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Enforcement

Bureau of
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Driver
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Services

Emergency
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Networks

Homeland
Security and
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Minnesota
State Patrol

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Office of
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Traffic Safety

State Fire
Marshal



State Fire Marshal

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State Fire Marshal Update

Email Updates

The State Fire Marshal Division (SFMD) will be migrating to a new email update system and the use of Gov.Delivery. If you currently are a subscriber to our email updates, you will need to sign up again to be included in the Gov.Delivery updates from our office. You can subscribe using this [link](#).

Legislative Report

The Minnesota Legislature adjourned at midnight on Sunday, May 20 with a flurry of bills approved and sent to Governor Dayton for his signature. The following is a quick review of bills that the Minnesota Fire Association Coalition (MnFAC) were watching and reviewing during the session.

Fireworks, HF329/SF235

Fireworks expansion to include aerial devices has passed both the House and Senate Committee hearings. It was on both floors for a vote but was never voted on by the House and Senate members.

Fire Protection Districts, HF2120/SF1918

This bill has been heard and is laid over for possible inclusion in the Senate Omnibus Tax Bill.

Alternative fire drills for schools, SF2900/no House companion bill

This bill is an alternative fire alarm bill that would allow a public or private school or educational institution to implement an alternative fire drill that does not require students or other persons to quit (evacuate) the premise.

Places of Accommodation Inspection, HF4023/SF3612

This bill would mandate the SFMD to inspect every three years places of accommodation as defined in the bill for compliance with the Minnesota State Fire Code.

To review the full MnFAC legislative update, [click here](#).

Barn Conversions to Wedding Event Centers

At an alarming rate, older barns in rural and metro areas throughout Minnesota are being repurposed for weddings and other large gatherings. A barn is the latest “perfect place” for brides and grooms to bring family and friends to witness their celebration. Many of these structures have been converted with no review or approval by the local fire code official. The SFMD estimates that less than 1 percent of the estimated 100+ converted sites in Minnesota have met the state’s building and fire codes (after being reviewed by local building code officials).

There have been three recent wedding barn fires before or after an event. Luckily, there were no injuries associated with any of these fires. The venues in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho (August 2017), Arthur, North Dakota (October 2017) and Tamworth, New Hampshire (November 2017) were fully involved upon the fire department arrival, and all three structures eventually collapsed. Searching the web will provide you with more details about these fires.

If you have questions about a barn/wedding venue in your area, contact SFMD code specialist [Tom Jenson](#).

Fire Data

Wedding barns and similar assembly buildings used for events continue to be an issue. Many of these buildings were never intended as buildings to house large numbers of people. The SFMD developed some resources for facility owners and fire code officials to use when dealing with these buildings:

- [Self-Inspection Checklist](#)
- [Fire Safety for Assembly Occupancies](#)
- [Crowd Managers, Fire Watches and Standby Firefighter Requirements](#)

Fire Code Adoption Update

The MN State Fire Chiefs Association (MSFCA) Code Committee has completed their review of the 2018 International Fire Code (IFC), but will hold one or two additional meetings in order to resolve a few pending issues. We sincerely appreciate of MSFCA Code Committee members for their hard work and the many hours devoted to reviewing the 2018 IFC. Their efforts are essential in ensuring a successful code adoption cycle.

The SFMD is now working to complete a draft rule for M.R. Chapter 7511 (the MN State Fire Code), and the associated SONAR (Statements of Need and Reasonableness). Our hope is to have a rule draft completed by the end of June, when it will be sent to the MN Department of Labor and Industry for review. Assuming a relatively smooth adoption process, the goal is for the 2020 MN State Fire Code to become effective sometime in first quarter of 2020.

If you have any questions in reference to the fire code adoption process, please contact [Forrest Williams](#).

Fire Code Inquiries

SFMD code teams continue to average about 225 phone calls, emails and text messages per month from fire departments, contractors, architects, building owners and the general public. And this underrepresents the real number of inquiries, because many of our field staff receive questions directly. The code teams pride ourselves on same-day or at least 24-hour response to questions. However, some calls require code research and could take a week, but we will let you know if there will be a delay.

