



Alcohol and  
Gambling  
Enforcement

Bureau of  
Criminal  
Apprehension

Driver  
and Vehicle  
Services

Emergency  
Communication  
Networks

Homeland  
Security and  
Emergency  
Management

Minnesota  
State Patrol

Office of  
Communications

Office of  
Justice Programs

Office of  
Pipeline Safety

Office of  
Traffic Safety

State Fire  
Marshal



## State Fire Marshal

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### State Fire Marshal Update

#### 2017 Legislative Session

The 2017 legislative session has passed the halfway point, and the adjournment date is set for May 22, 2017. Please continue to follow the Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association (MSFCA) and the Minnesota State Fire Department Association (MSFDA) for updates. They work very hard for all firefighters in Minnesota, and you must do your part by staying in touch with your local legislators regarding key fire service issues.

With this legislative session being a two-year budget-setting session, the fire service is working to ensure the Fire Safety Account is used for areas supporting the Minnesota fire service.

Expansion of legalized fireworks is moving through the legislative process with Representative Rarick's sponsored bill, House File (HF) 329. I have testified against this expansion of fireworks due to the increased consumer injuries and additional property loss that could be expected.

The bill to move the adoption of future fire codes from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) to the State Fire Marshal Division (SFMD) was introduced, but will not be moving forward during the 2017 session. Many interested parties will work on it over the summer to see if it can be accomplished during the 2018 legislative session.

The Cancer Registry Bill HF 1295 will create a state-based cancer registry that will enable researchers to conduct focused research on cancer incidence among firefighters. We hope this research will lead to improved safety precautions and protocols for firefighters and most importantly to lower cancer risks.

#### 2016 State Fire Marshal Division Annual Report

Our annual report was for many years included in the SFMD *Fire in Minnesota* publication, which consisted mainly of statistics. This new, independent Annual Report details the diverse accomplishments of the SFMD staff in 2016 and provides a narrative description of each of our SFMD teams (school, health care, investigations, etc.) activities.

Statistics contained here compare the results of this year's efforts with those from previous years. You will also find information on the division's history, along with a staff list and contact information. We hope you will use this report as a resource throughout the year.

Our 2016 Annual Report will soon be posted on the SFMD website. We look forward to receiving your feedback on it.

## **Fire Data and Fire Code Team**

When filling out your incident reports, remember to include any civilian injuries at structure fires. It is important for our office to have those statistics along with the required fire fatality notifications. Our fire data team also wants to compile accurate statistics on how many structure-fire-related injuries occurred throughout the state on a year-to-year basis.

### **Fire reporting**

Thank you for entering and submitting your 2016 calls into the Minnesota Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS). We are proud that the Minnesota fire service has one of the best fire reporting systems and one of the highest reporting percentages — 99 percent — in the country. For 2016, all but 7 of the 780 Minnesota fire departments submitted their incident reports. That is an all-time reporting record with nearly 294,000 reports submitted to our office.

We are currently working with ImageTrend — our fire reporting software vendor — on a new fire investigation module. Preliminary reviews point to it being a very robust system with many more features than the existing module. We hope to have this project completed by Aug. 1, 2017. Once completed, it will be available for use by any fire department that has an interest. The point of contact for more information is [Scott Radke](#).

