



## CAFS Institute

### CAFS Implementation Overview

Fact: Fire departments around the U.S. are adopting Class A and Compressed Air Foam Systems as the new standard for structural fire response. Departments are investing in Compressed Air Foam technology to increase firefighter safety, increase the capability of initial fire attack resources (personnel, water supply, and equipment), and reduce property damage.

What is the Issue (Cause)?

Class A foam, and in particular Compressed Air Foam, represents a radical departure in agent application, operation, and tactical methodologies. Departments often fail to understand the necessity to educate every member about what these new technologies are, how they work, how they are different from plain water, and how to best utilize them. Every member needs to understand the department's goals and results expected from the move to these new operational practices.

Results of the Issue (Effect):

Departments that don't aggressively educate every member on these new technologies frequently suffer the effects of poor implementation. Line firefighters grow to regard the new technology as management's way to keep them outside of fire buildings. Officers, who don't understand what tactical adjustments to make, report seeing extinguishment results that are the same as, or worse than, using plain water. Upper management does not see the return of increased safety, increased fireground efficiency, and decreased property damage that they had expected. These results lead to the overall demise of a technology, then considered, as yet another fire service "smoke-and-mirrors" invention that did not live up to it's hype and was only a costly mistake.

Reality: Every department that moves towards adopting Class A foam and CAFS technology needs an appropriate education and training program to enable success. The issues listed above face every department that begins the implementation process. What is needed is a multi-tiered, integrated approach to educating every department member, from the new recruit to the Chief of the Department, on how to make a successful switch to foam and CAFS. Experience shows that the fire departments who take training and education seriously, have higher rates of successful implementation, benefit by superior foam application results, and increase firefighter safety.