We have two email addresses for code questions (new format): fire.code@state.mn.us for code questions and fm.fire.sprinklers@state.mn.us for fire sprinkler code questions. You can also call the fire code specialist, Tom Jenson, at 651-201-7221.

When sending a question by email, it helps to include as much information as possible about your question. Most important is to include your name (not all email addresses contain your name) and a phone number where we can reach you. Some questions are better answered over the phone, and sometimes we need more information and talking is easier than emailing back and forth. So please include some kind of signature line with your name, department and phone number.

Minnesota Fire Incident Reporting

Minnesota's fire incident reporting software from our vendor, ImageTrend, is undergoing an update to a new platform called "Elite." The new system will have additional capabilities, including the ability to do more customization at a local level. The SFMD will be migrating fire departments over to this Elite platform in the upcoming months.

ImageTrend Elite is on the move. The early adopters are all moving forward in the new MNFire Elite system. Now the next step is to start rolling out regionally as the goal is to have all agencies that use ImageTrend migrated to the new MNFire Elite system by year end.

Migration schedule

June	Region 11 United and Region 12 Minnesota Valley
July	Region 8 North Suburban and Region 10 Central
August	Region 6 Lake and Region 7 St Croix Valley
September	Region 9 West Central and Region 15 Southeast
October	Region 2 Northern and Region 4 Northeast and Region 5 Cuyuna
November	Region 1 Capital City and Region 14 South Central
December	Region 3 Arrowhead and Region 13 Southwest

Each agency's MNFire Administrator will be contacted with training links and instructions.. In the meantime, please bring the current incident validity up to 100 percent. Don't worry, you'll be able to update them in the new Elite system.

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact [Scott Radke](#), [Joel Paylor](#) or [Nora Gierok](#).

Kick Off Summer with Fire Safety and Prevention in Mind

Summer is well underway here in Minnesota, and according to the SFMD's fire and life safety educators, there are a few important safety items to check off of your summer to-do list.

Although we have had plenty of warm days to pull out the grill already, now is a good time to make sure it is ready for the days ahead. Here are some important safety tips to remember when using the grill:

- Only use a grill outside, and be sure it's at least 3 feet from any siding, deck rails or eaves. Keep kids and pets out of this 3-foot area around the grill.
- Be sure to keep your grill clean. Remove the grease and give it a cleaning after each use to reduce the chances of starting a fire.
- If you are using a gas grill, open the lid before lighting.

- For those using charcoal grills, place ashes in a metal container once they have cooled and keep them away from the house or deck.
- Keep an eye on your grill and do not walk away from it once it is lit.

Fire safety tips are almost the same for indoor cooking as they are for outdoor cooking. In fact, cooking is the leading cause of fires across Minnesota and the nation. In 2016, cooking fires accounted for 45 percent of the structure fires across the state. The top three factors in those fires were unattended equipment, having combustibles too close, and equipment that was accidentally turned on or not turned off after use.

For additional fire safety information, please contact [Amanda Swenson](#) or [Kathi Osmonson](#).

Fire and Life Safety Education

The SFMD, along with safety professionals from across the state, will once again be participating in Governors Fire Prevention Day at the Minnesota State Fair. This year Fire Prevention Day is Friday, August 24. Come and see the exciting new changes for 2018.

Fire Prevention Training Opportunity

Save the date

Thursday September 27, 2018

National Fire Protection Association and State Fire Marshal Division Safety Summit

Join us for speakers on topics such as:

- Stocking your fire prevention toolkit
- Minnesota fire data and the national fire problem
- Residential fire sprinklers
- Remembering When™: Older Adult Fire and Fall Prevention
- Lessons from investigations
- And more!

The event will be held at New Brighton Department of Public Safety:

785 Old Highway 8 NW

New Brighton, MN 55112

Registration: 8:30 a.m.

Training: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

This will be a fast-moving day with short presentations on various fire and life safety topics. These will not only include public education but a wide variety of fire service topics, including national speakers from NFPA. This is a training for everyone! Lunch will be included, and the training is free. Registration is on the [SFMD website](#).

Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education

The MBFTE's website and database recently received a makeover and is now up and running. There are several features that have been added to assist the fire service, including a Maps tab that will provide primary contact information and the location of every fire department in Minnesota. Another mapping feature shows the areas that are served by the fire service specialists, and the SFMD Props tab shows where all of the SFMD's fire vent and propane training props are located throughout the state. Licensing Coordinator Margaret

Koele has spent a tremendous amount of time with our web designer Monica Correll on this project, and both are to be commended on a job well done for the fire service!

The MBFTE staff and fire service specialists are ramping up at this time of the year to ensure that the fire departments and training providers are using their training funds before the June 30 end-of-fiscal-year date and the August 1 deadline to submit for reimbursements. There are many programs that are funded by the MBFTE each year (department reimbursement awards, Live Burn, NFPA 1001, conferences and seminars, and HMEP grants just to name a few), so there is a lot of follow-up with the fire service.

The MBFTE board and committees met in early May at their regularly scheduled meetings. Presentations were made for funding requests in fiscal year 2019 by several agencies, and the MBFTE will be bringing those requests – along with several of their own – to the Fire Service Advisory Committee for consideration of more than \$3 million in one-time funding.

Lastly, the board approved moving \$100,000 from their base budget over to the SFMD's base budget in fiscal year 2019 to support the addition of a fourth fire service specialist position. In addition to the work they do for the SFMD, these fire service specialists do a tremendous amount of work on behalf of the MBFTE, and adding another position will mean greater efficiency for both the division and the MBFTE.

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 an SFMD fire investigator to assist you at your incident. If you have any questions regarding our fire investigation team, please contact our Chief Fire Investigator Jim Iammatteo at james.iammatteo@state.mn.us and he will be happy to assist in answering your questions.

Fire Service Specialists

NAFTD: The SFMD division is preparing to host the North American Fire Training Directors Conference (NAFTD), the conference will be held in Bloomington this year on September 25-26. If you're interested in training material, we will have a sponsor area. Please contact [John Ehret](#).

Training Props: The SFMD has eight props available for use: five car fire/LP props and three vent props. Contact M-State or your local training provider for the SFMD props.

Sharing Services: we continue to hear from local FDs the desire to share services, and are currently working with five FDs to start the process of sharing services. (These are not the FDs already working with the Service Planning Grants).

NFA: We recently received a grant for nine NFA classes to be delivered across the state with national instructors. Watch for course flyers coming from our division. We have just wrapped up another grant in concert with Minnesota State University, completing in-state delivery of ten classes in Minnesota. We are in

line for ten more fall 2018. Contact your local training provider and we will see what can do to provide a class. These are free NFA classes.

OSHA: Recently we have been told by several fire departments in the state of Minnesota that MnOSHA has been making random standard compliance visits to local communities, including fire departments. The other category we have been hearing about is complaints being made requiring an OSHA visit. With the compliance visit, we have been hearing the top 15 items that remain a priority (you can find a list of them on the [MBFTE website](#)). Citations have been issued for turnout gear not in compliance with the 10-year from manufacture date rule and turnout gear that is stored in the fire department not in compliance .

Additionally, we have worked with the Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association and OSHA so that OSHA can provide an update at the fall MSFCA conference. More information to follow in the next several weeks.

MNOSHA has a consultation service. They can help you assure a safe work environment and avoid OSHA violations. For more information, contact MNOSHA Workplace Safety Consultation via [email](#) or phone: 800-657-3776.

USDA Funding Available for Public Safety Infrastructure and Equipment

Did you know? USDA Rural Development is committed to the continued support of infrastructure and equipment for rural community facilities such as hospitals, clinics, public safety facilities, childcare facilities and much more. This includes fire emergency facilities, vehicles and corresponding equipment.

Low-interest loan and grant financing is available through the [Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program](#), which is currently accepting applications. Eligible applicants include public entities such as municipalities, counties, special-purpose districts, non-profit corporations and tribal nations. Funds may be used for fire hall construction/expansion/renovation, fire rescue vehicles, ambulance vehicles, storm warning systems, and more.

