolina, an aggressive recruitment drive targeting females included the use of the media. For example, the media use included public service announcements and even the fire chief being interviewed on a local radio talk show. Although the talk
show and a subsequent newspaper article were not without controversy, the end result was a significant improvement in female recruitment. In the end, “the publicity of the radio show and the Charlotte Observer story significantly boosted the interest of women in applying for the fire service. In the past, ‘less that one percent of our applicants were female.’ That year, probably 11 to 12 percent of our applicants were female” (Varley, 1991, p. 8).

Seventh, the benefit of a department conducting pre-employment training for female candidates was recognized. Boomgaarden (1995) in his research identified numerous departments that offer pre-employment academies designed to assist interested and targeted individuals in successfully competing for jobs. These special classes delivered instruction and training about components of both the written and physical test. Olsen (1996) agrees and suggests that pre-employment training practices should be kept operating all year long. He advocates that periodic open houses, practice test sessions and orientation sessions can draw candidates’ interest well ahead of test dates, allowing more time for them to develop their strengths and skills. Across the country departments are finding success in applying pre-employment training strategies. One success story where this approach was utilized was in Jacksonville, Florida. The Florida Community College at Jacksonville utilized this approach by conducting a program whereby female recruits could develop the physical conditioning needed to help them gain the physical capability necessary to pass the state minimum standards test for firefighters. They improved the pass rate for female applicants from 6% (5 out of 84) to 49% (19 out of 390) after the specially designed course. This dramatic improvement in qualified female applicants demonstrates the effectiveness of special programs geared towards the hiring
process (Dozier, 2000). Research conducted in Fortworth, Texas has yielded similar results. It was recommended that their Firefighter Cadet Program be expanded. The goal of expanding the program was to allow individuals who were interested in the fire service to participate in fire service related activities in order to make them worthy candidates for employment. The cadets are recruited from area high schools and colleges. “The ultimate goal is for the cadets to take the civil service firefighter examination and continue as a civil service employee for the city” (Dozier, 2000, p. 32). In his research in Southern California, Gray (1996) recommended, “orientation sessions where females are encouraged to find out more about the fire service must be a high priority” (p. 15).

Finally, a survey conducted in Wisconsin revealed that 78% of the career female firefighters had participated in some type of a pre-employment orientation training for the department they are now working for in the recruitment process (Marohl, 2002).

Eighth and finally, the need for management’s commitment in recruiting a more gender diverse department was well established. It is emphasized that the leadership must come from the top. Osby (1991) recommends the fire chief be an active participant in the effort to recruit female candidates. He places the importance of the Chief’s involvement in the recruiting process at the top of his list of successful selective recruitment activities. “The chief also must actively participate in the recruitment and testing/evaluation process. High visibility and active participation by the chief are common elements of successful programs. The most successful programs featured the chief not only as supportive, but more often as an advocate” (p. 51). However, although Dozier (2000) agrees with the importance of having the support of management, he downplayed the need for the fire chief to actually be a direct participant in the
recruitment process. In his survey of the female workforce of Abilene, Texas, appearances and participation in recruitment efforts personally by the fire chief were deemed the most ineffective (Dozier, 2000, p. 28). FEMA (1999) also emphasizes having the support of management. “Fire department leadership must firmly support the recruitment and integration of women into the fire department. All aspects of the recruiting effort must reflect management’s sincere commitment to not only bring women firefighters onto the department but to support a diverse fire service workforce” (p. 7). FEMA (1999) goes on to outline how management can support recruitment efforts in four crucial ways:

1. Obtain the funding necessary funding to make the recruitment program a success.

2. Make other departmental resources available to maximize the allocated money.

3. Work with other city departments as needed to obtain adequate lead-time and to settle any other jurisdictional or political problems.

4. Demonstrate leadership by representing the program positively to elected officials in order to obtain their support, and by making public statements, particularly in the media, in support of the recruitment effort to hire women.

Finally, an area discussed in the literature that can have a significant impact on gender diversity is in the provision of childcare, especially if management shows a strong commitment towards childcare. Neves (2001) notes:
Firefighters are in a unique situation when it comes to childcare. Their children usually need non-parental care for more than 24 hours at a time. In addition, many firefighters are subject to emergency callback during major incidents, and may need someone to take care of their children on a moment’s notice at any hour of the day or night. (p. 14)

According to Dr. Wendy Griffin, Associate Professor of Women Studies at California State University Long Beach, the single most important thing an employer can do to increase the number of women is to provide on site quality day care (Mathis, 1999). Another author points out that she has spoken with many women who have an interest in becoming firefighters, but have concerns as to how to get adequate child care for their children during night time hours (Floren, 2000). It was discussed that some progressive managers are starting to consider childcare provision to improve the potential for a more gender diverse workforce. FEMA (1999) discusses many cities and private employers are beginning to take an interest in the childcare needs of their employees. Not only is it thought problems with childcare are a significant reason why women may not enter the fire service, but they recognize that childcare problems cause absenteeism, poor productivity and morale, and may lead to the loss of good employees. It is suggested creative solutions are needed and have begun to emerge:

One fire chief has suggested that his city develop old fire stations into around-the-clock childcare centers specifically for the benefit of firefighters’ children. ‘We have found that qualified people do not apply for the job because they’re concerned about what they’d do with their kids.’ ‘I don’t think it benefits the department if qualified people get away because of that.’ In the U.K., the London
Fire Brigade subsidizes spots in child care centers for its employees’ children. The Suisun city, California, Fire Department has increased the off-duty response of its full-time personnel to a major incident by outfitting and staffing one of its rehab vehicles to handle child care. Firefighters responding to the call can drop off their children at the fire station or at staging, to be cared for by members of the rehab team for the duration of the incident. Other fire departments provided child care during off-duty training sessions, to encourage greater participation. Positive examples are also being set by some hospitals and airlines, which have many employees who need child care at unusual hours. (FEMA, 1999, p. 67)

Summary:

Special recruitment methods are essential if the fire service wants to change from a male dominated field. Many fire departments have a team responsible for overseeing the hiring process. It is suggested that similar team be assembled to deal specifically with the recruitment of women. In addition, using existing female firefighters in recruitment can stop the preconceived impression that women cannot be firefighters. As fire departments become more diverse, positive interactions in the community will result; neighbor to neighbor, family member to family member, friend to friend. This "grass roots" method of conveying and open and diverse workforce can encourage women to consider the fire department as a possible employment option. In order to attract women with the physical and personal characteristics deemed necessary for the fire service, areas known to appeal to these types of women should be targeted, such as gyms, college campuses, etc. It is also suggested that the use of local television and newspaper can assist in the portrayal of successful female firefighters to possible female employment
candidates. Providing pre-employment training, especially in the physical agility
demands, allows for higher success rates of female candidates. Finally, having the
management's complete commitment to a gender diverse department can assist in the
recruitment of female firefighters, specifically in obtaining funding to make the program
a success. The most specific recruitment method found in the research was the provision
of childcare. Due to the unusual working hours of a typical firefighter, conventional
childcare is not always an option. When creative and affordable childcare options are
made available, the number of women will increase. In order to increase the number of
female firefighters, atypical recruitment method must be utilized.

**Men in Nursing**

The literature review revealed a parallel profession for analysis in the area of
gender diversity - the nursing field. The nursing field has experienced many of the same
issues as the fire service in creating a gender diverse workforce and instituted some
interesting solutions. First, like the fire service, there is a perceived need or pressure on
the leaders in the nursing profession to create a more gender diverse workforce. Brady
and Sherrod (2003) teach that “nursing should reflect the racial, ethnic, and gender
characteristics of the population it serves” (p. 159). Second, similar to the fire service the
nursing field faces obstacles to becoming more gender diverse. For example, one
commonality is in the public’s perception of nursing gender and the terminology utilized
to address the profession:

All kinds of images emerge when conflicting mental pictures roll out and create
perceptual and experiential dissonance between what should be and what is.

Interestingly enough, when the man is the nurse, many frames of reference
emerge that would not be applied in reference to a woman who is a nurse.

Comments related to competence. "What’s wrong, couldn’t you get into medical school"? Intelligence- "You’re a bright guy, why’d you become a nurse"? Sexual identity- "Are you gay or something"? And, a host of others indicate the prevalent disparity in perception between being a man and a nurse. (Porter-O’Grady, 1998, p. 24)

On a similar note, leaders in the nursing profession are advocating a halt to the use of the term “male nurse.” They have suggested that the terms “male nurse” and “male nursing student” need to be eliminated, for they imply that “nurse” is inherently “female” (Porter-O’Grady, 1998). Villeneuve (1994) explains, “Significant barriers to men exist in nursing education and practice, and the language and history of nursing have sexualized nursing practice itself by labeling it as women’s work” (p. 217). Some authors feel this stereotype can be also manifested by the patients the male nurse treats or by a negative attitude by his female co-workers. Tumminia and Peterson (1994) emphasize: “The male students have to interact with female nurses and patients who may wonder about their masculinity” (p. 31). Sowell and Misener (1997) suggest, “male nursing students and male nurses frequently must justify nursing as their career choice and cope with the assumptions that they are either homosexual or not intelligent enough to be physicians (p. 160). However, more recent studies have shown that the female co-workers and patients who have had experience working with and being treated by male nurses have had a change of heart. For example, in a study conducted in Massachusetts, 98.5% felt that men not only belonged in nursing, but even in obstetrical nursing. The study concluded that the female nurses felt that men do belong and that “professional nursing competence
is more important than gender” (McRae, 2003, p. 167). Similarly, in the same study McRae (2003) found that 68% of pregnant females who were treated by male nurses felt that men should be in nursing even in the obstetrical setting.

Third, an area that stood out in the nursing field in gender diversity was mindset. The leaders in nursing appear to have an aggressive mindset towards improving gender diversity. For example, nurse managers have developed an approach or model called “Gendered Strategic Management” (Marsh & Macalpine, 1998, p. 221). In this model, the managers are encouraged to change there thinking towards gender diversity. For example, “thinking creatively” and “thinking out-of-the box” are two components in the model to help improve gender diversity (Marsh & Macalpine, 1998). Evans (1997) emphasizes the need for this aggressive mindset by pointing out “changes will only come in the profession when hegemonic notions of masculinity and femininity are challenged and transformed” (p. 8). An example of this aggressive mindset was noted in the literature for recommended recruitment practices of the nursing to improve gender diversity. Authors are even advocating recruiting men from other well-respected careers to become nurses. For example:

Another source of recruitment into nursing is male school teachers and social workers who are seeking a career change which will provided the opportunity for unlimited employment and salary growth. They are looking for a career in which they can transfer their basic teaching or counseling skills to the health care of clients. (Tumminia & Peterson, 1994, p. 31)

In New York City, leaders in nursing are even going as far as recruiting active and retired public safety officers to improve gender diversity.
Hunter College’s Bellevue School of Nursing in New York City has a successful evening program to educate retiring policemen, firefighters, and correctional officers for second careers as registered nurses. Due to the hazards of their jobs most of these men retire at an early age, following 20 years of service; yet they are still capable of contributing to the workforce in another profession. They don’t have to prove their masculinity since they have already serviced in work roles that are acceptable to the general public as masculine occupations.

(Tumminia & Peterson, 1994, p. 31)

And, why stop there? Tumminia and Peterson (1994) also suggest that other health care professions are good recruitment sources to improve the gender diversity in nursing.

