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State Fire Marshal

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State Fire Marshal Update

2017 Legislative Session

The 2017 legislative session has completed its work, Governor Dayton has signed the budget bills, and we will therefore continue with business as usual. Thank you to the Minnesota fire service and the Minnesota Families and Advocates Coalition (MnFAC) for all their hard work during the legislative session and the support for additional funding for the State Fire Marshal Division (SFMD) and the Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education (MBFTE).

The Fire Safety Account funding for the next two years will be as follows:

SFMD	\$6,274,000 (additional \$300,000 federal fund reduction)
MBFTE	\$4,265,000 (up from \$2,913,000 base budget)
Minnesota Task Force 1	\$500,000 per year for two years
Minnesota Air Rescue Team	\$250,000 per year for two years
Hazardous Materials Teams	\$850,000 per year for two years
ERT Teams as recommended	\$675,000 per year for two years
	\$225,000 to Duluth and St Cloud, \$125,000 to St Paul, and \$100,000 to Moorhead

The bill to move the adoption of future fire codes from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) to the SFMD was introduced but will not be moving forward during the 2017 session. We will work on this over the summer with many interested parties to see if this we can accomplish it during the 2018 legislative session.

Fire Data and Fire Code Team

Fire protection demonstration trailer

So far this year, 356 firefighters and fire inspectors have been trained using our fire protection system demonstration trailer. This is a wonderful training tool that helps demystify fire sprinkler, fire alarm, and fire standpipe systems. The trailer is pretty heavily scheduled for the rest of this season. Because it has water-based systems, it goes into storage when the temperatures turn cold. Jon Nisja from our office schedules the trailer, so if you are looking for training ideas for 2018, contact him at jon.nisja@state.mn.us.



Fire Data Team

We are in our 10th year of a contract with ImageTrend to provide us with our fire data system and the Minnesota Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS). ImageTrend is going through a conversion to their new “Elite” product. One of the first modules to be rolled out in Elite is their fire investigation module. The SFMD’s investigation and data teams have worked closely with ImageTrend on this new software. We will be converting our own investigation system to the Elite format in the upcoming weeks. We hope this will become the new “gold standard” for a fire investigation data system across the country.

The fire data team is in the final draft of the Fire in Minnesota 2016 report. Fire department participation was up; 774 of the state’s 779 fire departments supplied their fire incident data. This is the highest reporting we have experienced. The Fire in Minnesota 2016 report should be completed and back from the printer by mid-September. Highlights from the report:

- Total incidents responded to by fire departments was up by 6% over 2015
- Fires were down by 6%; most of the decrease coming in the “other fires” category (grass fires, vegetation fires, outdoor fires, trash fires, etc.)
- Total dollar loss in 2016 was over \$259 Million; an increase of 16% from 2015

Personnel / Hiring:

- Kevin McGinty transferred to the School Inspection team. Kevin's former position as code and training coordinator will be posted soon so that people can apply for it.
- We also are advertising for a fire protection engineer to fill a long-vacant position in our office. The fire protection engineer position can help out with complex and technical fire safety and fire protection issues and assist local code officials.
- Kevin Sedivy moved to residential, so another fire service specialist position will open soon.

SFMD, the Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety (MNOPS) and MBFTE will all have booths at Governors Fire Prevention Day at the State Fair on Friday, August 25.

Look for the new Quick Response Newsletter coming out soon. Several years ago, we published a series of one-page newsletters on topics related to fire sprinkler systems. We somewhat ran out of topics on sprinklers but are now expanding the Quick Response newsletter to include a wide variety of fire safety, fire prevention, and fire protection topics. We hope to have these newsletters published at least once a month and possibly twice a month. Look for these newsletters to come your way in the next month or two.

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 about "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 Alarm Training Sponsored by Fire Marshals Association of Minnesota (FMAM)

Fire Alarm Two-Day Seminar

August 14-15, 2017

Registration at 7:30 a.m.; seminar starts at 8:00 a.m.

