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State Fire  
Marshal



## State Fire Marshal

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### State Fire Marshal Update

#### Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association

Congratulations goes out to Elk River Fire Chief John Cunningham, who was elected President of the MSFCA for the next two years. Also congratulations to Pine City Fire Chief Tom Miller, who was elected MSFCA Vice President also for the next two years. Together they will lead the MSFCA, and they will be a great team.

#### Minnesota Fallen Firefighter Memorial Service

This year's memorial event is Sunday, Sept. 24, 2017, and once again it will be located at the site of the fallen firefighters' memorial on the State Capitol grounds. The event starts promptly at 1 p.m. and will include the reading of the names of seven newly discovered fallen firefighters dating back to 1893.

#### Fire Data and Fire Code Team

- Fire in Minnesota – 2016 will be going to print in the next week or so. Some highlights from that report:
  - A fire department response occurs every two minutes in Minnesota.
  - A building fire is reported every 87 minutes.
  - Areas of Minnesota outside of the seven-county metro area tend to have more fire deaths and greater damage.
  - Fire departments responded to 291,456 incidents in 2016 (an increase of 6 percent over 2015).
  - Total fire loss was \$259,063,192 in 2016.
  - Of the state's 779 fire departments, 774 provided data to create Fire in Minnesota – 2016.
- Governor's Fire Prevention Day at the Minnesota State Fair was a success.
- Thanks to the fire safety account, the SFMD has been able to provide over \$76,000 in fire and life safety materials and resources to local fire departments in the past two years.
- So far this year, the SFMD has provided fire investigation and fire prevention training to over 400 fire service personnel; that is 524 hours of class instruction and equates to 6,469 student contact hours.
- In an average year, SFMD personnel travel almost a million miles to provide investigation, inspection, and education services to the citizens of Minnesota.
- In the first two-thirds of 2016, SFMD personnel conducted 1,762 inspections, 794 follow-up inspections, and 338 fire investigations.

## **Fire Code Inquiries**

The fire code team electronically tracks all questions that come in by phone or email sent to fire code or sprinkler email addresses. The questions are categorized by requester, such as general public, design professional, contractor and code official. They are also categorized by code (fire, building, mechanical, sprinkler) or by specific occupancy (school, health care, daycare). Details about the questions are also recorded. We are able to search by keyword, which helps us create a top-five list.

The questions range from simple ones, such as “Where are smoke and CO alarms required in a home?” or “How far should I place the fire pit from my house?” to the more complex. Complex questions involve hazardous materials, above-ground and underground tanks, LP-gas installations, or high-pile combustible storage. The code staff (eight fire code, four sprinkler) monitors the emails and tries to respond within 24 hours (longer for weekends and holidays), but for sure within three days. The more challenging questions may require some research, but staff at least let requesters know they are working on it. Some questions may be answered by looking at one of our [information fact sheets](#) on the SFMD website.

In 2016, there were 2,282 requests for information; 888 by phone, 1,394 by email; and a few by mail. Thirty percent come from code officials, 21 percent from general public, 19 percent from building owners, 17 percent from contractors, and the remaining are from design professionals (architects and engineers) and other government agencies. In 2016, we were averaging 190 requests per month. Totals for 2015 were 2,436 (203 per month) and for 2014 were 1,873 (156 per month). As you can see, there has been about a 23 percent increase since 2014.

If you have any questions about fire code inquiries, please contact [Tom Jenson](#).

## **Fire Code Adoption Update**

Even though it's been a short 15 months following the effective date of the 2015 Minnesota State Fire Code, the process for the next code adoption has already begun. The State Fire Marshal's Code Adoption Committee has met on three occasions so far, with the first meeting held in July. Our code staff also serve on the Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Code Advisory Committee, which held their first meeting of the new adoption cycle in April.

The next code will be based on the 2018 International Fire Code (IFC), which should be available for review by the end of September. And although the 2018 IFC isn't here yet, the code committee has been busy reviewing a list of proposed code changes received over the past 15 months from SFMD staff and local code officials.