Men who are already employed in other allied health careers such as hospital orderlies, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, phlebotomists, respiratory technicians, psychiatric technicians, and physician assistants are another source of recruitment for nursing. At some point these men come to the realization that their present occupations limit their potential for growth, and seek a nursing career, which offers more advancement. Nursing opens avenues for teaching, administration, and research. (p. 31)

Fourth, it was noted authors in the nursing industry were promoting creative ways to improve their recruiting efforts towards gender diversity. Newell-Withrow and Slusher (2001) suggest to improve gender diversity, nursing should look at alternative methods to qualify students for entrance into nursing programs. They suggest although academic excellence should be recognized as important, nursing schools should
alternatively recognize some the potential men can bring to the nursing workforce and their benefits. In northern Virginia, one college developed a committee to help improve the retention and recruitment of male nursing students. The committee consists of male nursing students, faculty members, and members of the college’s counseling department. The committee meets regularly to assist the needs of male nurses in the nursing program and is active in recruitment efforts. “This involves recruitment visits to neighboring high schools, presenting panel discussions at state student nurses conventions or district registered nurses meetings. The media is supplied with press releases about the ongoing activities of the male students in order to spread the word further” (Tumminia & Peterson, 1994, p. 32). Several authors agree that using men who were currently nurses in the recruitment process heightened the success in creating gender diversity. Okraine (1994) in a study of the perceptions of nursing education held by male nursing students found men were more likely to be influenced to enter nursing by male friends or relatives who were nurses. Likewise, Brady and Sherrod (2003) agree that using male nurses or nursing students to service as role models is a benefit in the recruitment and retention of men in nursing. One of the areas nursing leaders are targeting to promote gender diversity is the school career counselor. It was found the career counselors are not being fully utilized to improve gender diversity. Research conducted by Whitcock and Leonard (2003) pointed out, “Notably, schools’ career services were presented as doing little or nothing to portray nursing as a possible career for young men” (p. 248). They go on to emphasize the need to educate and take advantage of this valuable resource. One example of utilizing the school counselors as a valuable resource was noted in Wisconsin:
At the University of Wisconsin, counselors from junior and senior high schools are invited to meet with nursing faculty to discuss the need for more men and other minority groups in nursing. Dr. Valencia Prock, Dean of Nursing, finds it surprising that counselors have misconceptions about entrance into nursing, and the fact that male students become excellent nurses in all areas of nursing.

(Tumminia & Peterson, 1994, p. 31)

Fifth and interestingly, some authors feel the recruitment of more men into the nursing field will not only help create gender diverse workforce but be one of the main solutions to the nursing shortage. Newell-Withrow and Slusher (2001) research conducted in Eastern Kentucky, suggested that the recruitment and retention of male nurses is an important factor to reckon with in solving the nation’s nursing shortage dilemma. “It will only be with improvements in recruitment and education that nursing will incorporate the much needed diverse nurses into our profession to help meet the nursing shortage and to facilitate improvements in the changing image of nursing” (p. 271).

Sixth and finally, the literature was not without opponents to more gender diversity in nursing. One author believes the addition of more men in nursing will just add insult to injury. “The successful entry of a male minority into nursing, rather than diluting gender as a major defining factor in occupational differentiation, has exacerbated it by adding male managers to the nurse’s burden of male doctors” (Porter, 1992, p. 512). Poliafico (1998) argues that nursing is not a desirable profession for men. She believes that men do not do well with taking orders from physicians and have limited career opportunities with relatively poor pay.
Summary:

Men in nursing is the reverse dilemma of the fire service, yet with parallel solutions. Nursing has always been a female dominated field, with recent strides into gender diversification. The stereotypical portrait of a nurse is of a woman in a starched dress and hat. Compare that to a nurse in colorful scrubs, which just happens to be a man. Female nurses were questioned as to their male counterparts and a large majority agreed that men belonged in nursing and could provide competent, professional nursing care. Nursing management has been dedicated to providing a gender diverse workforce which is one reason gender diversification in nursing is a success. Creative recruitment in the nursing field includes recruitment of public safety officers and allied health providers, college support groups for male nurses, and community education of employment opportunities in nursing for men. Yet, the literature revealed opponents to gender diversification in nursing, stating it exacerbated the male domination of management where female first opportunities in management once existed. The diversification of the nursing field can be a model for the inclusion of women into the fire service.

PROCEDURES

This research project employed historical research supported by descriptive research in an attempt to evaluate the need for the Manteca City Fire Department to become more gender diverse. The procedures employed included a review of the published literature, the culmination of three surveys, and the conduction of two expert interviews.

Literature Review
A literature review was performed in an attempt to identify existing research about gender diversity. The literature review was initiated at the Learning Resource Center located at the United States Fire Administration. The literature review involved a search of fire service and business journals, magazines, and textbooks. Next, an attempt was made to look outside of the fire service and review research about gender diversity conducted for another industry - the nursing field. Subsequently, research was conducted at a medical library at Doctors Medical Center in Modesto, California. An attempt was made to parallel information or any research conducted.

**Surveys**

Three different surveys were utilized for this research project. They included a survey of the female workforce, a survey of like-size fire departments, and a survey of the Manteca City Firefighters.

First, a survey was conducted of the current female workforce in an attempt to determine their perceptions about the career of firefighter and effective recruiting methods. A convenience sample of one hundred was utilized. Fifty surveys were conducted in person in front of a local shopping center. The survey was conducted in front of the Target Store located in Manteca, California. The surveys were conducted during the morning hours on three different Saturdays in October and November of 2003. Likewise, 50 surveys were conducted in front of a local health club. These surveys were conducted during the week in the late afternoons or early evenings. Likewise, the surveys were conducted in October and November of 2003. Initially, all surveys were planned to be conducted in front of the local shopping center. However, while piloting the survey, feedback was given that many women may be intimidated by their perceived
physical requirements for the career of firefighter. As a result, it was feared there would not be enough feedback from those who would actually consider a career as a firefighter. Consequently, it was decided to conduct half of the surveys in front of a local health club. The health club utilized was In Shape City located in Manteca, California. It was thought that the clientele of the health club would be less intimidated by the physical nature of the career of firefighter and a greater amount of effective recruitment techniques could be gleaned. For the female workforce surveys only those who were currently employed or seeking employment between the ages of 18 and 45 were surveyed. It was felt that this criteria would reflect the current female workforce within the community.

Initially, the female respondents were asked to rate several components of the career of firefighter as either an "incentive", "deterrent", or "neutral" as far as being a likely career choice. The components included some of the working conditions such as 24-hour shifts, hazards of the job, physical requirements, facilities, salary and benefits, and advancement opportunities. Other influences were evaluated including working with mostly male co-workers, public perception, and childcare matters. Second, the survey asked if they would ever consider a career as a firefighter. If yes, they were asked what the greatest appeal was. If no, they were asked what would have to change about the fire service for it to appeal to them as a possible career choice. Only those who would consider a career in the fire service continued the survey from this point. Third, the survey asked respondents to rate several activities that were being utilized in various fire departments in an attempt to recruit women into the fire service. They were asked about their opinion as to which two were the most effective and which two were the least effective. The recruitment practices included advertising in the newspaper, developing
recruitment literature, "word of mouth" recruitment, utilizing female firefighters in recruitment, targeting specific areas, and pre-employment orientation or training. Finally, they were asked if they had any other suggestions for effective recruitment practices. Highlights of the survey are referenced in the Results and Discussion sections of this report. The survey can be found in Appendix A1. The entire results of the survey are included in Appendix B1.

Next, a survey of fire departments throughout California was conducted. A total of 126 fire departments were identified that were comparable in size and utilized paid personnel. The inclusion of like-size departments in the survey was due to the assumption that they would have a similar need for gender diversity. The like-size departments were identified by the number of personnel within their department. Departments with 50 to 100 personnel were included in the survey process. See Appendix D for a complete list of the like size-fire departments surveyed. A cover letter was included with the survey attempting to motivate the Fire Chiefs to complete and return the survey. Similarly, a self-addressed stamped envelope was provided along with the option to fax back the completed surveys. Of the 126 fire departments sent surveys, 104 surveys were returned and incorporated into the research project. Only 97 surveys were needed to assure a 95% confidence level (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The purpose of the survey was to find out how the Manteca City Fire Department compared to like-size fire departments in gender diversity matters. First, the survey asked if they had any female firefighters and what recruitment practices they were utilizing. Second, those who had female firefighters were asked what benefits they had realized and/or obstacles they had encountered by having female firefighters. Finally, the departments were asked if
they had any court mandates to hire women or to give women any preference in the hiring process. Highlights of the survey are referenced in the Results and Discussion sections of this report. The survey instrument can be found in Appendix A2. The entire results of the survey are included in Appendix B2.

Finally, a survey was conducted of the Manteca City Firefighters in an attempt to determine their opinion and attitude about having a gender diverse fire department. The surveys were conducted at the beginning of Emergency Medical Technician Continuing Education Classes conducted in November of 2003. All 50 firefighters were surveyed over a three-day period. The survey asked about their overall opinion or attitude about working with female firefighters. They were asked if they were "receptive", "non-receptive", or "neutral". Finally, respondents were asked their rank within the fire department. This was done in an attempt to differentiate and evaluate management’s commitment to gender diversity. Highlights of the survey are referenced in the Results and Discussion sections of this report. The survey can be found in Appendix A3. The entire results of the survey are included in Appendix B3.

Interviews

Initially, only one interview was planned for this research project to determine what the current recruitment practices were by the City of Manteca Personnel Department for the Manteca City Fire Department. As information unfolded while conducting the literature review, ample information was found about the obstacles or liabilities of gender diversity in the fire service, but there was a lack of information found on the benefits that a female firefighter might bring to one’s department. Consequently, a second interview was planned with a female firefighter to explore the subject matter.
First, Mae Hamm, Director of Personnel for the City of Manteca was interviewed. The interview was conducted on October 26, 2003. Mrs. Hamm was interviewed because she conducts and has organizational responsibility for the recruitment of firefighters for the Manteca City Fire Department. She was asked to explain the recruitment practice conducted for entry-level firefighters. Highlights of the interview are referenced in the Results and Discussion sections of this report. The entire interview can be found in Appendix C1.

Second, Captain Serena Johnson of the Ripon, California Fire Department was interviewed. The interview was conducted on September 30, 2003. She was chosen for the interview out of convenience, as she was the only known local female firefighter. Captain Johnson was asked what benefits she perceived that she was able to give to her fire department based on the fact that she was female. Similarly, she was asked to share any obstacles that she has encountered by being a female firefighter. Highlights of the interview are referenced in the Results and Discussion sections of this report. The entire interview can be found in Appendix C2.

**Assumptions and Limitations**

It is assumed that the authors cited in the literature review conducted unbiased and objective research. It is assumed that all respondents from the female workforce, the California Fire Departments, and the Manteca City Firefighters surveys answered all questions honestly. Survey results were limited by a number of factors. First, an identified survey limitation was that some surveys contained sporadic unanswered questions. In such cases, comparison with other responses contained in the same survey allowed for determination of the reason for the exclusion. However, when it was not
possible to determine intent by cross-matching blank question responses with other survey responses, assumptions were made that the information was not available, did not apply, or the respondent was unaware of the correct response. A second limitation noted was that the surveys did not include a question about the use of college and high school counselors during recruitment practices. Information was discovered late in the literature review emphasizing the need for exploration into this area. However, it was discovered after the surveys were already conducted. Similarly, in an effort to condense or streamline the female workforce survey, the example of recruitment practices for them to rate was narrowed down to six practices. Consequently, the use of the media was not included in the female workforce survey, with the exception of advertising in the newspaper. This was considered a limitation because the survey of the California Fire Departments included the use of the media as a component of the survey. Third, giving the California Fire Departments the option to fax back their responses may have given the respondents doubt to anonymity because the faxes all had a printed reference to where they originated. Similarly, asking the respondents of the Manteca City Firefighters survey to identify their rank may have caused the five chief officers to feel uncomfortable with the anonymity of the survey. Fifth and finally, with the publicity of the recent wildland fires in California, it is felt that the public's perception of firefighters is higher than usual. Consequently, this may have increased the positive responses about the career of firefighter from the female workforce.

