



# HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

## NEWS RELEASE

### PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **HFD Fire Chief To Return To Station**

Houston Fire Chief Phil Boriskie will be stepping down as City Fire Chief to return to the fire station

**When:** Today, January 19, 2010 @ 8:30 am  
Press Conference

**Where:** 1205 Dart Street, Houston, Texas 77007  
Second Floor Command Room

**What:** After six years as HFD Fire Chief, Phil Boriskie will be stepping down in order to return to his fire station. In a bulletin addressed to all the members of the Houston Fire Department, Boriskie expressed his pride in the department and recounted the progress achieved during his term as Chief.

[Here is the bulletin in its entirety sent earlier this morning:](#)

It has been the honor of my life to serve with you as your Chief for the last six years. In retrospect, my heart never left the Firefighters at the station in our struggles to respond to the emergency needs of this city. While the time has come for me to step aside as Chief, it is my desire to return to the station and continue to serve in this great Department.

There are multiple reasons to be proud of this Department. But above all else, I honor your day to day commitment to meet Houstonians, many in their worst moment of their life, and serve them with Courage, Commitment and Compassion. That speaks louder than any words I can convey.

In spite of some turmoil, the citizens of Houston in an overwhelming majority tell us they approve of the work you do and how you do it. In fact at an 88% approval rating, we are the highest rated Department in this city. Together, over the last six years, we have made the Department better.

In that time, we have upheld and upgraded our status as a national leader in EMS care, pioneering in medical protocols that bring many people back from the brink death.

We have gone from 202 to almost 500 paramedics and we are smarter in how we care for those who call on us when they need us the most. We work better with our city health department for chronic callers, transport to the closest appropriate hospital, and utilize our Tele-nurse program, so we don't just routinely throw an ambulance at a chronic problem; we address the need. That leaves us better prepared to serve people with real emergencies.

In that time we have improved on our aggressive approach to fighting fires, saving more lives and more property. Thanks to your efforts, we now do it all in the best gear and in a way that has reduced by nearly 40 percent the number of injuries to firefighters annually.

We now have more stations, more EMS units, upgraded apparatus, more gear and better technology for saving lives. I thank the citizens of Houston, City Council and Mayor White for their support and for seeing to it that you are better compensated, justifiably so, for the work you do.

Like all large organizations, we struggle with the competing agendas of human beings. I have attempted to lead us through those struggles in the way I believe to be right. I am adamant that

political and personal agendas are detrimental to this Department and can say with conviction that HFD will prevail from the attacks from unknowing critics.

I have chosen to address men and women directly, hearing what is in their hearts and making the right decision based on good counsel. Though not always neat or politically expedient, we are on the path for what is best for the Houston Fire Department.

I do not claim to know it all. But we have set a course to improve the ability of all who chose supervisory roles to be better able to do so with our Officer Development Programs. Through training and better education, the members of this Department are safer and that has always been the hallmark and priority of this Administration.

This journey has touched my heart in ways I will never be able to articulate. In the difficult times we stood side by side at funerals, hospitals, the emergency scene and supported each other like no other.

I ask you to keep in your prayers those Houston Firefighters who have paid the ultimate sacrifice and those who have endured the physical and emotional scars from this work of mercy.

It has been a privilege to be your Fire Chief, but a greater privilege to work by your side as a Houston Firefighter. As always stay safe out there.

Phil Boriskie  
Fire Chief