For example, the City of Littlefork in Koochiching County recently received a community facilities direct loan of \$100,000 to help purchase a used fire rescue vehicle fully equipped with new tank, pumper and hoses. It replaces the current vehicle, which was originally purchased in 1975 and quickly approaching the end of its useful life. For more information on the community facilities program, contact your [local area office](#) or visit www.rd.usda.gov/mn.

School Inspection Team

Fiscal year 2018 school inspections

Our school inspectors are in the process of wrapping up the few school inspections remaining for fiscal year 2018. By the end of June, the SFMD School Inspection Team will have completed over 500 school inspections for the year.

With summer begins what is unofficially known as “follow-up season,” where our inspectors focus on follow-up inspections to ensure that previously cited corrective orders have been completed. Fortunately, through the years we’ve developed highly effective partnerships with the public school districts we inspect, and both the SFMD and school officials do a great job working together to ensure that necessary corrections are made, often coming up with creative and cost-effective solutions.

School fires

Although it's rare these days to hear about a school fire in the media, the truth is a fire occurs somewhere in a Minnesota school every eight days on average. But the good news is, thanks in large part to the evolution and enforcement of fire and life-safety codes, fires in school buildings typically result in minimal damage, and injuries are rare. A few examples of recent school fires:

- Fire involving materials on an unattended hot plate in a science lab
- Fire involving an industrial shop spray finishing booth and exhaust duct
- Fire within a wood shop dust collection system duct
- Fire involving a commercial clothes dryer (spontaneous combustion)
- Incendiary fire set in a school restroom

It should be noted that both the spray finishing booth fire and dust collection system fire were extinguished by fire sprinkler activation. The MN State Fire Code requires each of these hazardous operations to have fire sprinkler protection, and rightly so as demonstrated in these cases. It's always great to see a sprinkler save!

Residential Team Update

The Residential Care and Lodging Team wants to thank all of our partners in the fire service that provide assistance as we complete our assigned tasks. The support and assistance we receive from fire departments around the state is an essential part of how we are able to provide excellent service to the citizens of Minnesota. Please don't hesitate to reach out to our staff anytime you are in need of assistance from us.

Department of Human Services licensed facility training is in full swing during the month of June with licenser training in Rochester, Mankato, Brooklyn Center, Saint Cloud and Arden Hills, as well as fire inspector training at Camp Ripley. The inspector training is scheduled for June 27 and 28 at Camp Ripley.

This training consists of one day of classroom training and a half day of actual inspection experience with different occupancies generally associated with DHS licensed facilities. If you haven't registered, please do so soon. Attending this training will meet the requirements for you to conduct DHS inspections within your jurisdictions. Any questions about DHS training can be directed to [Kevin Sedivy](#).

The best news for the RC&L Team is that, effective June 13, the team will be back to full staff. Travis Cole has been selected to fill the vacant position. Travis comes to the SFMD from the city of Grand Rapids and will be based out of his home office there. Travis has 10 years of experience as a full-time building and fire inspector, including over five years as the Grand Rapids Building Official.

Travis is also a captain on the Grand Rapids Fire Department, which he's been with for approximately 10 years. Travis will be assigned to the new NE Region, which consists of the counties of Lake of the Woods, Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Koochiching, Itasca, Saint Louis, Lake and Cook. This region and other changes made to RC L regions will take effect July 1, 2018.

Washer/Extractor and Dryer Program Request for Funding

Since 2015, the first year of the Turnout Gear Washer/Extractor Program, the Department of Public Safety has awarded over \$500,000 to over 60 Minnesota fire departments for the purchase of turnout gear washers/extractors.

A good turnout gear decontamination program should also include equipment to quickly dry turnout gear after washing so that it can be more quickly put back into service. Turnout gear dryers can dry wet gear in four

hours or less, as opposed to the much longer hang dry method. Wet turnout gear is difficult to don and can cause steam burns to the wearer. Also, if the decontamination process (washing/drying) can be accomplished more quickly and efficiently, firefighters will be more likely to regularly clean their gear, thus leading to more healthy firefighters in the long-term.

