



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

445 Minnesota Street • Suite 145 • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-5145

Phone: 651-201-7200 • Fax: 651-215-0525 • TTY: 651-282-6555

www.dps.state.mn.us

State Fire Marshal Update

Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association

The MSFCA Fire Officer School (FOS) is scheduled for Feb. 9-11, 2018, in Alexandria. Bill Thoennes and the planning committee have put together another excellent fire officer school and will limit the attendance to 300. This school always fills up very quickly, so keep an eye on the MSFCA website for registration information. With the success of the Alexandria FOS, MSFCA has now expanded to a second FOS in Duluth on March 16-18, 2018. Check the MSFCA website for additional registration information.

Fire Code Team

State Fire Marshal Conference

The Seventh Annual Minnesota State Fire Marshal's Conference will be held April 3-4, 2018 at the Minneapolis West Sheraton in Minnetonka. Watch for more information on that conference in the next few weeks. Last year over 200 fire safety professionals attended the conference, which hosts classes on fire code enforcement, new fire safety technology, community risk reduction and fire investigations. This year we are adding a primer class for fire inspector certification and have invited the Minnesota Fire Service Certification Board to administer Fire Inspector I and II exams at the conference.

Preliminary 2017 Fire Loss Statistics

Fire departments have until the end of February to submit their fire incident reports to the SFMD. Here are some preliminary (and unofficial) statistics from the 2017 Minnesota Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS):

- Total fire department responses: 247,681
- Total fires: 13,845
 - Structure/building fires: 7,169
 - Vehicle fires: 2,307
 - Outside fires: 4,037
 - Other fires: 332
- Total fire loss: \$189,388,167
 - Property loss: \$128,944,089
 - Content loss: \$60,444,078
- Trivia:
 - Building fires represented about 3 percent of the incidents responded to but 83 percent of the dollar loss reported.
 - There were 11 times more emergency medical and rescue calls than there were fire calls in 2017 (159,560 to 13,845).
 - Of Minnesota's 778 fire departments, 691 (89 percent) used the ImageTrend state fire reporting system in 2017.

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), Arthur, North Dakota (October) and Tamworth, New Hampshire (November) 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 at Thomas.Jenson@state.mn.us.

Fire Code Adoption Update

Both the SFMD and Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association code committees continue to review the 2018 International Fire Code to prepare for adoption in 2020. Concurrently, the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry’s Construction Codes and Licensing Division (CCLD) has begun their review of the 2018 International Building Code. As part of this process, a State Fire Marshal representative will sit on CCLD’s Fire Code Compatibility Technical Advisory Group, which will hold meetings throughout January and February.

SFMD Supervisor Forrest Williams is now leading the code development and adoption process. For more information, or questions on how to submit a code change proposal, please email Forrest at forrest.williams@state.mn.us.

Fire Code Inquiries

SFMD code teams continue to average about 200 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

In 2018 the SFMD will be migrating to the new ImageTrend Incident Reporting System called Elite. The current application has been in place since 2007 and was due for a facelift. The first step will be rolling out the new Elite application to a group of 10 early adopters during the first quarter of 2018. This will include training on the new features via YouTube. Adjustments and changes will be made prior to the rollout to the 691 fire departments in the state that use ImageTrend. The plan for the rollout of the new ImageTrend Elite will be done regionally, and we expect implementation to take place in mid to late 2018.

I encourage everyone to take a test drive of the new Elite demo system. To access the demo site, follow the directions on the current ImageTrend front page. Information for early adopters was sent out in January. This is a mandatory change and all departments using ImageTrend will need to move to the new system.

If you have any concerns or questions please contact scott.radke@state.mn.us.

Fire and Life Safety Education

2017 Team Accomplishments

- Created YFPI Go Bags to help specialists provide quality intervention services. Sixty-six Go Bags were deployed in 33 counties, including two tribes.
- Sixty-five YFPI cases were referred to services through the SFMD.
- Lexington Fire Department donated \$2,000 to the Youth Fire Intervention Team again in 2017. The MSFCA is the fiscal agent for donations that help reimburse YFPI specialists for intervention-related expenses and advanced training.
- With the MSFCA Public Education Committee, the team helped to create and deploy a Fire and Fall Prevention Toolkit for fire departments to educate older adults.
- The team created a fire death rate database to identify and help counties with the highest risks work toward community risk reduction.

2018 Team Goals

- Help local fire departments target young adults for fire prevention education.
- Continue to work with departments to reduce fire death rates.
- Continue to identify youth who start fires and refer them to intervention services.