**Definition and Clarification of Terms**

**Affirmative Action.** Proactive actions taken to provide equal opportunity, as in admission of employment, development, and promotions, for under-represented groups.
Fire Awareness in the Schools (FAITS). A program provided by the Manteca City Fire Department where firefighters teach fire safety classes at the local elementary schools. Classes are taught monthly to second, fourth, and sixth grades. Classes include such topics as the emergency telephone number (911), stop, drop, and roll, and exit drills in the home (EDITH).

Gender Diversity. Having both males and females in the workplace.

Like-size Fire Departments. Fire departments with a similar number of personnel.

Recruitment. To enroll or interest someone as a worker or member.


Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). The sudden death of an otherwise healthy infant under one year of age that remains unexplained after a complete medical history, death scene investigation, and thorough autopsy.

RESULTS

9. How does the gender makeup of the Manteca City Fire Department compare to other like-size fire departments throughout California?

Eighty-two of the 104 fire departments (79%) surveyed in California revealed that they had female firefighters working within their fire department (Appendix B2). Whereas, within the Manteca City Fire Department all of the firefighters are of the male gender (Manteca City Fire Department [MFD], 2002). There are currently no female fire firefighters within the fire department and there never have been (MFD, 2002). Interestingly, the mean number of female firefighters reported from the survey of 104 like size fire departments in California was 2.5 (Appendix B2). Even more significantly,
Figure 2 reveals the most diverse fire departments reported as high as 15 female firefighters within its ranks.

**Conclusion:**

Most of the like size fire departments within California have female firefighters as part of their fire department team. The most gender diverse fire departments have as many as 15 female firefighters. The Manteca Fire Department is in the minority with its absence of gender diversity.

10. What is the perception of the female workforce about the career of firefighter within the City of Manteca?

Several incentives were identified by the female workforce that would urge them to pursue a career as a firefighter. They included pay, retirement, advancement opportunities, physical nature of the work, 24-hour shifts, and public perception of a female firefighter. The female workforce reported only one main deterrent keeping them from pursuing a career as a firefighter, childcare or family considerations. Although three areas were considered neutral by the female workforce, including working with mostly male coworkers, hazards of the job, and facilities, only their perceived incentives and deterrents will be discussed. See Appendices A and B for a complete inventory of all survey questions as well as survey results. An interesting note was that the female workforce was neutral about facilities with open dorms and shared restrooms. Similarly, it was surprising that they did not perceive working with all male coworkers as a deterrent.

**Pay and Retirement**
Overwhelmingly, the female workforce perceived the pay and retirement for the career as a firefighter as an incentive for them considering firefighting as their occupation. For example, 90 of the 100 (90%) females surveyed considered pay as a major incentive (Appendix B1). Even more overwhelming was their perception of the retirement benefit of a firefighter as an incentive. Ninety-four of the 100 (94%) indicated a firefighters retirement as a major incentive for considering a career in the fire service. Several comments were made by the female workforce indicating they had no idea of the salary and retirement benefit for a career as a firefighter.

**Advancement Opportunities**

Survey results indicate the female workforce perceives the opportunity for advancement within the fire service as an overwhelming incentive in considering a career as a firefighter. Advancement opportunities were viewed as the greatest incentive for considering firefighting as their vocation. Case in point, 99 of the 100 (99%) surveyed felt advancement opportunities were a major incentive (Appendix B1). An interesting note was the few respondents who cited pay as a deterrent responded the opportunity to advance would be an incentive. For example, one respondent shared that although she would have to take a substantial pay cut to become a firefighter, her current job hadn't any opportunity for advancement.

**Physical Nature of Work**

An unexpected finding was the female workforce viewed the physical or manipulative nature of the work of firefighter, including maintaining physical strength and cardiovascular endurance as an incentive. For example, 77 of the 100 (77%) women in the female workforce surveyed perceived the physical nature of the work as an
incentive (Appendix B1). Several comments were made that even though they currently were unsure of their ability to physically perform the duties of a firefighter, they desired the ability to perform as a firefighter and a career that fostered a more physical lifestyle.

**24-hour Shifts**

Overall, the majority of the female workforce viewed the 24-hour shift (10 shifts a month) as an incentive. Survey results showed of the 100 (57%) women in the female workforce surveyed felt the 24-hour shift was an incentive to becoming a firefighter (Appendix B1). Working only ten shifts a month was the deciding factor towards the 24-hour shift schedule being an incentive. Several comments were made about the 24-hour shift question in the survey. This indicated respondents felt the time spent with their family, by being off 20 days a month as a result of the 24 hour shift would outweigh the negative of being gone for 24 hours at a time. It should be noted many of the respondents who indicated the 24-hour shift/10 days a month as an incentive also cited childcare or family matters as a major deterrent to a career as a firefighter related to the 24-hour shift.

**Public Perception**

The majority of the female workforce viewed the public's perception as an advantage for them pursuing a career as a firefighter. Survey results revealed that 51 out of the 100 (51%) women surveyed in the female workforce felt public perception was an incentive. Whereas, only four respondents viewed the public's perception as a deterrent (Figure B1). On a similar note, several of the respondents who reported they would consider the fire service as a possible career cited public respect as the greatest appeal (Appendix B1).

**Childcare/Family Matters**
The largest deterrent reported by the female workforce which would keep them from considering a career as a firefighter was childcare or family matters. For instance, 58 of the 100 (58%) women surveyed considered childcare or family matters as a major deterrent (Appendix B1). Further, when asked what would have to change about the fire service for it to appeal to them as a possible career choice, the most frequent response was relating to the provision of childcare during the 24-hour shift (Appendix B1).

**Conclusion:**

First, survey results disclosed pay and retirement benefits as a major incentive for females pursuing a career as a firefighter. However, the general population needs to be informed before it can be an incentive. Comments from respondents indicated the female workforce did not know the salary and retirement benefit for a firefighter. Publicizing the pay and retirement benefits to target the female workforce may increase the number of women pursuing firefighting as their occupation.

Second, survey results indicate the female workforce perceives the opportunity for advancement within the fire service as an overwhelming incentive in considering a career as a firefighter. Emphasizing the opportunity for advancement within the fire service to the female workforce should increase the number of women who pursue firefighting as their occupation.

Third, survey results identified the female workforce views the physical nature of the job of firefighter as an incentive. Comments made indicate they are unsure about their ability to perform as a firefighter but desire the opportunity to be employed in a physically challenging career such as firefighting. A physical fitness for firefighters course targeted for the female workforce may be a way to address this concern.
Fourth, survey results showed the female workforce perceives the 24-hour shift as an overall incentive towards considering a career in the fire service. This perceived incentive seems to be the result of only working ten 24-hour shifts a month rather than being gone 24 hours at a time. The 24-hour shift has a direct relationship to childcare or family matters in being a deterrent to a career as a firefighter.

Fifth, survey results from the female workforce indicate by a small majority, women perceive public perception as an incentive for them to pursue a career as a firefighter. An unexpected finding was only a few women surveyed viewed public perception as a deterrent to pursuing firefighting as their vocation.

Sixth and finally, survey results revealed childcare as a major deterrent among the female workforce in considering a career as a firefighter. It was found that the provision of childcare would make a positive impact on the female workforce considering firefighting as their vocation.

3. What is the opinion of the female workforce, who would consider a career as a firefighter, as to what would be effective recruitment practices?

They included targeting specific areas, utilizing female firefighters in recruitment practices, and conducting pre-employment orientation or training. Likewise, three recruitment practices were identified as the least effective methods. They included advertising in the newspaper, developing recruitment literature, and word of mouth recruitment. See Appendices A and B for a complete inventory of all survey questions as well as survey results. An unexpected finding was that the female workforce believed that the effectiveness of advertising for a career as a firefighter in the newspaper was poor at best.
**Targeting Specific areas**

The female workforce of the City of Manteca who would consider a career as a firefighter rated targeting specific areas where female firefighter candidates would most likely frequent as the most effective recruitment method. For example, 38 out of 59 (64%) rated targeting specific areas as one of the two most effective recruitment methods (Appendix B1). Many comments were made by respondents recommending areas that would foster physical ability and fitness, such as gyms, health clubs, and athletic organizations.

**Utilizing Female Firefighters**

The second most effective recruitment practice rated by the female workforce was in utilizing current female firefighters in the recruitment practice. For instance, 32 of the 59 (54%) women surveyed rated utilizing females as one of the two most effective recruitment practices (Appendix B1). Interestingly many respondents reported that they had never personally seen a female firefighter. Suggestions were made that being exposed to a female firefighter during the recruitment process would be motivating. It was suggested female firefighter candidates would have more confidence, see that it was obtainable, and that they would not be the only one.

**Pre-employment Orientation or Training**

The third most effective method identified by the female workforce was in conducting pre-employment orientation or training such as a physical fitness for firefighters class, open houses, ride-alongs and practice physical agility exams. Twenty-eight, of the 59 (47%) respondents felt that pre-employment orientation or training was one of the two most effective recruitment practices (Appendix B1). Interestingly, many
of the female workforce respondents identified the survey itself as pre-employment orientation or training. For example, respondents were asked if they had any other suggestions for effective recruitment practices, and the most frequent response was more activity like this survey. Further, respondents shared that the survey sparked their interest in a career as a firefighter and wanted to know how to get started.

**Advertising in the Newspaper**

Overwhelmingly, the female workforce identified advertising in the newspaper as the least effective method to recruit them. Forty-five of the 59 (76%) reported that advertising in the newspaper was one of the two least effective recruitment practices (Appendix B1). Many respondents shared that they did not read the newspaper. And certainly if there was simply an advertisement in the classified section of the newspaper, most women would never even see the advertisement.

**Developing Recruitment Literature**

The female workforce rated developing recruitment literature as a practice which was one of the least effective. Thirty-four of the 59 (58%) rated developing recruitment literature as one of the two least effective recruitment methods (Appendix B1). Respondents suggested recruitment methods which had some type of physical interactions were more effective. Consequently, they felt recruitment literature would be lacking.

**Word-of-Mouth**

Thirty-one of the 59 (53%) rated recruitment by word-of-mouth as one of the two least effective methods (Appendix B1). The concern seemed to be that it was only an effective recruitment for a few. For example, although all of the respondents would
consider a career as a firefighter, none of them had ever heard of an opportunity by word-of-mouth recruitment. Comments were made that word of mouth would only reach the friends or family of the current firefighters.

**Conclusion:**

Survey results revealed three main recruitment practices as most effective.

![Figure 1](image_url)

**Figure 1** illustrates targeting specific areas, conducting pre-employment orientation or training, and utilizing female firefighters in recruitment practices were rated as the most effective recruitment practices by the female workforce.

