



Alcohol and  
Gambling  
Enforcement

Bureau of  
Criminal  
Apprehension

Driver  
and Vehicle  
Services

Emergency  
Communication  
Networks

Homeland  
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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 start of the 2017 legislative session was Jan. 3. 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.

Fire Service Day at the Capitol is on Feb. 2. For more information or to sign up, [use this link](#) from the MSFDA.

#### 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 also have those statistics along with the required fire fatality notifications. Our fire data team staff 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

Please enter 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. All 2016 responses should be entered into MFIRS by Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2017.

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. Point of contact for more information is [Scott Radke](#).

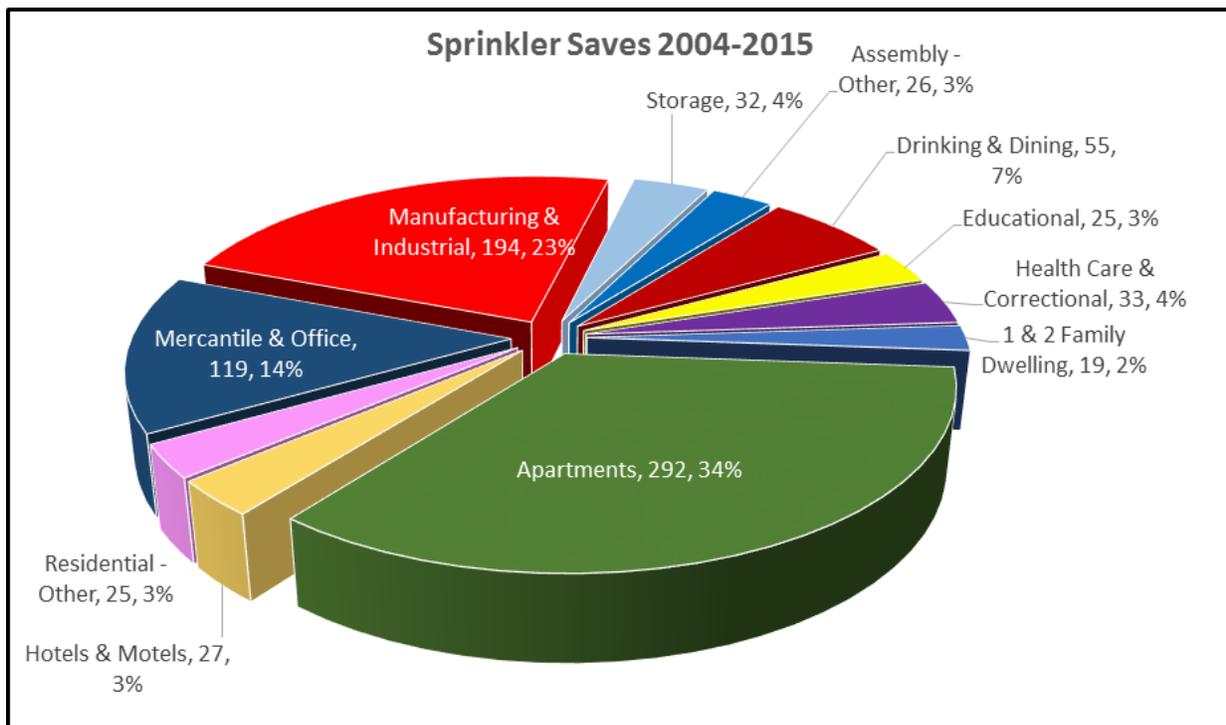
#### Fire deaths in 2016

Unofficially, there were 36 fire deaths in 2016. That is the second-lowest number ever.

#### Sprinkler saves

For the past 12 years, we have been tracking sprinkler saves. We are averaging about 80 sprinkler saves per year, or about one every five days, in Minnesota. The leading occupancy for sprinkler saves is apartment buildings. Some points about sprinklers:

- Providing sprinkler protection in apartments is relatively new in the codes (only since 1989), so for apartment sprinkler saves to top the list of occupancies is pretty remarkable.
- This is evidence that residential sprinklers work.