Registration fee: \$75.00

Location: Shakopee Fire Station, 2700 Vierling Drive E. Shakopee, MN 55379

Please email any questions to KSkow-Fiske@rogersmn.gov

Presented by John Swanson, SFMD

This seminar will cover the following topics:

- **Fire Alarm Basics:** This course will provide some of the basics that make up a fire alarm system and is intended for inspectors and fire alarm technicians new to the profession. Topics to be discussed include: different types of fire panels, addressable vs. non-addressable fire alarm systems, alarm vs. supervisory vs. trouble signals, different types of fire alarm circuits, different types of initiating devices, types of notification appliances, and emergency voice alarm communication systems vs. temporal 3 and 4 (horn) systems.
- **Inspection, Testing and Maintenance:** This course will discuss whether the issue of unwanted fire alarm calls can be fixed and how inspection, testing and maintenance of fire alarm systems play an important role in reducing unwanted alarm calls in your community. Topics to be discussed include: the role of the fire alarm designer; technician and authority having jurisdiction in reducing unwanted alarms; Minnesota State Fire Code (MSFC) criteria for inspection, testing and maintenance; and how initiating devices and notification appliances should be tested in accordance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 72.
- **Fire Alarm Plan Review:** This course is designed for the code official or fire alarm designer responsible for reviewing, inspecting or designing fire alarm systems. This advanced fire alarm class will cover such topics as: fire alarm fundamentals, including battery calculations and voltage drop calculations; initiating device installation criteria depending on ceiling configuration; audible and visible notification appliance installation; audibility vs. intelligibility when dealing with emergency voice alarm communication systems; and compliant vs. non-compliant methods for transmitting the fire alarm signal from the protected premises to the supervising station.

You can find the [registration form](#) on MBFTE's website.

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 (PDF) 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

Youth Fire Prevention and Intervention materials at your fingertips

The SFMD sponsored a Go Bag project for the Minnesota Youth Fire Intervention Team. This Go Bag will help you to respond quickly to a youth firesetter and their family. The bag includes everything you will need to complete the assessment and start the intervention process. Our goal is to have one trained YFPI Specialist and a Go Bag in each county across the state. Some counties may need more due to higher volumes of intervention needs. If you are interested in being the YFPI point person for your county, contact [Kathi Osmonson](#).

Smoke alarm testing sticks

If your department could use smoke alarm testing sticks to help remind at-risk residents to test their smoke alarms and prevent them from climbing on unsafe stools, chairs or other items to test alarms, contact [Amanda Swenson](#) or [Kathi Osmonson](#). The sticks also come with an educational component about effectively reaching and educating older adults who currently are one of our highest-risk populations in the state.

Play safe! Be safe!

Play safe! Be safe! is offering a training on its award-winning fire safety education program here in Minnesota. On Tuesday, November 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 for 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 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 State Fire Marshal website.

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](mailto:Jim.Iammatteo).

Fire Service Specialists (FSS)

FSSs John Ehret (East) and Tate Mills (West) continue to visit with Fire Departments one-on-one, and attend Regional and County Fire Chief s meetings. With the recent transfer of FSS Kevin Sedivy to the Residential Care and Lodging Team (RCL), the state has been split into East and West regions until the hiring of a third FSS South position.

The end of the state's fiscal year has kept them busy with helping departments submit their MBFTE roster info (for the new fiscal year) and training invoices to the MBFTE (for the past fiscal year). They also continue to help departments with administrative issues such as City/Township contract disputes, SOP/SOG development, training, and personnel issues.

The FSSs are also available for help with management of large incidents and resource allocation with the help of the local Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association (MSFCA) representative. They can be contacted through the Minnesota state duty officer for large incidents at 800-422-0798 or in the metro area at 651-649-5451.

For all other requests, contact the FSS directly:

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

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

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.

Recruitment and Retention Stipend Pilot Program

In 2016 we once again received applications and rosters from all 125 qualified fire departments and 67 qualified EMS organizations. As a result, 3,118 volunteers will be receiving the \$500 stipend for the 2016 program year. The stipend payments for the final year of the program were dispersed to the designated municipalities for all eligible fire and EMS organizations on July 15, 2017. As a reminder, the individual stipend payments to the volunteers must be made by September 15, 2017.

The Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Stipend pilot program was in place for the years 2014, 2015, and 2016. A final report summarizing the three year program will be presented to the legislature in January 2018.

Any questions regarding the Recruitment & Retention program should be directed to Nanci Libor at nanci.libor@state.mn.us.

Turnout Gear Washer/Extractor Award Program

The Gear Washer/Extractor Award program for fiscal year 2017 was able to provide a total of \$300,000 to 41 fire departments to assist with the purchase and installation of a turnout gear washer/extractor. All 41 departments have completed their purchase and installation of their turnout gear washer/extractors. Any questions regarding the Turnout Gear Washer/Extractor Award program should be directed to Nanci Libor at nanci.libor@state.mn.us.

Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education (MBFTE)

“Deadlines” is the theme for the MBFTE at this time of year, as the MBFTE staff has been very busy processing a record amount of fire department and training provider reimbursement requests in anticipation of the August 1 deadline for fire departments to submit their invoices. The fire service was awarded more than \$8 million in fiscal year 2017 for various training reimbursement opportunities, and many have taken advantage of the funding that is available.