First, it was found targeting specific areas where women frequent which would foster physical ability and fitness, such as gyms, health clubs, and athletic organizations would be most effective. Second, it was discovered utilizing current female firefighters in the recruitment practice was effective. By seeing current career female firefighters,
potential female candidates would realize the goal was achievable and they would not be
the only female firefighter. Third, conducting pre-employment orientation or training
related to the career of firefighter was an effective recruitment practice. It was found that
the survey of the female workforce to obtain these results was considered by them to be
an example of pre-employment orientation or training. Further, they considered the
survey as a very effective recruitment practice.

Survey results exposed three main recruitment practices as least effective.

Figure 2
Least Effective Recruitment Methods rated
by Female Workforce interested in Firefighting N=100 S=100

Figure 2 illustrates advertising in the newspaper, developing recruitment literature, and
word-of-mouth recruitment were rated as the least effective recruitment practices by the
female workforce. First, advertisement in the newspaper for the position of firefighter
was the least effective method of recruitment. Potential female candidates either did not
read the newspaper altogether, or would not notice advertisements in the classified
section. Second, it was discovered developing recruitment literature was considered one of the two least effective methods of recruitment. It lacked interaction necessary to reach potential female candidates. Third, word-of-mouth recruitment was established as a least effective method of recruitment. Although it might be effective with a few of the family and friends of firefighters, overall it is not far reaching.

4. What are the recruitment practices of like-size fire departments throughout California that may contribute to gender diversity?

Survey results revealed four corroborating recruitment practices that like-size fire departments in California who were utilizing that may contribute to gender diversity within their fire department. They included word-of-mouth, utilizing female firefighters in recruitment, developing recruitment literature, and pre-employment orientation. Three other recruitment practices were identified less extensively, including utilizing the media, targeting specific areas, and having a recruitment team. See Appendices A and B for a complete inventory of all survey questions as well as survey results.
Figure 3 illustrates the top four recruitment practices identified by those fire departments that currently had female firefighters within their departments.

**Conclusion:**

It was found that like-size fire departments within California are actively engaged in a variety of recruitment activities that improve gender diversity. The most common recruitment activities they are utilizing include word of mouth, utilizing current female firefighters in recruitment, developing recruitment literature, and pre-employment orientation or training. An unexpected finding was that targeting specific areas such as gyms, health clubs, female literature, and female athletic organizations was the least frequent method utilized by fire departments.

5. What benefits have like-size fire departments throughout California realized by being gender diverse?
Several corroborating benefits were identified as a result of surveys and interviews. They include enhanced female recruitment ability, improved EMS patient care for Women and Children, improved public education ability, and improved leadership skills. Although several other benefits were identified more sparsely, such as reduced legal liability, superior social skills, and increased versatility, only the four corroborating benefits will be discussed. See Appendices A, B, and C for a complete inventory of all survey questions and interviews as well as survey results and interview responses. An interesting note in the surveys was that legal liability was noted as both a benefit and liability or obstacle in the surveys.

**Enhanced Female Recruitment Ability**

Thirty-two of the 82 fire departments (39%) surveyed who have female firefighters report that enhanced female recruitment ability is a benefit they are realizing (Appendix B2). This benefit was also reported as likely from a career female firefighter. In an interview with Fire Captain Serena Johnson (See Appendix C2), she explained her first exposure to a female firefighter gave her the confidence to pursue a career in the fire service. If she wasn't exposed to a female firefighter being utilized in recruitment practices, Captain Johnson may not be enjoying a career in the fire service today.

**Improved Patient Care for Women and Children**

Fire Captain Serena Johnson indicated that being of the female gender was certainly a benefit in patient care (See Appendix C2). She attributes the benefit not totally to being female but to diversity. Typically, a patient may respond better to either a male or female. By having both genders available the patient ultimately benefits. Captain Johnson gave two examples where patients responded better to her as a female
firefighter. First, during a recent drug overdose the patient was not being cooperative with her male partner and was refusing treatment and transport, although it was necessary to her well being. Captain Johnson was able to intercede and develop a rapport with the patient. Consequently, treatment was established and the patient transported without having to wait for law enforcement to arrive. Ultimately, the patient benefited. Second, Captain Johnson shared that being female seems to be beneficial during pediatric incident such as Sudden Infant Death (SIDS). She felt that the parents of SIDS related incidents responded better to her than her male counterparts. On a similar note, improved patient care for women and children was the second highest benefit reported from fire departments surveyed in California as a direct result of having female firefighters (Appendix B2).

**Improved Public Education**

Twenty-seven of the 82(33%) like-size fire departments in California reported improved public education ability as a benefit they were realizing by having female firefighters (Appendix B2). An interview with career firefighter Captain Serena Johnson (See Appendix C2) revealed an interesting discovery. Captain Johnson felt that as a female firefighter had no greater ability than a male firefighter based on her gender. However, where the benefit came into play was in the area of diversity. She felt by having a diverse team, they had more ability or options to make a difference. Some audiences responded better to a male firefighter; whereas, others were known to respond better to a female firefighter. For example, a group of cub scouts (male) may respond better to a male firefighter. Conversely, a group of “brownies” (female) may relate better to a female firefighter.
Enhanced Leadership Characteristics

The fourth most common benefit reported from fire departments that had female firefighters was that the female firefighters demonstrated enhanced leadership characteristics (Appendix B2). Further, several comments were made in the “other benefits” section that related to enhanced leadership characteristics. They included such comments as superior administrative skills, improved written and verbal communication, superior organizational skills, and improved conflict resolution ability. Captain Serena Johnson (See Appendix C2) felt this was the biggest benefit that her fire department had realized as a result of her being a firefighter in the department. For example, she pointed out that her written communication skills, ability to type, project management propensity, and overall organizational skills have been warmly welcomed. She felt that her administrative skills helped her promote to her current position as fire captain in only a few years.

Conclusion:

Survey results and interview responses identified four corroborating benefits as a result of a fire department becoming gender diverse. They included enhanced female recruitment ability, improved EMS patient care for women and children, improved public education ability, and improved leadership skills (Figure 4).
First, enhanced female recruitment ability would be a potential benefit the Fire Department will realize by being more gender diverse. A survey of like-size fire departments in California and an interview with a current career firefighter concur enhanced female recruitment ability as a potential benefit to gender diversity. Second, it was discovered through a survey of like-size fire departments in California and an interview with a career female firefighter that improved patient care for women and children would be a likely benefit to the Manteca City Fire Department would realize from becoming gender diverse. Two examples were given in the interview of how patients would benefit. Third, survey results and interview responses uncovered that one third of the departments surveyed felt they had improved public education ability by having female firefighters on board. An interview with a career female firefighter found
that this improved ability was not specific to the gender of the firefighter. Rather the benefit was linked to diversity, having the option of using both male and female firefighters to conduct public education as needed. The choice in the main provider of care was established as a benefit. Fourth, survey and interview results indicate that a benefit of the Manteca City Fire Department becoming gender diverse may be that improved leadership characteristics will be yielded.

6. What liabilities or obstacles have like-size fire departments in California realized by being gender diverse?

Several corroborating liabilities or obstacles were identified as a result of surveys and interviews. They included inadequate facilities, poor attitudes of male coworkers, lack of policies in place, and difficulty maintaining physical ability and fitness standards. Although liabilities or obstacles were identified less frequently, such as reduced legal liability, increased workers compensation claims, and female medical issues, only the four corroborating benefits will be discussed. See Appendices A, B, and C for a complete inventory of all survey questions and interviews as well as survey results and interview responses. An interesting note in the surveys was legal liability was noted as both a benefit and liability or obstacle.

**Inadequate Facilities**

Overwhelmingly, inadequate facilities were an obstacle or liability that fire departments throughout California encountered who had hired female firefighters. Forty-five of the 82 (55%) fire departments surveyed that had women in their department reported difficulty with facilities (Appendix B2). Further, many comments were made on surveys suggesting inadequate facilities were a challenge. Several departments even put
exclamation marks next to the inadequate facilities checkbox on surveys. Conversely, an interview with Captain Serena Johnson (See Appendix C2) revealed that inadequate facilities had not been a problem in her experience. Even though her current fire station has separate restrooms, showers, and sleeping quarters for men and women, previously, these facilities were shared by both genders. She explained that in the previous fire station restrooms had changeable signs and the ability to be locked. Consequently, she was able to lock the door and have privacy when needed. Similarly, firefighters slept in duty shorts and tee shirts making sleeping concerns a non-issue. Interestingly, one fire department surveyed included this same approach in the “other” section of the survey in regards to facilities and gender diversity. Although this department had several female firefighters, they too had success in using a changeable sign on the restroom door with the ability to lock the restroom for showering. It was noted that if departments have adequate policies in place, it would help to minimize problems related to facilities.

**Poor Attitudes of Male Coworkers**

The second highest liability or obstacle reported by the fire departments surveyed in California who had female firefighters was the poor attitude of the male firefighters about gender diversity. For example, 22 of 82 (27%) departments report poor attitudes such as acceptance problems, negative attitudes, and harassment (Appendix B2). Similarly, the interview with Captain Serena Johnson, a career firefighter, (See Appendix C2) revealed that she has dealt with some acceptance problems from male coworkers throughout her career. She indicated that there were firefighters, particularly the older ones, who have never completely accepted her as a firefighter. However, she indicated that this liability was very minor and that she really brought it on herself by feeling the
need to prove herself. Captain Johnson shared that this acceptance challenge has manifested itself as a feeling or pressure to perform more tasks and, at a higher level than her male counterparts. However, she explained that this lack of acceptance has subsided over time and that as more females have entered the fire service this poor attitude of male firefighters has diminished. Captain Johnson reported that in her fire department, she has never been harassed sexually or otherwise (Appendix C2).

**Lack of Policies in Place**

Twenty of the 82 fire departments (24%) encountered difficulties with gender diversity because of a lack of policies were in place to address female firefighters (Appendix B2). For example, several comments were made regarding a lack of policies, which included pregnancy issues, dating amongst firefighters, and policies for sleeping attire. The interview with Captain Johnson, a career female firefighter (See Appendix C2) supported this deficiency. Captain Johnson recalled that when she was pregnant that the department was entering into "uncharted waters." There were no policies in place at all addressing pregnancy and work restrictions. Very few work restrictions were placed on her other than at eight months she was restricted from wearing a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). The restriction was done randomly and was not based on any research or criteria. In retrospect, she stated they were fortunate that they did not run into any problems related to the department not being prepared with a policy in place. Similarly in her department there are other policies were not in place such as grooming standards. Although there have not been any consequences resulting from this, survey results and interview responses emphasized the potential.

**Physical Ability and Fitness Standards**
An interview with Captain Serena Johnson a career female firefighters (See Appendix C2) revealed that physical ability was a challenge for her and most female firefighters. Even though she participates in a regular physical fitness program and is certified as a personal fitness trainer, Captain Johnson believes that a lack of upper body strength is the main challenge. However, Captain Johnson suggests regular physical fitness including strength training in addition to creative techniques will minimize this obstacle. For example, when utilizing the Hurst "jaws of life" during vehicle extrication, she has learned to position the tool so the weight of it is resting on the vehicle rather than her lifting the weight of the tool the entire time. Nineteen of the 82 (23%) Fire Departments reported their department had difficulty in maintaining physical ability or fitness standards as a result of their gender diversity (Appendix B2). Comments were made on surveys indicating the issue was upper body strength.