Despite being more physically fit and healthier than the general population of firefighters, both career and volunteer/paid-on-call experience cancer at higher rates than those in the communities they serve. Studies continue to show that firefighters are acutely exposed to known carcinogens during structure and other fires, and are continually exposed via turnout gear that is soiled due to exposure to toxic combustion byproducts.

Minnesota Professional Firefighters (MPFF) President Chris Parsons has a proposal for the Fire Service Advisory Committee (FSAC) at its June 6, 2018 meeting to renew the Turnout Gear Washer/Extractor Award Program for another year (fiscal year 2019) with a funding level of \$300,000 and create a new Turnout Gear Dryer Matching Award Program with a funding level of \$300,000.

If this funding is awarded in August 2018 by the FSAC, information on the programs will be sent to all Minnesota fire departments for them to review and apply for any available funding.

American Red Cross Sound the Alarm Program

We all know that people living in homes without working smoke alarms face a much higher risk of dying in a home fire than those in a home with working smoke alarms. The American Red Cross is helping families learn more about fire prevention as well as installing working smoke alarms in homes as part of their Home Fire Campaign. The Home Fire Campaign was kicked off in 2014 and has hundreds of documented lives saved across the country.

In just three years the Sound the Alarm Home Fire Campaign has installed over 1 million smoke alarms and provided education about fire safety and prevention to well over a million people. Across the state of Minnesota, events have been held in communities to help move toward the goal of 100,000 alarms installed in homes. Thank you very much to the firefighters, fire departments and volunteers who have participated in the Home Fire Campaign and the Sound the Alarm Program. If your fire department is interested in participating in the Home Fire Campaign and the Sound the Alarm program, please contact your local Red Cross chapter or one of our fire and life safety educators, Amanda Swenson or Kathi Osmonson.



Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety

It's June in Minnesota and that means the excavation season is in full swing. Excavators and homeowners are digging, Gopher State One Call operators are processing tickets, underground utility operators are locating, and MNOPS inspectors are investigating damages and One Call complaints. Although these activities occur all year in Minnesota, they ramp up exponentially once the ground thaws in the spring. This was especially the case this year since we had a late start to the warm weather season.

As we all know, one of the first steps prior to excavating is submitting a locate request through Gopher State One Call (GSOC). To date, the ticket volumes at GSOC for March, April and May are 21,646; 55,319; and 132,582 respectively. As you can see, the late spring is reflected in these numbers. In 2017, these numbers were 41,082; 86,492; and 112,217. As ticket volume increases, the likelihood that MNOPS investigates One Call issues also increases. MNOPS inspectors have been busy with utility damage and One Call complaint investigations. Thus far in 2018, the following cases have been opened:

- 24 cases involving underground utility hits by excavators.
- 7 complaints against excavators involving damaged underground utility hits.
- 21 complaints against excavator not involving underground utility hits.
- 6 complaints against utility operators involving underground utility hits.
- 16 complaint against utility operators not involving underground utility hits.
- 1 complaint against the One Call center.

The cases where a utility hit did not occur indicate that there was still a violation against Minnesota's One Call law (MS216D or Rule 7560). Such examples would be a utility operator failing to locate their line within 48 hours or not locating a utility within 2 feet of accuracy. Examples of an excavator violation would be excavating prior to waiting 48 hours after submitting a locate request or failing to hand-dig within 2 feet of a marked utility. MNOPS anticipates opening more cases as the year progresses. One thing that has aided our ability to investigate more One Call violations across the state is the new [MNOPS excavation complaint form](#) that was added to our homepage on January 1, 2018. Feel free to take a look and pass the word on to your family and neighbors.

Later this year, MNOPS will be working with industry stakeholders to address One Call issues and enhance education. MNOPS meets quarterly with the regional Minnesota Common Ground Alliance (MNCGA) to discuss hot topics such as locating issues, new excavation technology, information databases, and best practices with pipeline operators, GSOC, contractors, utility locators, municipalities, etc. MNOPS has also been facilitating MS216D stakeholder review meetings to identify improvements in the state's One Call laws. We will seek to continue discussions now that the legislative session is over.