The committee's next step will be to identify and evaluate significant changes that occurred in both the 2015 and 2018 editions of the IFC. As with past code adoptions, this process will be a significant undertaking. We anticipate an adoption date for what will be called the 2020 Minnesota State Fire Code sometime in late summer or early fall of 2020.

For questions on the code adoption process or information on how to submit a proposed code amendment, please email SFMD Supervisor Forrest Williams: [forrest.williams@state.mn.us](mailto:forrest.williams@state.mn.us)

## **Fire Prevention Week 2017**

This year Fire Prevention Week (FPW) is October 8-14, and in case you missed it, the theme for 2017 is: Every Second Counts: Plan 2 Ways Out! In a fire, seconds count. Seconds can mean the difference between residents of our community escaping safely from a fire or having their lives end in tragedy.

That's why the theme the NFPA has chosen is so important. It reinforces why everyone needs to have an escape plan. Here are this year's key campaign messages:

- Draw a map of your home with all members of your household, marking two exits from each room and a path to the outside from each exit.
- Practice your home fire drill twice a year. Conduct one at night and one during the day with everyone in your home, and practice using different ways out.
- Teach children how to escape on their own in case you can't help them.
- Make sure the number of your home is clearly marked and easy for the fire department to find.
- Close doors behind you as you leave – this may slow the spread of smoke, heat and fire.
- Once you get outside, stay outside. Never go back inside a burning building.

What is your fire department doing this year? Are you really providing fire safety information for your residents, or are you merely having an open house to show off equipment? Open houses are good for public relations, but they do nothing for fire prevention without an educational component. How are you teaching your citizens to be fire-safe in their own homes? Make this week's FPW more than just open houses and fire station tours. Our fire and life safety educators can assist you with some new ideas and resources.

More resources, including FPW products, infographics and teaching tools, are available on the NFPA website at: <http://www.nfpa.org/public-education/campaigns/fire-prevention-week-audience>.

## **Fire and Life Safety Education**

SFMD is putting together a list of open-house events across the state. To include your event, send department name, address, county, date, time and contact information to [amanda.swenson@state.mn.us](mailto:amanda.swenson@state.mn.us)

Play safe! Be safe! is offering a training on its award-winning fire safety education program here in Minnesota. On Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2017, at New Brighton Fire from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. firefighters, educators, teachers and other care providers are invited to join us. Participants will get an entertaining and fascinating look into the preschool child's perception of fire, the frequent misuse of fire, and practical approaches to teach young children fire safety. All participants will receive a free Play safe! Be safe! kit. Trainers will receive additional Play safe! Be safe! kits for distribution, training slides, notes and a resource list. Don't miss out on this free training opportunity. Play safe! Be safe! only offers four trainings each year across the country. Registration will be on the SFMD website.

## **Recruitment and Retention Program**

Management Analysis and Development (MAD) will be completing the final report on the three-year, 14-county pilot program on firefighter recruitment and retention in Minnesota. The report is due to the Minnesota Legislature by January 15, 2018. Fire departments involved in the three-year pilot program may receive requests for additional information to compete the analysis of the effectiveness of the three-year program.

## **Youth Fire Intervention Training**

A YFPI Specialist course is coming up in October. The goal of this National Fire Academy course is to provide skills and tools necessary to become a Youth Fire Prevention & Intervention Specialist. The class includes: Introduction, Primary Prevention; Identification and Intake; Who Sets Fires and Why; Interviewing and Intervention Strategies; and Introduction to NFPA 1035 Youth Firesetting Intervention.

Program Managers will learn the basics of gathering an effective YFPI team, including mental health, social services, schools, juvenile justice, law enforcement professionals and more. Details:

**YFPI Specialist**  
**Bemidji Fire Station 2**  
**312 Lake Ave SE**  
**Bemidji, MN 56601**  
**October 26 & 27, 2017**

To register, go to: [www.fire.state.mn.us](http://www.fire.state.mn.us).

## **Fire Investigation Team**

The history of fire investigations in Minnesota goes back to the earliest days of the SFMD. When the division was established in 1905, one of its primary functions was fire cause and determination. You should be aware that Minnesota State Statute 299F.04 assigns the responsibility for determining fire cause and origin of fires to the local fire chief.