**Conclusion:**

Four corroborating liabilities or obstacles were identified as a result of surveys and interviews. They included inadequate facilities, poor attitudes of male coworkers, lack of policies in place, and difficulty maintaining physical ability and fitness standards.
Figure 5 reveals the liabilities or obstacles identified by like size fire departments that had female firefighters. First, the majority of fire departments surveyed in California who had female firefighters report that inadequate facilities was the biggest liability or obstacle they encountered. An interview with a career female firefighter and comments on surveys suggest that with the right approach this liability or obstacle may be minimized. Second, survey results and interview responses from a career female firefighter indicate that a poor attitude of male coworkers is a likely liability or obstacle that will be encountered when a fire department becomes gender diverse. Acceptance problems appear the biggest obstacle the fire department may face. However, interview response seems to indicate these poor attitudes subside over time and as more female firefighters enter the service. Third, survey results and interview responses emphasized the importance of a fire department having policies developed and in place prior to
becoming gender diverse. Three policies identified as lacking throughout fire departments were pregnancy issues, grooming standards, and sleeping attire. Fourth, survey results and interview responses suggest that difficulty in maintaining physical ability and fitness standards is an area of concern when becoming gender diverse. It was discovered that a lack of upper body strength was the main issue to reckon with. Participating in a regular physical fitness program and considering technique during physical tasks were found to be helpful.

7. What are the current recruitment practices of the City of Manteca for the position of firefighter?

In an interview with Mae Hamm, Director of Personnel for the City of Manteca the current recruitment practices of the City of Manteca for the position of firefighter were revealed (See Appendix C1). Three main components have been utilized in recruiting firefighters. They included advertising in the newspaper, word of mouth recruitment, and the opportunity to practice the physical agility exam ahead of time. Mrs. Hamm explained, "the problem is not getting enough candidates to apply for firefighter," rather the challenge is limiting the number of candidates that apply for the test. She explained that typically there are 250 candidates that apply for each firefighter position available. Consequently, the main recruitment effort the City of Manteca utilizes is an advertisement in the classified section of a local newspaper. The advertisement is limited to a five-day period. The advertisement includes a statement at the end encouraging minorities and women to apply (Appendix C1). On a similar note, Mrs. Hamm explains one could say he Manteca City Fire Department uses word of mouth recruitment. However, there is no formality or coordination. Firefighters are on their own to let
people know, as many interested candidates may not hear of job openings with the short window of advertisement. Finally, the fire department schedules a practice physical agility test a few weeks prior to the real test. All applicants are invited to participate. However, only the individuals who have already applied for the position are informed of the practice and are allowed to participate. During the practice test candidates have the opportunity to practice all of the events. Full-time firefighters assist candidates with techniques to help them to be successful (Appendix C1).

**Conclusion:**

The City of Manteca utilizes limited recruitment practices for the position of firefighter. They include a brief advertisement in the newspaper, informal word of mouth recruitment by the firefighters, and the opportunity for candidates to practice the physical agility exam ahead of time.

8. **What is the opinion of the Manteca City Firefighters about becoming more gender diverse?**

Surprisingly, a survey of the Manteca Fire Department workforce revealed that only six of the 50 (12%) firefighters were non-receptive or had poor attitudes. Firefighters were either receptive or neutral about working with female firefighters.
Figure 6 illustrates that the majority of the Manteca City Firefighters either were receptive or neutral about working with female firefighters. Only a few firefighters were not receptive (Appendix B3).

**Conclusion:**

Survey results indicate the Manteca Fire Department workforce has a neutral to receptive attitude about becoming gender diverse.

**DISCUSSION**

In reviewing the literature and the results of the research, several parallels existed. The need for the Manteca City Fire Department to expand its recruitment practices in consideration of gender diversification was established. Additionally, several benefits as well as obstacles of the Manteca City Fire Department becoming gender diverse were
identified and will be discussed. Finally, "unknowns" were established, which will be discussed.

**The Need**

Clearly, the Manteca City Fire Department is in the minority with its absence of gender diversity. Survey results revealed 79% of the like-size fire departments within California have female firefighters within their department. The average number of female firefighters in like-size departments throughout California is 2.5. The need to make an effort towards gender diversity was corroborated in the literature reviewed and from the results of the research project. The Manteca City Fire Department has not been reaching it's potential in the area of equality:

In addition to being the right thing to do, expanded workforce diversity has brought with it improvements in skill levels and new insights and capabilities in delivering services to our communities. Talent and ability can be found in all people. It is the responsibility of management to identify, encourage, and facilitate the development of that talent and ability. (Carlton, Hawkey, Watson, Donahue, Garcia, & Johnson, 1997, p. 20)

The results of this research reveal untapped potential in the female workforce. For example, a survey of 100 working females in the City of Manteca showed that 59% would be interested in a career as a firefighter. However, in the City of Manteca only a few of the several hundred applicants who apply for the position of firefighter each year are of the female gender (See Appendix C1). Theoretically, surveyors of the female workforce could have simply passed out firefighter applications to those interested and made a positive impact on the number of female applicants for firefighter. Complacency
towards diversification is a missed opportunity to improve the organization. O'Brien (1999) explains:

The Fire Service is letting itself down in the area of equality. That must change.
To be the best, the Fire Service has to reach out and attract people of the highest
caliber from across society. There is a large pool of talent among people from
ethnic minorities and among women. The Fire Service is not taking advantage of
the opportunities for recruiting that talent. (O’Brien, 1999, p. 12)

Researchers deem departments as "putting their heads in the sand" or, this lack of
diversification effort as unacceptable. Experts teach it is no longer acceptable for fire
chiefs to say, “We’ll hire anybody who meets our standards” (FEMA, 1999, p. 1). Some
feel an effort towards gender diversification is a matter of the law. The Civil Rights Acts
of 1964, Title VII, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Act, 1972
prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender and other diversities. The fact is that the
City of Manteca has no female firefighters and only receives a few applications each year
for the position of firefighter out of hundreds; yet, survey results reveal their are many
potential candidates in the female workforce. The disparity between the survey results of
women interested in the fire service, the nominal amount of female firefighter applicants,
and the absence of current female firefighters make the Manteca City Fire Department's
recruitment practices questionable.

Many potential female firefighter candidates are simply not informed about the
career of firefighter and specifically firefighter opportunities within the City of Manteca.
The Manteca City Fire Department should make an effort towards gender diversification.
This effort not only has the potential to improve the fire department, but prevent legal or financial ramifications.

**Benefits**

Three main benefits of having female firefighters were corroborated by the literature, survey results, and interview responses and will be discussed. First, improved EMS patient care for women and children was found to be a likely benefit of the Manteca City Fire Department becoming gender diverse. It was one of the top benefits reported by like-size fire departments throughout California who had female firefighters. Since the Manteca Fire Department has no female firefighters, male crews utilize the female paramedics on the private ambulance company as a resource when situations arise where there is a perceived need for a "woman's touch" at a medical emergency. However, many times the ambulance company does not have any female paramedics and this option is not available. Staley (1997) shares an experience of improved patient care as a result of gender diversification:

> I remember the women firefighters in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew in Miami a couple of years ago. Not only were they side-by-side with the men in disaster control, but also they were the glue that held the evacuation centers together. Shattered families and frightened kids found strength and comfort in the company of women firefighters, who were able to balance control with compassion and sensitivity. I’m not saying that men couldn’t or didn’t exhibit the same skills, but the women distinguished themselves. There was something comforting about having women nurturing and maybe mothering just a little in the centers that helped foster a calming sense of community and family. (p. 154)
On a similar note, interview responses supported the literature and survey results. Captain Serena Johnson, a career female firefighter (See Appendix C2), gave an example where a patient responded better to her as a female firefighter. During a recent drug overdose the patient was not being cooperative with her male partner and was refusing treatment and transport, although it was necessary to her well-being. Captain Johnson was able to intercede and develop a rapport with the patient. Consequently, treatment was established and the patient transported without having to wait for law enforcement to arrive. Ultimately, the patient benefited. In the Manteca City Fire Department the majority of the emergency responses are emergency medical. Consequently, a gender diverse department would improve service delivery to its' constituents.

Second, another example of concurrence between survey results, interview responses, and the literature, was the benefit gender diversity had on female recruitment ability. This was the number one benefit reported by like-size fire departments in California who had female firefighters. Thirty-two of the 82 fire departments (39%) surveyed who have female firefighters, report that enhanced female recruitment ability is a benefit they are realizing (Appendix B2). This benefit was also reported as likely from a career female firefighter. In an interview with Fire Captain Serena Johnson (See Appendix C2), she explains her first exposure to a female firefighter gave her the confidence to pursue a career in the fire service. Otherwise, Captain Johnson shares she may not be enjoying a career in the fire service today if she wasn’t exposed to a female firefighter being utilized in recruitment practices (Appendix C2). In the literature, Dozier (2000) found that using current female firefighters was one of the most effective methods of recruiting female firefighter candidates. Moreover, Booth (1987) found that the most
successful female firefighter recruitment strategy (by a large margin) was “organizing current minority and female firefighters into a task force” (p. 50). On a similar note, a survey of the female workforce who would be interested in a career as firefighters revealed that they perceived the utilization of current female firefighters in the recruitment process as very effective (Appendix B1). Until the Manteca City Fire Department has its first female firefighter, the department will not be able to realize this benefit.

Third, was the corroboration of the improved public education benefit. An interview with career firefighter Captain Serena Johnson (See Appendix C2) revealed how she perceived this improved public education ability was manifested. Although Captain Johnson felt as a female firefighter she did not have any greater ability than a male firefighter based on her gender, the benefit came into play in the area of diversity. She explained by having a diverse team they had more ability or options to make a difference. Some audiences responded better to a male firefighter; whereas, others were known to respond better to a female firefighter. She gave the example that a group of cub scouts (male) may respond better to a male firefighter. Conversely, a group of “brownies” (female) may relate better to a female firefighter. Like-size fire departments throughout California agreed. Improved public education ability was a benefit they were realizing from being gender diverse (Appendix B2). This benefit would be manifested often, considering the active public education program within the Manteca City Fire Department. Additionally, having female firefighters would help the department implement feedback given in a customer survey of the teachers throughout the schools in the City of Manteca. Teachers expressed having female firefighters serve as instructors
during their Fire Awareness in the Schools program (FAITS) was a benefit. Teachers complained all of the firefighter instructors were male. They felt female firefighters would serve as good role models for the female students. Additionally, they stated the students would pay better attention during the firefighter’s class if both male and female firefighters were present.

**Liabilities or Obstacles**

Three main liabilities or obstacles to a gender diverse fire department were evident throughout the literature review, surveys, and interviews, and will be discussed. They include inadequate facilities, childcare/family issues, and physical ability.