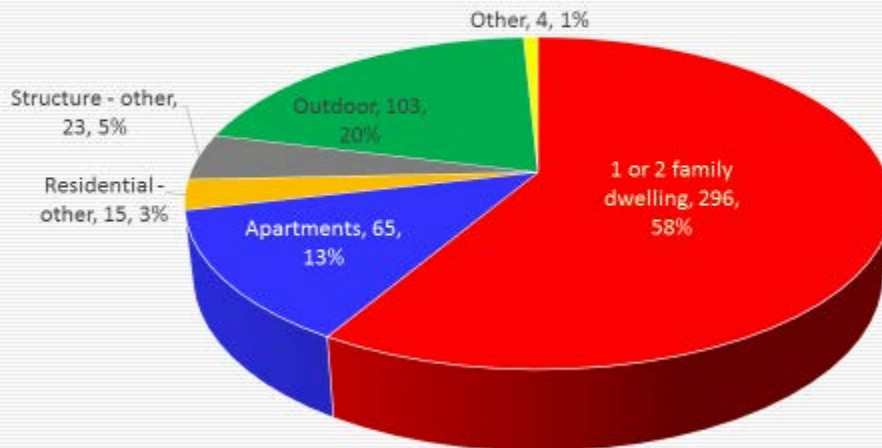
### **Fire deaths in 2016**

Unofficially, there were 36 fire deaths in 2016. That is the second-lowest number ever. The following chart looks at fire deaths over the past 10 years.



As we continue to review the fire deaths each year in Minnesota, one statistic continues to focus our fire and life safety educators' attention. The place where citizens are dying is in the place they feel the safest: their own home. Please take a minute to look at the following chart on fire fatalities by location.

## Location of Fire Fatalities 2004-2015



### State Fire Marshal Conference

The 2017 Fire Marshal Conference will be April 11 and 12 at the Ramada Plaza Minneapolis. Classes include fire code issues, fire investigations, fire sprinkler systems, smoke control, food trucks, fire safety education and more. For more information, please contact Deputy State Fire Marshal [Kevin McGinty](#) or visit the [SFMD website](#) for registration information.

### 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, day care). Details about the questions are also recorded. We are able to search by keywords, which helps us create a top-five list.

The questions range from simple ones about “where smoke and CO alarms are required in a home” or “how far to 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.

For 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 and Life Safety Education**

There are a couple of upcoming trainings in public education. The first one which will be the day before the SFMD conference, will focus on fire and fall prevention in older adults. Our population in Minnesota is getting older, and we are seeing this reflected in the number of fire deaths and injuries as well as our rates of falls in older adults. The second training will focus on how our communities, neighborhoods and families are changing and how that might affect fire risk. Details for each class are below with registration on the [SFMD website](#).

### **Remembering When – Fire and Fall Prevention for Older Adults**

Brooklyn Center Fire Department  
6250 Brooklyn Boulevard, Brooklyn Center  
Monday, April 10, 2017  
10 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Free

Would you like to...

- Learn about a nationally recognized fire and fall prevention program for older adults in your community?
- Help older adults live safely at home longer?
- Connect with other professionals working to improve quality of life for older adults?

### **Changing American Family at Risk**

Course dates: July 31-August 5  
Location: Camp Ripley  
Cost: Meals and lodging at Camp Ripley if needed (\$7.75 per meal and \$30 per night)

This six-day course emphasizes the strategies for reaching America's families to protect them from fire. It is less about the families themselves and more about safety strategies at the neighborhood level. Students learn behavioral change from a family-based, neighborhood perspective.

The course teaches approaches to create positive fire safety interventions for the individual and the family. Students engage in new strategies for establishing positive relationships that lead to behavioral change. The course also presents future strategies to create sustainable change in the neighborhood, resulting in a reduction of the fire problem.

### **Messaging Guide**

SFMD and MSFCA put together a messaging guide to give departments across the state consistent messages for public education topics. There is a wide variety of topics with short and simple messages. The guide is laid out in an easy flip-chart format, which gives firefighters a visual aid to show the public. We are down to the final quantities of the guide. If your departments has not yet received the

guide, or you are in need of additional copies, please contact [Amanda Swenson](#), [Kathi Osmonson](#) or one of the fire service specialists.

### **Youth Firesetter Intervention**

The Minnesota Youth Fire Intervention Team has a new program manager in Dakota County. Andy Hamlin took a position outside of the fire service, so please welcome Tim Congdon to the team! You can contact him by phone (715-781-1967) or [email](#).

To view the updated map or download any forms that you might need, please visit the [SFMD website](#).

