



HOME > BLOGS > MUTUAL AID > ADVICE FOR NEW LEADERS COMES IN MANY FORMS

## Mu+ual Aid

A FIRE CHIEF BLOG

### Advice for new leaders comes in many forms

by Lisa Allegretti in Mutual Aid

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What it Means to be a Leader

I am what the fire service would call homegrown. I came to FIRE CHIEF a little more than a decade ago right after college and steadily have been promoted through the ranks every few years. Recently I was promoted into the big office — with all of the responsibility that comes with it.

Each step on the ladder came with new challenges. With my new role as editor, I suddenly had management responsibilities over friends and colleagues, while the buffer

between me and the purse-string holders disappeared. It wasn't something journalism school or even years on the job had prepared me for, though I relish the challenge.

So where does someone in my position go for guidance?

Fortunately for new chiefs in a similar position, Plano (Texas) Fire Chief Brian Crawford offers guidance in [this month's cover story](#). Crawford talks of how becoming a new fire chief will bring many challenging, exciting, personal and emotional trials. It can be the most rewarding and fulfilling time of your career.

However, if not fully prepared for the intra- and interpersonal dynamics of leading individuals and groups apart and away from the emergency scene, it also can be one of the worst.

"Some leaders mistakenly believe that surrounding themselves with talented people somehow will make them appear less capable or intelligent — quite the contrary is true," Crawford writes.

The impulse to do it all yourself can be strong. But doing it all can result in doing it poorly. Take advantage of the talent that surrounds you. At the same time, while it is essential to tap into the talent around you, at the end of the day, the toughest decisions

#### What's Mutual Aid?

Mutual Aid is a blog of news and views from FIRE CHIEF staff and industry experts -- a virtual conversation about the issues important to you.

#### Contributors

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Janet Wilmoth grew up in a family of firefighters in a Chicago suburb. She first worked for FIRE CHIEF magazine in 1986 as an associate editor and also served as FIRE CHIEF's international...

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are yours.

“One of the biggest mistakes you can make as a new leader is to assume that one person has all the facts ... there is simply no reason to rush an administrative decision, especially a critical one,” Crawford writes.

An additional resource for new chiefs is the IAFC's New Chief Leadership Symposium, to be held next month in Phoenix. The two-day program specifically is designed for three- to five-bugle chiefs and will cover critical thinking and decision-making, budgeting, community expectations, political savvy, work-life balance, servant leadership, technology, and even the fun that can be had by being a chief.

Even for those of you who have been sitting in the chief's chair for a long time, it's never too late to become a better leader – and never too soon to help those who will follow in your footsteps.



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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	1

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