The MBFTE will finish out this year’s reimbursement period by doing a reallocation of funds to those departments who submitted eligible reimbursement expenses that exceeded their original award amount. This reallocation will occur after the August 1 deadline and before the August 11 deadline that the Department of Public Safety has to close the financials on fiscal year 2017.

The MBFTE, along with the fire service specialists, have been busy assisting fire departments in uploading their rosters into our database by July 1, which is an annual requirement for departments in order for them to determine their reimbursement award in the next fiscal year.

Applications for the MBFTE’s Conferences and Seminars Grant were due on July 7, and now the committee will pore over the 37 different grant requests in the next few weeks so they can provide recommendations to the board at their August 15 meeting to decide which of these projects should be considered for funding, and how much.

Lastly, June 30 was the deadline for licensed firefighters to renew their three-year license with the MBFTE. Nearly 4,000 licensees were due to renew their licenses this year, so you can imagine how busy our Licensing Coordinator Margaret Koele has been with this project in addition to her other duties!

School Inspection Team

Last month the school team wrapped up its remaining inspections for the year, completing a total of 496 assigned school inspections for fiscal year 2017. In addition, the school team conducted another 64 site-visits, consultations, and agency-requested inspections, and 334 follow-up inspections – for a total of 894 inspection reports generated in fiscal year 2017.

Another project nearing completion is the development of a new document designed to assist schools when developing fire safety and evacuations plans for mobility impaired students. We hope to have it completed and available on our website within the next few weeks.

Schools are advised to consult with their local fire official when developing these plans, as evacuation assistance may be necessary when students are located on floors above or below grade-level and elevators is not available due to Phase I recall. If the plan includes the use of a temporary staging area, such as relocating a student to a separate fire area, stairway enclosure, or rescue room; it’s essential that the responding fire department is familiar with the school’s procedures and staging locations.

The NFPA has published two documents that schools may find helpful when developing emergency evacuation plans. Although our new document focuses on school buildings, the NFPA links below planning guides can be applied to a wide range of occupancy types:

- [Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities](#)

- [Personal Emergency Evacuation Planning Tool for Students with Disabilities](#)

Residential Team Update

RCL continues to provide timely and professional service to its customers as it transitions from the leadership of Glen Bergstrand to that of new supervisor Ryan Whiting. Kevin Sedivy has been promoted from fire service specialist to deputy state fire marshal – inspector on RCL and is assigned to the newly aligned North Central region. The RCL West Central, Central and Northeast regions have had minor changes as well. Even while being short-staffed, the team completed all mandatory hotel inspections on schedule for Fiscal Year 2017.

RCL is seeing an increase in workload coming into fiscal year 2018 as the Department of Human Services (DHS) adds programs and many new hotels are being constructed. A major goal for fiscal year 2018 is to be 100 percent on-schedule with hotel inspections leading up to the Super Bowl in February 2018.

Fire Investigation Training

Effective July 1, 2017, the SFMD is making a change to our fire investigation training coordination. For a number of years, Fire Investigator Casey Stotts has also been our lead person on fire investigation training. Fire Investigator Kevin Mahle will now be our coordinator for all internal and external fire investigation training across the state of Minnesota. If you have questions in regards to fire investigation training, please contact Kevin Mahle at kevin.mahle@state.mn.us

Chief Fire Investigator Jim Iammatteo is in the process of reorganizing the territories for the 11 fire investigators, and the new map will be provided to the fire departments in the near future. Your area may or may not be affected by this coverage area change for our division fire investigators. If you ever have any questions in reference to fire investigations in your area, please contact Jim at james.iammatteo@state.mn.us

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 for more information.

Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety

The Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety (MNOPS) recently completed its annual field audit with the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). Each year a PHMSA evaluator travels to Minnesota to observe MNOPS inspectors in the field. The evaluator ensures that MNOPS inspections are thorough, accurate and in compliance with internal procedures and guidelines. This year, the evaluator observed four inspectors in the metro and outstate areas. This year's inspection went very well and many positive things were pointed out by the evaluator.

Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM)

- Assessed impacts of 2017 legislature.
- Requested FSA funding to finish monitor upgrade project and replace handheld radios.
- Facilitated initial executive steering committee (chiefs) meeting.

- Began joint review of Admin. Rules Chapter 7514.
- Working on establishing specifications for replacement response vehicles.
- Changing term of reference to “state hazardous materials response teams.”

2017 Fire Fatalities

This year is off to a very tragic start, with 32 fire fatalities in comparison to 24 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.