### Fire code update classes

To date, eight classes have been given with two remaining in the early months of 2017. Here are some of the comments from the evaluations:

- “Great class.”
- “Instructors made a dry topic interesting to learn.”
- “I always leave your presentations with something I can use out in the field.”
- “The interaction of the instructors and students was very good.”

These classes have been approved for CEUs for building officials.

Here are the remaining class dates and locations:

- Jan. 24-25 at the New Ulm Fire Department.
- Feb. 1-2 at the Andover Fire Department.

You can register for a class on our [website](#).

### Additional Training Opportunities

There are two institutes this time of year – January at the [University of Minnesota](#) and February at [Upper Great Plains Educational Institute](#) in Chaska. Staff from the State Fire Marshal Division (SFMD) will be presenting at both institutes.

There will be a Public Education Workshop on Wednesday, March 1 at Minneapolis Firefighters Hall & Museum featuring national and state leaders. This is intended to give educators more tools and resources for reaching diverse audiences. The registration fee is \$40 and includes lunch and breaks.

If you have any questions, please contact Kevin McGinty at [kevin.mcginty@state.mn.us](mailto:kevin.mcginty@state.mn.us) or 651-201-7219.

### **Save the Date!**

The 2017 Fire Marshal Conference will be April 11 and 12 at the Ramada Plaza Minneapolis. Get it on your calendar now! More information coming soon.

### **Fire Code Inquiries**

The fire code team electronically tracks all questions that come in by phone or emails 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 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 will be a public education workshop that applies to both fire and life safety educators and youth fire intervention specialists on Wednesday, March 1 at Minneapolis Firefighters Hall & Museum featuring national and state leaders. This is intended to give educators more tools and resources for reaching diverse audiences. The registration fee is \$40 and includes lunch and breaks. Register at: [sfm.dps.mn.gov](http://sfm.dps.mn.gov).

A Public Educator Course will be offered on Feb. 15 at SBM Station 3 with an optional certification test for Fire and Life Safety Educator I on Feb. 16. Register at [sfm.dps.mn.gov](http://sfm.dps.mn.gov).

Two Youth Fire Prevention and Intervention (YFPI) Specialist classes will be held in February:

- Feb. 11-12 at the Marshal Fire Department.
- Feb. 15-16 at the Columbia Heights Fire Department.

Both classes will offer an optional certification test for YFPI Specialist during the afternoon of day two. Register at [sfm.dps.mn.gov](http://sfm.dps.mn.gov).

Kathi Osmonson and Amanda Swenson are also available for training for fire departments or regions on public education and fire and life safety. Once the training is complete, the SFMD will supply each department with resources to use in public education. Contact [Amanda](#) or [Kathi](#) for scheduling.

### **Fire Service Specialists**

Fire Service Specialists Kevin Sedivy and Tate Mills have been busy with regional meetings, county fire chiefs' meetings and making contact with fire departments on different issues facing today's fire service. 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 the answer, 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 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](#).

### **Shared Services Grants**

Discussion on the merits of the Shared Services Grants Program have led to a re-evaluation of the entire Shared Services Program. We used some of the remaining fiscal year 2016 grant funds to contract with the Minnesota Management Analysis and Development (MAD) to help us chart the direction of the Shared Services Program in the future.

All of the previous grantees were contacted, and the Shared Services Grant program's effectiveness was measured.

The future of the program may look the same or be very different, depending on our review of the recommendations. Options include doing away with the program all together, revamping it into an implementation of study results, or something brand new entirely.

Some recommendations from the final report are:

- Expand the State Fire Marshal Division's involvement.
- Establish categories of grants, articulate expected outcomes, and establish performance measures accordingly.
- Develop a questionnaire to help interested departments assess the extent to which they are already sharing or collaborating.
- Establish program performance measures, improve program evaluation.
- Improve information sharing.

Our fire service specialists will be working on these items in the near future and will present their program recommendations to both the state fire marshal and the Fire Service Advisory Committee this spring. The link to the final report is [online here](#).

If you have any questions about the Shared Services Program, contact Kevin Sedivy at [kevin.sedivy@state.mn.us](mailto:kevin.sedivy@state.mn.us) or 651-295-1639.