The MSFCA is now the fiscal agent for the Minnesota Youth Fire Intervention Team (YFIT). The team is seeking donations to reimburse volunteer members who conduct interventions with firesetters and attend trainings on their own time. If you are interested in making a charitable donation, the MSFCA is a 501c(3) corporation and funds can be sent to:

Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association  
2704 Mounds View Boulevard  
Mounds View, MN 55112

\* make sure to note YFIT in the memo line

If you have any questions, please email [Kathi Osmonson](#) or call her at 651-201-7220.

### **Fire Service Specialists**

Fire Service Specialists Kevin Sedivy, Tate Mills and new hire John Ehret have been busy with firefighter training listening sessions and regional and county fire chiefs' meetings, and have been making contact with fire departments about different issues facing today's fire service. They have reviewed the recommendations of the Shared Services Program study, have renamed it "Service Planning Grant Program," and have developed a plan for the four specific recommendations and presented it to the Fire Service Advisory Committee.

Some of the more recent issues they have assisted departments with are developing standard operating procedures/guidelines, mutual aid/auto aid agreements, recruitment and retention issues, fire district/jurisdiction challenges and assisting the Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education (MBFTE). They have also been a resource for newly appointed chiefs in establishing necessary resources and contacts. If they don't know, they will find it for you!

If you need help with an issue of any kind, you can contact the Fire Service Specialists:

- Fire Service Specialist East – Kevin Sedivy: [kevin.sedivy@state.mn.us](mailto:kevin.sedivy@state.mn.us) or at 651-295-1639.
- Fire Service Specialist West – Tate Mills: [tate.mills@state.mn.us](mailto:tate.mills@state.mn.us) or at 320-333-2817.
- Fire Service Specialist South – John Ehret: [john.ehret@state.mn.us](mailto:john.ehret@state.mn.us) or at 651-323-7134

### **School Inspection Team**

The SFMD would like to congratulate Deputy State Fire Marshal Brad Lundquist on his recent retirement after over 18 years with the division. Brad spent all 18 years with the school inspection team, inspecting public and charter schools throughout central Minnesota. Brad's tireless dedication to school fire safety was evident to all who worked with him. Congratulations to Brad on an outstanding career!

We'd also like to welcome Deputy State Fire Marshal Kevin McGinty as our new school inspector for the central region, filling the vacancy Brad left. As many of you know, Kevin has been with the division for over six years, holding the positions of code specialist and code development and training coordinator.

Kevin brings nearly 40 years of fire service experience to the school inspection program, and we are very fortunate to have him on board. Kevin's inspection region includes the counties of Morrison, Mille Lacs, Kanabec, Stearns, Wright, Isanti, Chisago, Kandiyohi, Meeker, Anoka, Washington, Sherburne and Benton.

Kevin's contact information, along with that of other school inspectors, can be found at the following link: [SFMD Inspectors and Investigators by County](#).

### **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.

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

### **Fire Marshal Support Staff**

We are very pleased to announce that Nate Le (one "e") has joined our support staff, manning the sprinkler desk. Nate brings with him a degree in computer programming, a ready smile, and an eagerness to learn his new role. He already has made some fresh observations and technical improvements to our traditional way of doing a few things.

Annette Lindstrom moved from the sprinkler desk to a new position with Fiscal, where she will have more opportunity to use her accounting degree. While with SFMD, Annette put her software skills to work, making several much-appreciated updates to the tools we use every day. Just a few of her many updates include streamlining and updating the application and renewal forms used by the sprinkler contractors and fitters, and creating a multi-purpose, user-friendly registration spreadsheet for use by the SFMD conference team. Thanks to Annette for her positive attitude, professionalism, and team spirit while she was in charge of the sprinkler desk.

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

The MBFTE is very much involved in the Firefighter Training Study that is being conducted by MAD. 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, and must be completed by June 30, 2017. MAD is leading several initiatives in this training study, consisting of:

- A survey of attendees conducted at the MN Fire Chiefs' Conference (project kickoff in October).
- Group interviews with the MBFTE's Executive Committee and Training Committee members (Nov-Dec).
- Individual interviews with fire chiefs from ten of the fifteen MSFDA regions (Dec-Jan).
- Individual interviews with public and private training providers (Dec-Jan).
- Listening sessions provided at eight different locations throughout the state (Jan-March). Host cities that have been selected for afternoon and evening listening sessions are:
  - Thief River Falls, Wadena, Willmar, Windom, Virginia, Pine City, Inver Grove Heights, and Rochester.