Fire investigation remains a high priority at SFMD, and our staff continues to provide fire investigations when requested by a local fire department after calling the Minnesota state duty officer. Please call the Minnesota state duty officer to request a SFMD fire investigator to assist you at your incident.

## **Arson Investigation Training**

With Kevin Mahle taking over our training program, we have many changes and updates coming. Our new program updates for the classes will reflect changes in NFPA 921 and 1033. We are also revamping our evidence preservation class that we provide to any fire department free of charge. That is our 2 hour class that can go as long as three hours. This program is redesigned to also be NFPA compliant as well. These updates are rolling out over the next month or so. We will be providing more details about these updates at the Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association Conference in Rochester.

With the changes in training, there has also been a change in territories, so be sure to check the website out to make sure you know who your investigator is.

If you have any questions about our fire investigation team, please email [Jim Iammatteo](mailto:Jim.Iammatteo).

## **Fire Service Specialists (FSS)**

This past quarter the FSS, Tate Mills and John Ehret, have remained focused in three major areas: assisting with the MBFTE, fire department needs and special projects.

- **MBFTE:** Assisting fire departments with submitting their MBFTE paperwork. Over 130 phone calls and contacts made.
- **Fire department needs:** Reached out to 41 departments to assist with NFIRS, assisted three fire departments with the merging process, and assisted several fire departments with city/township issues.
- **Special projects/programs:** In early August the SFMD received \$250,000 for the Service Planning Grants.
- **AFG Grant:** After being successful in an AFG we have received three LP Prop trailers consisting of a car fire, LP tank fire and BBQ fire prop. All three trailers will be ready for use in late fall; contact your training provider. Two more trailers will be received by spring 2018. Minnesota has been selected as the location for the 2018 North American Fire Training Directors Conference (NAFTD). Our intent is to have a location selected and completed by mid-September 2017 so we can begin advertising to our North American fire service partners.

We have applied for a \$20,000 National Fire Academy (NFA) grant. We hope to receive the grant in mid-September. The grant will fund 10 NFA courses. In anticipation of receiving the grant, please contact your training provider if you're interested in hosting an NFA course. Please contact the FSS assigned to your area:

FSS (East) John Ehret 651-323-7134 or [john.ehret@state.mn.us](mailto:john.ehret@state.mn.us)

FSS (West) Tate Mills 320-333-2817 or [tate.mills@state.mn.us](mailto:tate.mills@state.mn.us)

## **Service Planning Grant Program (formerly Shared Services Grant Program)**

Service Planning Grants can be used for information gathering and a variety of studies. Those studies can examine everything from sharing training needs, administrative costs, personnel and equipment, to full consolidation of departments. If a department has an idea, the State Fire Marshal Division (SFMD) wants to hear it.

### **Eligible Use of Funds**

These funds are to be used to pay for (but are not limited to solely paying for) a third-party feasibility study that addresses the study requirements listed below and the options for service planning, including (but not limited to) those provided in "A Blueprint for Shared Services." A prerequisite could also be from a group's independent study done to show that implementation will benefit all groups involved and improve service.

### **Study Requirements**

The study will include:

- A clear set of goals that identifies how the participating fire departments/cities/townships will more efficiently plan for future service improvements in the areas of (but not limited to) training, department administration, personnel, equipment or department consolidation.
- An analysis of the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency response and benefit to the population served.

The study should also take into account:

- Geographic area, population density and other factors that encourage communities' and fire service providers' voluntary participation.
- Funding sources for the project if implemented.
- Cooperative training among departments and equipment procurement between departments.
- Employment issues associated with combining existing agencies and entities into a regional or multi-jurisdictional entity for consolidation projects.
- An analysis of best practices in the creation and functioning of public-safety-related service planning delivery models.
- A preliminary set of operating procedures for cooperative shared fire and rescue service systems.

More information on the Service Planning Grant Program can be found on the SFMD website under the "Service Planning Grant Program" section at [www.sfm.dps.mn.gov](http://www.sfm.dps.mn.gov).

### **Statewide Study on the State of Fire Training in Minnesota**

The SFMD has contracted with MAD to conduct an independent third-party study, the results of which will help provide information and direction regarding the state of firefighter training in Minnesota. The report was completed by June 30, 2017. You can find [the final report](#) on our website.