### **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.

Executive Director Steve Flaherty and Fire Marshal Bruce West continue to meet regularly with the team from MAD that are involved with the study, and they will also be attending all of the listening sessions to hear firsthand what the fire service has to say regarding firefighter training in Minnesota.

### **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](#).

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

Funding for the Gear Washer/Extractor Award Program was approved for fiscal year 2017 in the amount of \$300,000. The application period closed on Oct. 10, 2016, and there were 84 applications received totaling more than \$640,000 in award requests.

We are excited to announce that we were able to provide the following 39 departments with awards: Bethel, Blackhoof Township, Brainerd, Breckenridge, Caledonia, Cambridge, Camp Ripley, Cook Dawson, Deer River, Eyota, French, Fulda, Garrison, Hackensack Area Fire and Rescue, Hallock, Kandiyohi, Karlstad, Kenyon, Kettle River, La Crescent, Maple Lake, Miesville, Montrose, Olivia, Pine Island, Ridgeway, Sabin-Elmwood, Scandia Valley, Springfield, Staples, Truman, Victoria, Wadena, Watertown, Wells, Windom, Winsted, Wolf Lake.

Any questions regarding the Gear Washer/Extractor Award 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**

A PowerPoint has been developed to cover the new fire code requirements for hotel fire safety. A class will be established soon to provide this information to those fire departments that provide hotel fire safety inspections.

Joint fire safety inspections (municipal and SFMD) will be scheduled for exchanging information and expertise with those departments who inspect hotels under agreement with SFMD.

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

The MBFTE staff are preparing for the second — and busiest — half of the fiscal year. The beginning of the calendar year is typically when fire departments, fire schools and training providers throughout the state are in full swing. Training reimbursement requests will increase significantly over the next several months. Executive Director Steve Flaherty has been traveling extensively throughout the state over the last few months attending regional and local fire department meetings in an effort to help fire chiefs and training officers utilize the \$8 million in reimbursements that are available to them this fiscal year.

The end of fiscal year 2017 is also a demanding time for licensing at the MBFTE, as more than 75 percent of the 4,085 licensed firefighters in Minnesota will be renewing their licenses. Licensing Coordinator Margaret Koele has been busy sending out renewal notices and assisting licensees and their fire departments with the online renewal process. Minnesota is the only state in the nation that requires licensing for full-time firefighters (nearly 2,000), and licensing for paid on-call or volunteer firefighters is optional. Licenses cost \$75 and are valid for three years.

Following is a three-year summary of MBFTE training reimbursement program:

<b>Reimbursement Program</b>	<b>FY14</b>	<b>FY15</b>	<b>FY16</b>
Participating departments	511	618	644
% of departments participating	65%	79%	82%
Participants in at least 1 round since 2009	89%	94%	96%
Depts participating for 1st time	32	37	12
Depts using in FY but in not last FY	87	37	74
Reimbursement Rate	\$80/FF	\$97/FF	\$160/FF
Avg reimbursement per department	\$2,206.00	\$1,647.00	\$3,479.00
Departments eligible for re-distribution	270	350	273
Redistribution Rate (max)	\$200/FF	\$185.67/FF	\$200/FF
Avg re-distribution per department	\$2,111.00	\$1,964.00	\$1,044.00

<b>NFPA 1001 Program</b>			
Students funded	751	780	1045
<b>Live Burn Program</b>			
Live Burns funded	82	54	106

### **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 excited as we work to bring two additional inspectors on board in the upcoming months bring to assist us in our pipeline safety role.

### **Upcoming Regional Fire Meetings**

Capitol City	Region 1	Jan. 25, 2017	White Bear Lake
Cuyuna Range	Region 5	Feb. 16, 2017	Brainerd
Lake	Region 6	Jan. 9, 2017	Kimball
St. Croix Valley	Region 7	Jan. 12, 2017	East Bethel
West Central	Region 9	Jan. 16, 2017	Granite Falls
Southwest	Region 13	Jan. 23, 2017	Wilmont
South Central	Region 14	Jan. 19, 2017	Easton

### **Fire Fatalities**

Fire fatalities unofficially for 2016 are at 36 with the potential for additional depending on fire victims still hospitalized across Minnesota. This is a drastic drop from 57 fire fatalities in 2015 and the second-lowest number of fatalities ever. 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.