With the listening sessions concluded, the final piece in the information gathering for MAD is to send out a [link](#) for firefighters across the state who were unable to attend any of the listening sessions to provide input on firefighter training. The link will stay active for three or four weeks, and then MAD will be working to complete the study by June 30, 2017.

### **Recruitment and Retention Stipend Pilot Program**

Eligibility packets for the 2016 program year will be mailed out in January 2017 with a submission deadline of April 15, 2017. In order to reduce the redundancy of asking for the same information, roster data submitted for the stipend program will be uploaded to the MBFTE database to meet their roster submission requirements. Any questions regarding the Recruitment and Retention program should be directed to [Nanci Libor](#).

### **State Fire Marshal Division Strategic Plan**

The Minnesota State Fire Marshal Division (SFMD) engaged employees, managers and executives, partner organizations, and members of the public in a process of strategic planning in order to guide continuous improvement in the next three to five years. The SFMD retained consulting firm Ethical Leaders in Action (ELA) to provide a third-party perspective for this process.

The planning process revealed many strengths, along with some areas for improvement. Of particular note was the degree to which outside stakeholders wanted the SFMD to play a more prominent role as a resource and as a coordinator in the state's fire service. We also identified staffing as an emerging risk factor: given the tenure of its workforce, the SFMD will face challenges maintaining the level of expertise exhibited by its current teams over time.

The SFMD strategic planning process was launched in the first quarter of 2016. The objectives of the project were to:

- Develop this strategic plan to guide the agency, which includes priorities, goals and initiatives based on an objective understanding of both the organization's current capabilities and the relevant needs of stakeholders.
- Determine how the SFMD and its units should focus effort and resources over the next 3-5 years to maintain and enhance its capacity to pursue its mission and increase efficiency in partnership with other agencies.
- Engage SFMD leaders and external stakeholders in substantive conversations about the desired future of the SFMD.

## **Strategic plan recommendations and opportunities**

The purpose of a strategic plan is to guide continuous improvements. The Minnesota SFMD will pursue the following strategic initiatives over the next three to five years:

1. **Internal staff development.** This includes enhanced staff training, knowledge sharing, and external benchmarking. It also includes some reorganization to rationalize reporting structures and spans of control. Finally, SFMD will put in place strategic recruiting measures to assure excellent staffing in the future.
2. **Investigations and interface with criminal enforcement.** SFMD will study and, if necessary, improve investigative methods to assure effective prosecution. The agency will continue to develop relationships with law enforcement agencies. It will also study whether new legislation, or enforcing current legislation, could help assure that SFMD coordinates all fatal fire investigations in the state. SFMD will continue to assure scene safety for investigators in light of potentially new threats.
3. **Solidified role in supporting MN fire service.** Multiple stakeholders asserted that centralization of some functions could improve access to services and/or save money (for local agencies and overall). First, SFMD will study whether consolidating MBFTE with the Certification Board would yield overall cost savings given their parallel charters and very similar administrative demands of firefighter licensure and firefighter certification. SFMD will also consider expanding its training function either to become a premier provider of firefighter professional training, or to be a clearinghouse for training provided through others.
4. **Considered policy leadership.** Association stakeholders expressed their strong desire for a greater advocacy role from the SFMD. Agency leaders acknowledge that one way to pursue the mission of the SFMD – “to protect lives and property by fostering a fire-safe environment...” – is through legislative influence and a higher public profile on issues of fire and public safety.

Implementing this strategic plan will require creativity and commitment from SFMD employees and partners in other agencies and organizations. It is precisely those capacities that have earned the SFMD a reputation for excellent service and for being a great partner and asset to the community. SFMD leaders appreciate all those who shared their time and insights with the strategic planning team as the agency paused in its work to think strategically. To review the entire strategic plan document, please visit the SFMD website at [www.sfm.dps.mn.gov](http://www.sfm.dps.mn.gov).