First, inadequate facilities were a challenge addressed in the literature as well as in the results of this research project. Forty-five of the 82 fire departments (55%) surveyed who had women in their department reported difficulty with facilities when becoming gender diverse (Appendix B2). Likewise, researchers throughout the literature found inadequate facilities were a major liability or roadblock to becoming gender diverse. Germann (1992) stressed the point that fire stations must be remodeled when necessary to include separate sleeping, rest room and bathing facilities for men and women. He states, “It is important that the work environment be inviting to females, or all other recruiting methods then become useless.” (p. 12) A study conducted in Texas by Dozier (2000) concluded the top concern of female applicants was sharing restroom facilities and open dorm sleeping areas. Conversely, an interview with Captain Serena Johnson (See Appendix C2), a career firefighter in California, revealed inadequate facilities had not been a problem in her experience. At her current fire station there are separate restrooms, showers, and sleeping quarters for men and woman; previously, these
facilities were shared by both genders. She explained that the restrooms had changeable signs and the ability to be locked. Consequently, she was able to lock the door and have privacy when needed. Similarly, firefighters slept in duty shorts and tee shirts making sleeping concerns a non-issue. Interestingly, in the survey of the female workforce within the City of Manteca, when asked about shared restrooms and open dorm sleeping areas, respondents were not too concerned about these working conditions (Appendix B1). This difference in concern between research in California and Texas may simply be geographic. The female workforce in California may be more liberal regarding these types of issues than the female workforce in Texas. Currently, within the Manteca City Fire Department one of the three fire stations is set up with separate rooms for each firefighter and both male and female restroom facilities, including separate shower facilities. The other two stations still have an open dorm situation with shared restroom facilities. The literature makes suggestions and recommendations to help fire departments prepare facilities for a more gender diverse workforce. For example, developing a five or ten year plan for remodeling firehouses is suggested. All new stations and any significant remodeling of existing stations should include adequate facilities for a two-gender workforce (FEMA, 1999). Another author's approach was similar to interview responses from Captain Johnson (Appendix C2). The approach was not addressing common sleeping areas as a gender issue but as a privacy issue. She suggested a design that featured cubicles containing a bed, desk, lamp and three or four lockers; one for each person on each shift. The cubicles would provide privacy and a reduction of sound or light from others in the room. "This solution does not pit women against men and respects the privacy and individuality of all” (Bartley, 2002, p. 16). Considering the
perception of the female workforce in the City of Manteca, a more simple approach seems prudent. Nevertheless, work needs to be done and money will need to be spent to prepare the Manteca City Fire Department facilities for gender diversification.

Second, childcare and family issues were a liability or obstacle addressed both in the surveys and in the literature. A survey of the female workforce revealed childcare or family matters as a deterrent from considering a career as a firefighter. Experts concurred the provision of childcare would have a positive impact on gender diversification within the fire service.

“More than a third (36%) of women firefighters have children living at home, most with no other parent at home to provide child care. Almost as many women (32%) are married to or are involved with other firefighters; 43% of these couples have children at home. One out of every twelve women firefighters is a single parent. Clearly, these issues have a significant impact on the ability of women to work as firefighters” (FEMA, 1999, p. 44).

Currently, the Manteca City Fire Department works a rotating 24-hour shifts with firefighters working ten days a month. However, the trend in California is fire departments changing to working 48 hours on consecutively, followed by 96 hours off, childcare issues may be even more difficult for potential female firefighters. Currently the firefighters are in negotiations to make the shift schedule change. There is no provision of childcare for firefighters. In our society, women typically are the main childcare providers and the research shows childcare issues to be a top priority for all working women. There has been discussion of a citywide childcare facility for use by all
City of Manteca employees. With input from the fire department perhaps such a facility could facilitate the 24-hour shift.

Third was the liability or obstacle of physical ability. Authors discussed the challenge of recruiting female firefighters without lowering the standards (Lynch, 2001). Although several comments were made concerning their perceived ability to physically perform as a firefighter, the female workforce within the City of Manteca viewed the physical nature of the career of firefighter as an incentive for pursuing a career as a firefighter (Appendix B1). They are encouraged by the challenge but may need help meeting the challenge. This seems to indicate a workable solution would require dedication on the part of the fire department and the people involved, could making this physical ability concern a non-issue. An example of this workable solution was found in the literature. In Florida, a physical fitness for firefighters program helped prepare female candidates for success on the firefighter physical ability exam. They improved the pass rate for female applicants from 6% (5 out of 84) to 49% (19 out of 390) after the specially designed course (Dozier, 2000). An interview with Captain Serena Johnson, a career female firefighter (See Appendix C2), revealed physical ability was a challenge for her and most female firefighters. However, she also suggested there were workable solutions such as physical strength training and technique. Captain Johnson suggests regular physical fitness including strength training and creative techniques will minimize this obstacle. For example, when utilizing the Hurst "jaws of life" during vehicle extrication, she has learned to position the tool so the weight of it is resting on the vehicle rather than her lifting the weight of the tool the entire time. Further, researchers emphasize the importance of using a valid physical ability entrance exam which is
completely job related. It was emphasized the physical ability test only include essential job related tasks and avoid unnecessary physical demands. Fortunately, the City of Manteca is currently utilizing a local college's firefighter physical ability exam that has been validated regionally.

**Recruitment Practices**

Three corroborating recruitment practices, which were noted in the literature and results of this research project, will be discussed. They included advertising in the newspaper, targeting specific areas, and pre-employment orientation or training. Word of mouth recruiting was considered an unknown and will be discussed below with the other unknowns. Likewise, utilizing female firefighters in the recruitment process was already discussed above. First, advertising in the classified section of the newspaper is not the recruitment method of choice, particularly if this is the only means of advertisement as is the case for the City of Manteca (Appendix C1). Overwhelmingly, a survey of the female workforce identified advertising in the newspaper as the least effective method of recruitment. Forty-five of the 59 (76%) reported that advertising in the newspaper was one of the two least effective recruitment practices. Many respondents shared that they did not read the newspaper. If they read the newspaper and there was simply an advertisement in the classified section of the newspaper, most women would never even see the advertisement. If the Manteca City Fire Department has the desire to reach more than just male firefighter candidates, it must expand beyond simply advertising in the want ads of the local newspaper.
Second, the literature review and results of the research project both supported the recruitment practice of targeting specific areas which attract women who enjoy physical activity. Neves (2001) explains:

High school and college career job fairs, athletic and physical education departments of colleges, the military, along with health clubs and gyms should all receive the attention necessary to recruit women. I believe if the values and goals of the individual you are attempting to attract parallels the organization it will be both easier to attract, but more important, easier to retain this individual. Women that value physical activity and possess the desire to challenge themselves in the face of physical and mental duress will find a career in firefighting very rewarding and satisfying. (p. 30)

In a survey of the female workforce within the City of Manteca, survey respondents rated targeting specific areas where likely females firefighter candidates would frequent as the most effective recruitment method. For example, 38 out of 59 (64%) rated targeting specific areas as one of the two most effective recruitment methods (Appendix B1). Many comments were made by respondents recommending areas which would foster physical ability and fitness, such as gyms, health clubs, and athletic organizations. A survey of like size fire departments reported although targeting these specific areas was not one of their top recruitment practices, it was being utilized frequently. For example, 26 out of the 82 (32%) fire departments who had female firefighters were targeting specific areas such as gyms, health clubs, and high school sports teams (Appendix B2). This recruitment seems to be a cost effective way for the Manteca City Fire Department to improve in its recruitment practices. Considering there is at least one health club in
each of the three fire station's districts, fire companies could easily help with recruitment at these facilities while on-duty. No overtime costs would be incurred.

Third, the practice of pre-employment orientation or training was corroborated as an effective recruitment practice. Both the survey of like size fire departments within California and the survey of the female workforce within the City of Manteca concurred that pre-employment orientation and training was a recruitment practice to invest in (See Appendices B1 and B2). Thirty-three of 82 (40%) like-size fire departments were conducting some type of pre-employment orientation or training which may contribute to gender diversity in their fire department. Twenty-eight of the 59 (47%) female workforce respondents felt that pre-employment orientation or training was one of the two most effective recruitment practices (Appendix B1). Interestingly, many of the respondents from the female workforce survey considered the survey itself pre-employment orientation or training. It sparked their interest in the fire service. On a similar note, in his research in Southern California, Gray (1996) recommended, “orientation sessions where females are encouraged to find out more about the fire service must be a high priority” (p. 15). By simply making potential female firefighter candidates aware of the career of firefighter through some basic orientation measures like the female workforce survey, the Manteca City Fire Department will make a positive impact in the recruitment of female firefighters. Finally a survey conducted in Wisconsin revealed that 78% of the career female firefighters had participated in some type of pre-employment orientation training for the department they are now working for in the recruitment process (Marohl, 2002).

**Unknowns and Other Considerations**
Three issues were considered unknowns and will be discussed. They included poor attitude of male coworkers, word of mouth recruitment, and legal liability. Finally, three other considerations will be discussed including management support, the use of high school and college career counselors in recruitment, and establishing a recruitment team. First, poor attitude of male coworkers was found to be the second highest liability obstacle noted by like size fire departments in California who had female firefighters (Appendix B2). Correspondingly, the literature cited poor attitudes among male coworkers, such as acceptance problems, negative attitudes, and harassment. Staley (1997) shares, "There are thousands of stories of equipment tampering, bed short-sheeting, schedule rearranging, and other mean-spirited shenanigans intended to discourage these early female invaders" (p. 154). He later explains, "Every female firefighter I have known or spoken with has had a story to tell about being unwanted and having to prove herself" (Staley, 1997, p. 154). Dissimilarly, an interview with a current female firefighter, Captain Serena Johnson (See Appendix C2) suggested these negative attitudes amongst male firefighters were transient and dissipated readily. She revealed that although she had dealt with some acceptance problems from male coworkers throughout her career, this liability was very minor and that really she brought it on herself by feeling the need to prove herself. Captain Johnson shared this acceptance challenge had manifested itself as a feeling or pressure to perform more tasks and at a higher level than the male firefighters. However, she explained this lack of acceptance has subsided over time and as more females have entered the fire service this poor attitude of male firefighters has diminished. Captain Johnson reported in her fire department, she has never been harassed sexually or otherwise (Appendix C2).
Interestingly, in the interview of the female workforce within the City of Manteca, respondents were not at all worried about working with all male coworkers. In fact many cited this as an incentive to becoming a firefighter compared to their current employment where they worked predominantly with women (Appendix B1). Similarly, a survey of the Manteca City Firefighters revealed that firefighters were either receptive or neutral about having a gender diverse fire department (Appendix B3). This positive attitude of the firefighters is without any prior diversity training to prepare them for a female firefighter. This seems to indicate that with the provision of training and a good attitude from management the attitude of the Manteca City Firefighters will not hinder the advent of gender diversification within the Manteca City Fire Department.

Second was the debate about the effectiveness of word-of-mouth recruiting. Most of the literature promotes its success and widespread use. For example, a study conducted in Wisconsin yielded results which support this concept. Marohl (2002) found that "most (70%) of the firefighters had learned of the opportunity to become a firefighter by word-of-mouth” (p. 29). Likewise, a survey of like size fire departments in California concluded that word-of-mouth was the number one reported recruitment practice (Appendix B2). However, a survey of the City of Manteca workforce uncovered that they considered word-of-mouth recruitment as one of the least effective recruitment methods (Appendix B1). The issue seemed to be that it was only an effective recruitment practice for a few. For example, although all of the respondents would consider a career as a firefighter, none of them had ever heard of an opportunity by word of mouth recruitment. Comments were made that word-of-mouth would only reach the friends or family of the current firefighters. This discrepancy, along with the fact that word of
mouth recruitment is not usually formal, could have been cited by fire departments that do no real recruitment, make the benefit of word-of-mouth recruitment inconclusive. For example, one could say that the Manteca City Fire Department uses word-of-mouth recruitment. However, it should be noted there is no formality or coordination and as a result there are very few female applicants each year. Booth (1987) points out there could be a problem to this approach. If the workforce consists of only male employees, this type of recruitment can magnify the imbalance. “Unfortunately, when fire departments have primarily white-male workforces, word-of-mouth recruiting perpetuates the situation” (p. 49).

