

Minnesota Department of Public Safety



Fire Safety Account *Financial Report for* *Fiscal Year 2014*

January 2015



Fire Safety Account – Fiscal Year 2014

Overview:

The 2006 Legislature established a fire-safety surcharge on homeowner insurance policies and certain commercial insurance policies, and established the Fire Safety Account to hold revenue generated by the surcharge. The bill abolished the fire insurance tax which had been in law for decades, the proceeds of which went into the state general fund. Insurance companies now submit their surcharge collections quarterly, on or before May 15, Aug. 15, Nov. 15 and Feb.15 each year.

The legislation also created a Fire Service Advisory Committee to make recommendations to the commissioner of public safety on how to spend Fire Safety Account money. These revenues may be allotted only to (1) the Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education (2) programs and staffing for the State Fire Marshal Division, and (3) fire-related, regional response-team programs and other fire service programs that have potential statewide impact. The committee is made up of representatives from state fire service associations, local units of government and the insurance field. The Fire Service Advisory Committee meets quarterly to review the account's status and funding allotments. The committee creates biennial budget recommendations for the commissioner.

Fiscal Year 2014 Budget:

Transfers from the account as established in the base FY14 budget:

- State General Fund – \$2,368,000
- State Fire Marshal Division – \$4,487,000
- Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division – \$604,000
- Board of Firefighter Training and Education – \$2,700,000
- One-time \$1,300,000 appropriation

FY14 Activity Summary:

Balance Forward from FY13	\$3,152,213
Collections from Fire Safety premiums	\$13,192,786
Resources available	\$16,344,999
Transfer to General Fund	\$2,368,000
Transfer to State Fire Marshal Division	\$4,487,000
Transfer to Board of Firefighter Training and Education	\$2,700,000
Transfer to Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division	\$604,000
One-time Appropriation	\$1,300,000
Total Transfers	\$11,459,000
Account Balance end of FY14	\$4,885,999

Board of Firefighter Training and Education (MBFTE):

In FY14, approximately \$2,700,000 was available for Minnesota fire departments, and once more, awards to all 785 Minnesota fire departments were based on a “per firefighter” rate (\$80). The MBFTE chose to award departments based on the number of firefighters on their current roster. No formal applications were required by the MBFTE for a fire department to receive a training reimbursement award. In August 2013, each of Minnesota’s 785 fire departments received an award letter informing them of the amount of funding available for their use on firefighter training during FY14.

Sixty-five percent of the 785 fire departments submitted training reimbursement documentation to the MBFTE — an increase of 5 percent from FY13. First-time applicants to the training reimbursement program numbered 32 fire departments. The average reimbursement was \$3,123.30 based on 511 fire departments seeking training reimbursement funding in FY14. Overall, more than \$1,873,000 in training reimbursements was requested by Minnesota fire departments in FY14.

In FY14:

- Again in FY14, the MBFTE provided reimbursement directly to training providers for NFPA 1001, Firefighter 1, Firefighter 2 and Hazardous Materials Operations training. There was \$1,160,000 available to Minnesota fire departments to pay for this training — enough to fund more than 800 firefighters.
- The MBFTE provided \$60,000 in reimbursement grants to 10 local, regional and statewide fire service organizations for unique training events. These “conference, seminar and symposium” awards made available 10 different training opportunities for 20,000 Minnesota firefighters at a significantly reduced rate.
- There was \$117,000 available for live-burn training throughout Minnesota. The money funded 80 separate live-burn trainings in acquired structures across the state in accordance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1403 standards. NFPA 1403 live-burn training ensures that all live burns in acquired structures were conducted in a safe manner, meeting a nationally recognized standard.
- The MBFTE provided \$100,000 to train Minnesota firefighters in a course called “Incident Safety Officer.” The intent is for firefighters to understand roles and responsibilities of the safety officer on an emergency incident scene. The training has been provided free of charge to more than 400 fire departments in the last two fiscal years and will continue through 2016 to ensure all 785 Minnesota fire departments receive this vital training.

One-time Appropriation for Fiscal Year 2014

The \$1,300,000 one-time appropriation was allocated for the Fire Service Advisory Committee (FSAC) to submit allocation-and-expenditure recommendations to Commissioner of Public Safety Mona Dohman for approval. The committee recommended funding the following:

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| • Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education | \$ 450,000 |
| • Minnesota Task Force 1: equipment, training reimbursements | \$ 350,000 |
| • Minnesota Air Rescue Team: equipment and training | \$ 80,000 |
| • Minnesota Chemical Assessment Teams (10 x \$10,000) | \$ 100,000 |
| • Minnesota Emergency Response Team, St. Paul FD | \$ 20,000 |
| • Shared Fire and Rescue Services Grant Program | \$ 200,000 |
| • State Fire Marshal Division: technology, database upgrade | \$ 100,000 |

Total \$ 1,300,000

State Fire Marshal Division (SFMD):

Approximately 70 percent of the SFMD budget comes from the Fire Safety Account. The remaining 30 percent comes from fees and from contracts for inspection of healthcare and daycare facilities, schools and motels.

FY14 monies provided operation funding for the SFMD

- Health Care and Corrections Facilities Inspection Team
- Public and Charter School Inspection Team
- Residential and Daycare Inspection Team
- Fire Protection Systems Plan Review and Inspection Team
- Fire Investigation Team
- Administrative, Management and other Support Services
- Fire and Life Safety Education
- Youth Firesetter Intervention
- Fire Incident Data Collection and Analysis

Funding from the Fire Safety Account has enabled the SFMD to significantly improve training opportunities for local fire marshals, inspectors and firefighters. One example is the addition of the Fire Protections Systems Training Trailer, a mobile training prop containing a complete, working fire protection (sprinkler) system in a variety of configurations. This allows students to visualize the internal operations of these systems and gain a better understanding of how individual components function during a fire. Since this unit was placed in service, more than 100 classes have trained 2,100+ fire service personnel throughout the state.

Another training aid, currently under development, is the Fire Code Training Trailer. When completed, this unit will contain a variety of training props including a working fire alarm system, kitchen hood fire protection system, several fire doors and egress devices, window systems, and other fire safety and protection features commonly found in buildings. This unit will give fire marshals and inspectors — particularly those new to the job — hands on experience with the devices, and a functional understanding of their operation and purpose.

The Shared Services Program has moved to the implementation phase, and our Fire Services Specialist continues to work with recent award recipients. When studies are completed, fire departments may use shared-service funding to help implement agreed-upon recommendations.

“Shared Services” refers to a number of ways in which fire-and-rescue organizations are working together to become more efficient and effective. The shared services concept may result in cost savings for fire organizations — but it doesn’t always have that result, nor does it mean that fire departments must formally merge to “share services.” The goals are efficiency and effectiveness.

Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HSEM):

In FY14, HSEM continued its focus on upgrading and sustaining equipment for Chemical Assessment Teams (CAT), St. Paul Fire Department Emergency Response Team (ERT) and Minnesota Task Force 1.

Additional funds were used to update standard operating procedures based on shortcomings identified in exercises. Monthly exercises with local police, fire, state response teams, other state agencies, and federal partners allowed us to evaluate, improve and streamline response procedures across the state.

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