

TITLE: Assessment of Unifying EMBA/Fire Operations and Evaluation of Officers' Leadership Practices in the Clayton County, Georgia Fire Department

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OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this study was to develop recommendations to improve the department's unification of EMS/fire line operations, improve officers' leadership practices supervising EMS personnel, and expand the knowledge for unifying fire/EMS shift operations.

METHODOLOGY: Respondents completed the Leadership Practices Inventory - Observer, and provided demographic and unifying EMS and fire suppression operations information. All 54 employees with the department's EMS Division participated. Sixty-three percent were firefighters and 37 percent were sergeants. About 37 percent had less than five years of experience, 24 percent had 6-10 years, 15 percent had 11-15 years, 11 percent had 16-20 years and 13 percent had 20 years or more experience. All but one respondent was male. The typical respondent was 35-44 years old (44%). Thirty-five percent had completed high school, 44 percent had some college, and the remaining had a college degree or more.

KEY FINDINGS: Respondents perceived the leadership practices of their supervising fire suppression officers as being in the "low range" compared to the Kouzes and Posner normative sample. This was true regardless of demographic characteristics.

"The research findings identify a huge gap between where fire lieutenants are as leaders of EMS personnel and where these fire lieutenants need to be. Analysis of the data establishes high standard deviations for each of the leadership dimensions suggesting that department possess some excellent fire suppression officers, many average officers, but also officers who need to improve the quality of their leadership behaviors" (p. 38).