Third, legal liability was reported as both increased as well as decreased in the surveys of like-size fire departments within California who were gender diverse (Appendix B2). The literature exposed that legal liability could result for fire departments who are using less than a proactive approach toward gender diversity. For example, in Spokane Washington a less than proactive approach to gender diversity resulted in the department incurring severe financial liabilities. When two females had resigned from the fire academy, they were replaced by two males, one from the minority list and the other from the open list. Consequently, a female candidate on the eligibility list filed a lawsuit to challenge the replacement of the women with men. The matter was settled when both parties agreed she would be given a seat in the next class, seniority status and $20,000. However, the survey of like-size fire departments in California showed none of the fire departments had ever been mandated to hire a particular number of female firefighters. This data and the literature seems to indicate the larger metropolitan fire departments have more of a risk for legal liability when considering the
absence of gender diversity. However, all departments were warned of the risk of sexual harassment. Ritchie (2001) conducted research which revealed “a significant amount of harassment of women and bullying by men within the Fire Service. Forty percent of the female firefighters interviewed nation-wide had been harassed in the last 12 months. Indeed, 60 percent of women mentioned harassment having occurred at some point during their career” (p. 10). Consequently, to reduce legal liability the Manteca City Fire Department should have sexual harassment policies and training in place and then make an effort to become gender diverse.

Fourth, it was emphasized that management support was key in taking action to become gender diverse. FEMA (1999) emphasizes having the support of management. “Fire department leadership must firmly support the recruitment and integration of women into the fire department. All aspects of the recruiting effort must reflect management’s sincere commitment to not only bring women firefighters onto the department but to support a diverse fire service workforce” (p. 7). Fortunately, in the Manteca City Fire Department all of the management team was surveyed and responded receptively to the department becoming gender diverse (Appendix B3). This will be a positive factor in the department's efforts to diversify,

Fifth, a practice that appears promising and is currently being used in the nursing field was using high school and college career counselors in the recruitment process. One example of utilizing the school counselors as a valuable resource was noted in Wisconsin:

At the University of Wisconsin, counselors from junior and senior high schools are invited to meet with nursing faculty to discuss the need for more men and
other minority groups in nursing. Dr. Valencia Prock, Dean of Nursing, finds it surprising that counselors have misconceptions about entrance into nursing, and the fact that male students become excellent nurses in all areas of nursing.

(Tumminia & Peterson, 1994, p. 31).

In the City of Manteca, there are several high schools and colleges nearby. This may be a resource to help in the recruitment process. It will be interesting to see how many local career counselors are unaware of firefighting as a potential career for their female students.

Sixth, was the benefit of establishing a recruitment coordinator or team. Surprisingly, only a handful of like-size fire departments surveyed in California reported they were utilizing a recruitment team (Appendix B2). By contrast, in the literature experts advocated establishing a recruitment team and using the department's best to participate on the team. Laabs (1991) research concluded that planning and organizing by a recruitment team were vital to the success of a minority female recruitment program. Gray (1996) in his research of recruitment methods for female firefighters in Southern California recommended recruitment teams be established. Further, he recommended that departments “assemble a high caliber recruitment team that is motivated and shares the goal of hiring and retaining qualified women firefighters” (p. 15). Currently, within the City of Manteca, all of the responsibility for recruitment of firefighter rests exclusively with the Personnel Director, Mae Hamm (Appendix C1). The fire department does not have a specific role in the recruitment process. Consequently, it is believed the establishment of a recruitment team to include representatives of the fire
department will foster a feeling of "ownership." It is hopeful that this will spark a more comprehensive firefighter recruitment process and contribute to gender diversity.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended the Manteca City Fire Department become involved in its own recruitment practices. Further, it is recommended a recruitment team or committee be formed with three main objectives. The primary objective will be to make the female workforce aware of the career opportunity of a firefighter and the necessary steps to become a firefighter within the City of Manteca. A secondary objective of the committee will be to evaluate the Manteca Fire Department's facilities and policies, as well as the provision of diversity training as it relates to preparing for gender diversity. A third objective of the committee will be to establish a mechanism to track the number of females who apply, their success rate, and make recommendations based on this information to improve recruitment practices in consideration of gender diversity.

Many benefits have been identified and may be realized by the Manteca Fire Department becoming gender diverse such as improved patient care for women and children, improved female recruitment ability, enhanced public education, and superior leadership skills. Fortunately, many of the obstacles or liabilities identified by this research project may be overcome considering the high level of management's support and firefighter's receptive attitude towards gender diversity found in the Manteca City Fire Department. Below are specific recommendations for the Manteca City Fire Department in an effort to improve recruitment practices and consider gender diversification.
1. Establish a Fire Department Recruitment Committee of motivated, high caliber individuals with a positive attitude towards diversity. The committee shall consist of, at a minimum, the following personnel:
   A. Manteca City Fire Department Chief Officer (Chairperson)
   B. City of Manteca Personnel Director
   C. Female firefighter from a neighboring fire department
   D. Three Manteca City Firefighters (One from each shift)

2. Make the female workforce within the City of Manteca aware of the career of firefighter and opportunities therein.
   A. Target Areas that attract women who participate in physical activity
      1. Gyms and health clubs
      2. College and high school athletic programs
   B. Conduct pre-employment orientation and training
      1. Fitness for firefighters class
      2. Orientation sessions
      3. Practice physical agility for all interested
      4. Surveys of female workforce by firefighters
   C. Utilize female firefighters in recruitment process
      1. Participate in pre-employment orientation and training
   D. Further research partnering with high school and college career counselors
   E. Further research into use of the media
3. Evaluate the Manteca City Fire Department's facilities, policies, and provision of diversity training as they relate to preparing for gender diversification. Make recommendations to the fire chief.

A. Sleeping areas
B. Bathroom and restroom facilities
C. Locker rooms
D. Pregnancy limitations
E. Maternity leave
F. Diversity training
G. Grooming standards

4. Monitor the number of females who apply for firefighter and examine their success rate.

A. Make recommendations to improve recruitment practices with consideration to gender diversity.
REFERENCES


Appendix A1

FEMALE WORKFORCE PERCEPTION □ SURVEY

1. Please rate the following components of being a firefighter as to how they would influence your consideration for a career as a firefighter: (Circle each component as an incentive, deterrent, or neutral)

**Working Conditions**
- A. 24 Hour Shifts (Ten shifts a month)  
- B. Hazards of Job (Fires, medical exposure, witnessing trauma and death).  
- C. Physical/manipulative nature of work (Physical ability: muscular strength and endurance)  
- D. Facilities: (Open dorm sleeping areas, shared restrooms)  
- E. Starting pay (60,000 annually)  
- F. Retirement (90% pay after 30 years)  
- G. Adv. opportunities (FF ⇒ Eng ⇒ Capt ⇒ Chief)  

**Other Influences**
- H. Working with mostly male coworkers  
- I. Public perception of female firefighter (your view)  
- J. Childcare issues/ or family matters

2. Would you consider a career as a firefighter? Yes ___ No ___  
If yes, what is the greatest appeal? _______________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3. What would have to change about the fire service for it to appeal to you as a possible career choice? _______________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

4. The following is a list of six activities that various fire departments utilize in an attempt to recruit women into the fire service. In your opinion, which two are the most effective and which two are the least effective?

- A. Advertising in the newspaper  
- B. Developing recruitment literature (Brochures / flyers, etc.)  
- C. Word of mouth recruitment  
- D. Utilizing female firefighters in recruitment process  
- E. Target specific areas (Health clubs, gyms, high school and college athletics, women's organizations).  
- F. Pre-Employment orientation or training (Physical fitness for firefighters class, career orientation classes, open houses, ride-alongs, practice physical agilities etc.)

5. Do you have any other suggestions for effective recruitment practices? ___________
________________________________________________________________________

Thank You!
Dear Chief,

I am working on an applied research project for the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy. The project I have selected will evaluate the need for our fire department to become more gender diverse. As a fire chief, your experiences and opinions about this subject are extremely important. Enclosed you will find a short survey requesting information about some of your experience with gender diversity. I am interested in your organization’s experiences with gender diversity issues and in learning from your expertise.

I would appreciate you taking a moment of your time to complete this survey and either mail or FAX back your responses to the Manteca Fire Department. A self-addressed stamped envelope is included. Our FAX number is (209) 825-2339. We hope to receive the survey back by October 25, 2003. The information you provide will be strictly confidential. I would be happy to share the results of the research with you if you wish. Thank You!

Sincerely,

Kirk Waters
Appendix A2
FIRE DEPARTMENT GENDER DIVERSITY □ SURVEY

1. How many firefighters (safety personnel) in your organization are female? (If none, go to question #5)

2. What type of recruitment practices has your fire agency or city utilized that may contribute to gender diversity? Check all that apply:
   ___ Utilized Female Firefighters in Recruitment Efforts
   ___ Developed Recruitment Literature (For example, brochures & flyers)
   ___ Word of Mouth Recruitment (Friends, family, etc.)
   ___ Established a Recruitment Team or Coordinator
   ___ Target Specific Areas (Women’s organizations, high school/college sports teams, health clubs, women’s literature etc.)
   ___ Use of the Media (Newspaper articles/advertisements, Recruitment films public service announcements, radio broadcasts, etc.)
   ___ Pre-employment Orientation or Training (Entry-level testing prep classes, open houses, explorer/cadet programs, physical fitness for firefighters course, orientation sessions, etc.)
   ___ Others, please list: _________________________________

3. What benefits have your fire department realized by having female firefighters? Check all that apply:
   ___ Improved EMS Patient Care for Children & Women
   ___ Enhanced Female Recruitment Ability
   ___ Improved Public Education Ability
   ___ Enhanced Leadership Characteristics
   ___ Reduced Legal Liability
   ___ Others, please list: _________________________________

4. What liabilities or obstacles have your fire department encountered by having female firefighters? Check all that apply:
   ___ Difficulty Maintaining Physical Ability & Fitness Standards
   ___ Poor Attitude of Male Coworkers (Acceptance problems, negative attitudes, harassment, etc.)
   ___ Lack of Policies in Place (Grooming standards, pregnancy leave, sexual harassment, nepotism & firefighter marriages, etc.)
   ___ Inadequate Facilities (Restrooms, sleeping quarters, showering, etc.)
   ___ Increased Legal Liability
   ___ Others, please list: _________________________________

5. Does your agency have any court or other mandates requiring the hiring of female firefighters? If yes, please explain: _________________________________

6. Do you give any preference to female firefighters in the testing/hiring process? If yes, please explain: _________________________________

Thank You!

Please FAX: 209-825-2339
Or Mail to: Manteca Fire Department
           1154 South Union
           Manteca, CA 95337
Attention: Captain Kirk Waters
Appendix A3

FIREFIGHTER GENDER DIVERSITY □ SURVEY

1. What is your current rank within the fire department?
   ___ Firefighter   ___ Engineer   ___ Captain   ___ Chief Officer

2. What is your opinion or attitude about working with female firefighters in the fire department?
   ___ Receptive/Good Attitude
   ___ Non-Receptive/Poor Attitude
   ___ Neutral/Undecided

Thank You!
APPENDIX B
Appendix B1

FEMALE WORKFORCE PERCEPTION □ SURVEY RESULTS

1. Please rate the following components of being a firefighter as to how they would influence your consideration for a career as a firefighter: (Circle each component as an incentive, deterrent, or neutral)

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<th>Deterrent</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
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<td>B. Hazards of Job (Fires, medical exposure, witnessing trauma and death)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Physical/manipulative nature of work (Physical ability: muscular strength and endurance)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>D. Facilities: (Open dorm sleeping areas, shared restrooms)</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>71</td>
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<td>E. Starting pay (60,000 annually)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>07</td>
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<td>F. Retirement (90% pay after 30 years)</td>
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<td>01</td>
<td>05</td>
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<td>G. Adv. opportunities (FF ⇒Eng ⇒Capt ⇒Chief)</td>
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<th>Incentive</th>
<th>Deterrent</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H. Working with mostly male coworkers</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Public perception of female firefighter (your view)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. Childcare issues/ or family matters</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>33</td>
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</table>

2. Would you consider a career as a firefighter?  
   Yes 59  No 41
   If yes, what is the greatest appeal? Helping people x, community service x 5, salary x 5, time off x 3, retirement x 4, excitement, saving people x 1, respectful career x 2, challenge x 1, self-worth x 1.