The date for the annual 811 5k run/walk at Lake Bde Maka Ska is set for August 11 at 8:11 a.m. This is a fun, leisurely event around the formerly named Lake Calhoun. Feel free to [register as a participant](#) or just show up and have a chance to win some cool prizes while educating the public on the importance of calling 811 before you dig. Proceeds for the 811 5k go to Operation Warm: Coats for Kids in the Minneapolis and St. Paul school area. Another great family event is the [Annual Day of the Dozers](#) at ERX Motor Park in Elk River on Saturday, September 29. This is a great opportunity for kids of all ages to sit behind the controls of various heavy equipment (under supervision, of course) and push huge piles of dirt around! MNOPS plans to participate again with industry stakeholders to promote safe digging to the public and educate kids and adults about calling 811 before digging. All proceeds for this event go to the Children's Hospital of Minnesota. We hope to see you at both events!

2018 Fire Fatalities

2017 was a very tragic year for fire fatalities, with 63 in comparison to 43 for all of 2016. Once again in 2017, it appears careless smoking will be the leading cause of fire-related deaths in Minnesota. In 2018 through June 1, we have had 22 fire fatalities in comparison to 29 fatalities in 2017. 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 at the forefront with your citizens. Thank you for your continued support of the SFMD.

Public and Private Fire Training Providers

I have added a piece in my fire marshal update that I hope all the readers will enjoy. During each fire marshal update I will be highlighting one of Minnesota's public or private training providers. This issue I will be highlighting Daryl "Bart" Bartholomaus from Minnesota State Pipestone Campus.

Bart is the Fire and Industrial Safety Training Coordinator with Minnesota West Community and Technical College, a position he has held since 1999. He is active in coordinating and instructing Fire/Rescue and Industrial Safety training throughout southwest and west central Minnesota.

Bart has taken coursework through the University of Cincinnati in the AAS Fire Service Open Learning Program in addition to attending numerous training sessions and workshops relating to fire and rescue, industrial safety, environmental, and employment practice issues. He is trained to the Hazardous Materials Technician level. He has also completed many safety and health courses at the Minnesota and Nebraska safety councils. including Employee Right-To-Know, Forklift Operation Instructor, Lockout/Tagout, Safety Committees, MN AWAIR Program, OSHA 501 for General Industry, and OSHA 500 for Construction, and he has completed the Advanced Safety Certificate Program through the Minnesota/National Safety Council.

He has been active in the fire service since 1977, spending 15 years with the Pipestone Fire Department where he served as a firefighter, lieutenant, captain, training officer, assistant chief and fire chief. He was a member of the Hayfield Fire Department for six years, serving as firefighter, training officer and assistant chief.

Bart also served as a Safety and Environmental Specialist from 1987 to 1992 with a major fiberglass boat manufacturing company. He was given additional responsibilities as a Regional Personnel Manager for three plants during the same time period. While employed by the boat manufacturing company, Bart developed several safety training programs, including the Fire Brigade Training Program, the Hazardous Material/Waste Training Program, the Forklift Operation Training Program and others.

Bart worked seven years (1992-1999) as the Public Safety Training Coordinator at Riverland Community College in Austin, Minnesota. During his employment at Riverland he instructed and coordinated Fire/Rescue and Industrial Safety training classes and courses. He was also involved with coordinating law enforcement continuing education classes in SE Minnesota.

He has been active as an instructor for fire service and industrial safety courses for 36 years. He has instructed classes at MN Sectional (State) Fire and Rescue Schools since 1982 and the MN State Fire School since 1985.

Bart is also an OSHA-authorized instructor for the OSHA 10- and 30-Hour General Industry and Construction courses. He also obtained the Advanced Safety Certificate from the National Safety Council in 2002.

Bart is certified by the Minnesota Fire Service Certification Board at Firefighter III, Fire Apparatus Operator III, Fire Instructor IV, and Fire Officer I. Bart is also a past president of the Fire Instructors Association of Minnesota (FIAM). To contact Bart, email him at daryl.bartholomaus@mnwest.edu.