### **Turnout Gear Washer/Extractor Award Program**

Unfortunately, no funding is available for the Gear Washer/Extractor Award program for fiscal year 2018. A funding request will be presented to the Fire Service Advisory Committee (FSAC) in June of 2018 for funding of the program for fiscal year 2019. We will keep you up to date with any information as it becomes available.

### **Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education (MBFTE)**

It's that time of year again where the MBFTE is working to inform the fire service about the board's funding appropriations for fiscal year 2018. At their Aug. 15 meeting the MBFTE appropriated their \$4.265 million annual budget for fiscal year 2018 in the following manner:

- Fire departments were awarded \$105.50 per firefighter in training reimbursements.
- One thousand seats are available for NFPA 1001 students; the MBFTE will directly reimburse the MN Fire Service Certification Board for the FF1 certification test, while the fire department will be responsible for payment of the FF2 test and then submit that expense to the MBFTE for reimbursement.
- There will be enough funding for 116 live burns in acquired structures.
- \$69,450 was allocated for conferences and seminars grant funding.
- \$44,400 was allocated for two more MBFTE Leadership Development cohorts at Camp Ripley

MBFTE staff, along with the FSS and the MN Fire Certification Board, are doing all they can to communicate the changes in funding from fiscal year 2017 to fiscal year 2018 by attending regional and local meetings. Recently, Margaret Koele and the certification board Executive Director Theresa Zikmund provided their first joint webinar for training providers to educate them on the upgrades made to the shared database.

### **School Inspection Team**

During the summer season, the school inspection team typically takes advantage of mostly empty school buildings to complete follow-up inspections. Follow-ups are conducted to verify the status of corrective items issued during the last interval (three-year) inspection. Summer's also a busy time for inspecting new public and public-charter school buildings preparing to open their doors for the first time. But now that fall is almost here, our inspectors will begin to shift attention back to completing their assigned interval inspections for fiscal year 2018.

As mentioned in the previous update, we've been working on an informational document to provide guidance and resources to schools for developing fire emergency and evacuation plans for mobility-impaired students. This document is a response to several requests from school districts on how to plan for mobility-impaired occupants who may be located above or below the level of exit discharge when elevators are not available. It's essential for schools to develop these plans with input and approval from the local fire official. This document is now available on our website at the following link:

[Evacuation of Mobility Impaired Students.](#)

### **Residential Team Update**

The Residential Care and Lodging (RC&L) team is once again fully staffed with the return of Rich Sorensen from his leave of absence. We are very happy to have Rich back to work full time.

The RC&L team region map has been updated to reflect the new north central region and some other counties changing regions.

The team is working hard to make sure all hotel inspections are on schedule leading up to the 2018 Super Bowl, which is a big challenge considering the number of hotels that are currently under construction

### **Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association Fall Conference**

The Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Conference is October 19-21, 2017 in Rochester. Registration is open for the conference, and once again, it is packed with many excellent educational opportunities, and the vendor show is second to none. The newly remodeled Mayo Civic Center is the site of the conference, and it should be an excellent opportunity to network with fire chiefs from around the state. Go to [www.msfc.org](http://www.msfc.org) for more information.

### **Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety**

Going into the fall season, the Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety is wrapping up inspection work and planning for the next year. MNOPS has recently held one of its many stakeholder meetings with underground utility operators and excavators to review Minnesota's "Call Before You Dig" laws.

MNOPS and industry stakeholders have keyed in on some improvements to consider as future changes. The aim of potential changes is to improve public safety through ensuring the most current, up-to-date, effective laws as possible.

### **2017 Fire Fatalities**

This year is off to a very tragic start, with 38 fire fatalities in comparison to 27 for the same time period in 2016. Please continue to challenge your communities with your fire and life safety messages throughout the year.

With your help and persistence in presenting fire prevention education in your communities, we can make a difference in the number of fire fatalities each and every year. One fire fatality is too many in any community, and we ask that you please continue to keep fire prevention in the forefront with your citizens.

Thank you for your continued support of the SFMD.