3. What would have to change about the fire service for it to appeal to you as a possible career choice? Working hours / 24-hour shift x 8, childcare provision x 6, physical ability requirements x 5, less risk or hazards x 3, more female firefighters x 3.

   Only those who would consider a career in the fire service to continue survey

4. The following is a list of six activities that various fire departments utilize in an attempt to recruit women into the fire service. In your opinion, which two are the most effective and which two are the least effective?

   A. Advertising in the newspaper Least Effective 45 Most Effective 7
   B. Developing recruitment literature (Brochures / flyers, etc.) Least Effective 34 Most Effective 6
   C. Word of mouth recruitment Least Effective 31 Most Effective 7
   D. Utilizing female firefighters in recruitment process Least Effective 2 Most Effective 32
   E. Target specific areas (Health clubs, gyms, high school and college athletics, women's organizations) Least Effective 1 Most Effective 38
   F. Pre-Employment orientation or training (Physical fitness for firefighters class, career orientation classes, open houses, ride-alongs, practice physical agilities etc.) Least Effective 5 Most Effective 28

5. Do you have any other suggestions for effective recruitment practices? Surveys like this x 4, television commercials x 3, internet x 1, career class at high school x 2, public seminars x 1, more overall recruitment x 1.

Thank You!
Appendix B2
FIRE DEPARTMENT GENDER DIVERSITY □ SURVEY

1. How many firefighters (safety personnel) in your organization are female? (If none, go to question #5) **Average 2.5**
2. What type of recruitment practices has your fire agency or city utilized that may contribute to gender diversity? Check all that apply:
   - 36 Utilized Female Firefighters in Recruitment Efforts
   - 34 Developed Recruitment Literature (For example, brochures & flyers)
   - 56 Word of Mouth Recruitment (Friends, family, etc.)
   - 28 Established a Recruitment Team or Coordinator
   - 26 Target Specific Areas (Women’s organizations, high school/college sports teams, health clubs, women’s literature etc.)
   - 30 Use of the Media (Newspaper articles/advertisements, Recruitment films public service announcements, radio broadcasts, etc.)
   - 33 Pre-employment Orientation or Training (Entry-level testing prep classes, open houses, explorer/cadet programs, physical fitness for firefighters course, orientation sessions, etc.)
   - 6 Others, please list: **College recruitment presentations, x 3 trade show booths, recruitment presentations at paramedic programs.**

3. What benefits have your fire department realized by having female firefighters? Check all that apply:
   - 31 Improved EMS Patient Care for Children & Women
   - 32 Enhanced Female Recruitment Ability
   - 27 Improved Public Education Ability
   - 20 Enhanced Leadership Characteristics
   - 14 Reduced Legal Liability
   - 20 Others, please list: **Improved juvenile fire setter program, improved teamwork x 4, more diverse skills x 4, increased versatility, better communication skills, improved teamwork, 4 months too early to tell, superior organization skills, superior social skills, compliant with equal rights, better administration skills, increased funding for station improvements, increased level of professionalism, workforce that represents the community x 2.**

4. What liabilities or obstacles have your fire department encountered by having female firefighters? Check all that apply:
   - 19 Difficulty Maintaining Physical Ability & Fitness Standards
   - 22 Poor Attitude of Male Coworkers (Acceptance problems, negative attitudes, harassment, etc.)
   - 20 Lack of Policies in Place (Grooming standards, pregnancy leave, sexual harassment, nepotism & firefighter marriages, etc.)
   - 45 Inadequate Facilities (Restrooms, sleeping quarters, showering, etc.)
   - 10 Increased Legal Liability
   - 8 Others, please list: **Restroom with signs and locks, policies for sleeping attire, dating of senior officers, workers comp claims, disability retirements, sexual assault, female medical issues, poor attitude of female firefighters.**

5. Does your agency have any court or other mandates requiring the hiring of female firefighters? **0**
   If yes, please explain: _____________________________________________________________

6. Do you give any preference to female firefighters in the testing/hiring process? **1**
   If yes, please explain: **Two candidates equally qualified, will hire the female.**
Appendix B3

FIREFIGHTER GENDER DIVERSITY □ SURVEY

1. What is your current rank within the fire department?
   - 24 Firefighter
   - 12 Engineer
   - 9 Captain
   - 5 Chief Officer

2. What is your opinion or attitude about working with female firefighters in the fire department?
   - 29 Receptive/Good Attitude
   - 6 Non-Receptive/Poor Attitude
   - 15 Neutral/Undecided

Thank You!
APPENDIX C
Appendix C1

INTERVIEW □ PERSONNEL DIRECTOR

Fifteen-minute interview conducted October 26, 2003

1. What are the current recruitment practices of the City of Manteca for the position of firefighter? (And, specifically relating to gender diversity).

Answer: Mrs. Hamm explained three main components have been utilized in recruiting firefighters. They included advertising in the newspaper, word of mouth recruitment, and the opportunity to practice the physical agility exam ahead of time. Mrs. Hamm explained the problem was not in getting enough candidates to apply for firefighter; rather the challenge was limiting the number of candidates who apply for the test. She explained typically there were 250 candidates who apply for each firefighter position available, with only a few candidates being female. The main recruitment effort the City of Manteca utilizes is an advertisement in the classified section of a local newspaper. Due to the large response, the advertisement is limited to a five-day period. In relation to diversity, the advertisement includes a statement at the end encouraging minorities and women to apply. Mrs. Hamm shared that there is informal "word of mouth" recruitment. Firefighters are on their own to let people know, as many interested candidates may not hear of job openings with the short window of advertisement. No specific individuals are targeted such as females or minorities. Finally, she explained the fire department sometimes schedules a practice physical agility test a few weeks prior to the real test. All applicants are invited to participate. However, only the individuals who have already applied for the
position are informed of the practice and are allowed to participate. During the practice test candidates have the opportunity to practice all of the events. Full-time firefighters assist candidates with techniques to help them be successful.
Appendix C2

INTERVIEW □ FEMALE FIREFIGHTER

Thirty-minute interview conducted September 30, 2003

1. What benefits do you feel your fire department has realized as a result of you being a female firefighter? (For example, improved EMS patient care for children & women, enhanced female recruitment ability, and improved public education ability).

   **Answer:** Fire Captain Serena Johnson discussed four benefits she felt her fire department had realized as a result of her presence that were inherent to her being a female firefighter. They included improved administrative skills, a more diverse teaching resource, enhanced female recruitment ability, and improved EMS for certain patients.

   Captain Johnson felt the biggest benefit her fire department had realized as a result of her being a firefighter was in the administrative skills arena. For example, she pointed out that her written communication skills, ability to type, project management propensity, and overall organizational skills have been warmly welcomed. She felt that her administrative skills helped her promote to her current position as fire captain in only a few years.

   Next, she discussed joining the department cultivated a more diverse teaching cadre. Although Captain Johnson believed as a female firefighter she had no greater ability than a male firefighter, she felt the benefit that came into play was in the area of diversity. She thought by having a diverse team they had more ability or options to make a difference. She explained some audiences responded better to a male firefighter; whereas others seem to relate better to a female firefighter. For example, a group of cub
scouts (male) may respond better to a male firefighter. Conversely, a group of “brownies” (female) may relate better to a female firefighter.

Next, Captain Johnson states being a female firefighter is certainly a benefit on EMS calls in certain situations. She attributes the benefit not totally to being female, but to diversity. She explained typically a patient will respond better to a male or female. By having both genders available, the patient ultimately benefits. Captain Johnson gave two examples where patients responded better to her as a female firefighter. First, during a recent drug overdose, the patient was not being cooperative with her male partner and was refusing treatment and transport although it was necessary to her well being. Captain Johnson was able to intercede and develop a rapport with the patient. Consequently, treatment was established and the patient transported without having to wait for law enforcement to arrive. Ultimately, the patient benefited. Second, Captain Johnson shared that being female seems to be beneficial during pediatric incidents such as Sudden Infant Death (SIDS). She feels the parents of SIDS related and responded better to her than her male counterparts.

Finally, Captain Johnson explained her first exposure to a female firefighter gave her the confidence to pursue a career in the fire service. If she wasn't exposed to a female firefighter being utilized in recruitment practices, Captain Johnson may not be enjoying a career in the fire service today.

2. What obstacles have you or your fire department encountered in being a female firefighters? (For example, difficulty with physical ability, poor attitude of male coworkers, lack of policies in place such as grooming & pregnancy leave, inadequate facilities such as sleeping quarters and restrooms, and childcare matters).

Answer: Captain Johnson reported she has dealt with acceptance
problems and difficulty with physical ability. Additionally, she reported her department has struggled somewhat with a lack of policies in place to address her presence in the workforce. Finally, she discussed initially her department had inadequate facilities, but they were not problematic. First, Captain Johnson encountered acceptance problems throughout her career. She indicated there were firefighters, particularly the older ones, who have never completely accepted her as a firefighter. However, she indicated this liability was very minor and she brought it on herself by feeling the need to prove herself. Captain Johnson shared this acceptance challenge has manifested as a feeling or pressure to perform more tasks and at a higher level than the male firefighters. However, she explained that this lack of acceptance has subsided over time and, as more females have entered the fire service this poor attitude of male firefighters has diminished. Captain Johnson reported that in her fire department, she has never been harassed sexually or otherwise.

Second, she shared the challenge of physical ability. Captain Johnson revealed that physical ability was a challenge for her and most female firefighters. Even though she participates in a regular physical fitness program and is certified as a personal fitness trainer, Captain Johnson believes a lack of upper body strength is the main challenge. However, Captain Johnson suggests regular physical fitness including strength training and creative techniques will minimize this obstacle. For example, when utilizing the Hurst "jaws of life" during vehicle extrication, she has learned to position the tool so the weight of it is resting on the vehicle rather than her lifting the weight of the tool the entire time.
Third, Captain Johnson recalled when she was pregnant the department was entering into "uncharted waters." There were no policies in place at all addressing pregnancy and work restrictions. Additionally, there were very little work restrictions placed on her other than at eight months she was restricted from wearing a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). The restriction was done randomly and not based on any research or criteria. In retrospect, Captain Johnson felt they were fortunate they did not run into problems related to the department not being prepared with a policy in place. Similarly, in her department other policies were not in place such as grooming standards. Fortunately, she explained there have not been any consequences resulting from the department's lack of policies in place.

Finally, Captain Johnson discussed in the beginning there were inadequate facilities but they were not without solution. She revealed that inadequate facilities had not been a problem in her experience. At her current fire station there are separate restrooms, showers, and sleeping quarters for men and woman; previously, these facilities were shared by both genders. She explained the restrooms had changeable signs and the ability to be locked. Consequently, she was able to lock the door and have privacy when needed. Similarly, firefighters slept in duty shorts and tee shirts making sleeping concerns a non-issue.
### APPENDIX D
LIKE SIZE DEPARTMENTS

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