## **Residential Team Update**

Residential Care and Lodging (RC&L) Supervisor Glen Bergstrand will retire on April 18, 2017. The RC&L Team anticipates the addition of 900 new hotel rooms opening in the metro area by the end of May 2017 and another 930 rooms by February 2018.

It is with great pleasure that I announce the new RC&L Team Supervisor. Deputy State Fire Marshal Ryan Whiting. Ryan has been with the division since 2009, working the northwest region of the state. Before coming to SFMD, Ryan held positions as the building official for the City of Grand Rapids, a residential building contractor, and a maintenance supervisor for the City of Bemidji.

In addition to his regular duties as an inspector with the RC&L team, Ryan is also serving as the chairperson for the Fire Marshal Code Advisory Panel (FMCAP). And, as many of you saw last year at the SFMD Fall Staff Conference, he has done a wonderful job at creating, building and outfitting the Structural Fire Protection Demonstration trailer.



The SFMD is very confident that Ryan will be able to assume this role and continue to guide, mentor and lead the team as his predecessor, so expertly modeled. Ryan will assume his new duties on April 19, 2017.

Congratulations, Ryan!

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

Licensing Coordinator Margaret Koele has been extremely busy processing more than 3,000 license renewals. These renewals happen every three years, and 75 percent of the licenses in our database come due in June of 2017.

Fire departments were recently notified of their obligation to upload their rosters to the MBFTE for the upcoming fiscal year awards. Each year, the MBFTE uses the current roster numbers provided by each department to calculate their training reimbursement awards on a per firefighter basis.

Governor Dayton recently announced appointments to the 15-member board of the MBFTE. Jim Fisher (Zim, MN) was reappointed to represent the MN Association of Townships; Becki White (Eden Prairie FD) was appointed to replace Dean Wrobbel (St. Cloud FD) as one of the MSFCA representatives; and Natascha Hennen (Freeport FD) was appointed to replace Amanda MacDonell (Grand Rapids FD) from the MSFDA. Dean served the board for five years and Amanda had served the board for eight years. Jim Fisher has now served four consecutive four-year terms and has been on the board since its inception.

The MBFTE has also been involved with this legislative session in that an increase to the appropriation of the Fire Safety Account could mean a significant increase in the MBFTE's base budget. This increase would allow for the MBFTE to more adequately fund their priorities on a more consistent basis from year to year rather than having significant swings in funding.

The Fire Service Specialists have been working in tandem with the MBFTE to follow up with fire departments and training providers to ensure that the projects funded for reimbursements are being used to their fullest potential. These efforts require a lot of windshield time and cellular data, but we are confident in seeing a continued increase in the use of the reimbursement program.

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

The Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety (MNOPS) has wrapped up another year of carrying out its public safety role in Minnesota. MNOPS inspectors conducted over 7,500 hours of pipeline inspections throughout Minnesota in 2016. MNOPS is gearing up once again to conduct annual pipeline safety inspections and education once again in 2017. The early months of each year are spent planning for inspections and preparing educational presentations for excavators regarding safe digging practices.

We are very excited to announce that we have two new inspectors on board to assist us in our pipeline safety role. Scott Hand and Jon Sogard have recently joined the MNOPS staff and will be assigned to Damage Prevention and our Large Operator Inspection Team.

### **Minnesota State Fire Department Association**

- The 142<sup>nd</sup> Annual MSFDA Conference will be June 8-10, 2017, in Brainerd. Registration packets were mailed out in January 2017. And we will put updates on our Facebook page.
- **The 143<sup>rd</sup> Annual MSFDA Conference will be APRIL 25-28, 2018, in Alexandria.** We're hoping this will be a better time of year and that we can get more people in attendance
- The MN Firefighter Newspaper is \$7 for a year subscription (six issues). We're looking for departments for "Showcase Your Department" (explain what "showcase your dept." is)

### **Fire Fatalities**

We have had a very tragic start to 2017 with 17 fire fatalities in comparison to 10 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.