Please take a few minutes to read the [January 2018 issue of the Minnesota Public Educator](#). This information is a resource for fire and life safety education and youth firesetting intervention professionals in Minnesota.

Development of a Young Adult Fire and Life Safety Program

The SFMD recognizes that a large number of young adults who are living independently for the first time have not been given the necessary education to protect themselves from harm by fire or common criminals. The overall goal of the program is to give young adults who are graduating high school or leaving on-campus housing the tools and knowledge to prevent fires in their new places of residence.

Additionally, the program would include the partnering with local and/or campus law enforcement agencies in offering personal safety education to young adults. The program would be presented either in the high school setting or in colleges throughout the state. This project is being spearheaded by the Fire and Life Safety Education Team.

Recruitment and Retention Program

Management Analysis and Development (MAD) has completed the final report on the three-year, 14-county pilot program on firefighter recruitment and retention in Minnesota. The Volunteer Retention Stipend Aid Pilot Program report was due to the Minnesota Legislature by Jan. 15, 2018. Please go to the SFMD website to download a copy of the [final report](#).

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.

Fire Investigation Training in Minnesota

The SFMD has had a long history of providing training to our customers in the Minnesota fire service. This has included fire investigation training for fire department weekly drills and for weekend classes such as fire schools and conferences. We have also provided basic and advanced fire investigation training for future fire investigators. Kevin Mahle was asked to take over the fire investigation training for the SFMD this past summer. Kevin Mahle would like to inform you of the minor changes in the fire investigation training the SFMD will be providing for the MN Fire Service.

First Responder Role in Fire Investigations

First Responder Role in Fire Investigations will be the 2.5- to 4-hour training provided for fire department drill sessions. This class is designed for firefighters and law enforcement. It covers the NFPA 1001 (FFI and FFII) objectives for cause determination as well as the objectives in NFPA 1021 for Fire Officer I. This course will showcase the SFMD's Fire, Arson and Explosion Investigation Services. Along with evidence identification and preservation, this course will discuss observations made on scene by all first responders that may pertain to cause determination. If you are interested in this class for your fire department drill or law enforcement training, please contact your local deputy state fire marshal fire investigator. If you cannot get ahold of your local investigator, feel free to contact Kevin Mahle.

Introduction to Fire Investigation

Introduction to Fire Investigation is an 8- to 12-hour course primarily for weekend fire schools and other conferences. This course will review the SFMD investigation services and First Responder's Role in Fire Investigation, and will start in on topics related to NFPA 1033 Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator and NFPA 921 Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations. These topics include fire behavior, building construction, fire pattern recognition, area of fire origin determination, fire cause, report writing and fatal fires. Case studies will be presented.

Fire Investigation Parts One and Two

What used to be the 24-hour basic and the 40-hour advanced classes is now Fire Investigations Part One and Part Two. These classes are for firefighters and law enforcement with substantial experience, those individuals who would like to pursue a career in fire investigation, and individuals who are conducting fire investigations as part of their current position.

Fire Investigation Part One will be a 40-hour, college-level course taught from a textbook that will be provided to students in class. This class will provide the basics in NFPA 1033 and NFPA 921. It will be primarily classroom-based but will have some hands-on portions. The Fire Investigation Part One class will have a written final test. Lessons in the Part One class include:

Administration	Methodology	Fire science	Fire patterns
Building systems	Fire protection systems	Electricity	Legal considerations
Safety	Documenting the fire scene	Physical evidence	Origin determination
Cause determination	Classification of cause	Failure analysis	Explosions
Incendiary fires	Deaths and injuries	Motor vehicle fires	Wildland fires

Fire Investigation Part Two will be similar to the old advanced class. The same textbook will also be used for this class, and the students will also receive a NFPA 921 Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigation book. There will be some classroom portions, but this class is intended to be more hands-on, including a live fire scene dig, processing and report writing. Many lessons will be presented by expert guest speakers. The final test will include the report and documentation of the live fire scene and the Minnesota Fire Service Certification Board (MFSCB)'s written fire investigator test. Students who pass the written test will not only pass the course, but will be able sign up for the MFSCB fire investigator practical on their own if they desire. Part Two lessons include:

Vehicle fires	Electricity and fire	Interviews	Financial aspects
Public/private interface	Photography	Reports	Prosecution of arson
Forensic evidence	Scene exam	Case prep	Group presentation

It is important to note that MFSCB certification is not equal to IAAI-CFI or NAFI-CFEI. CFI and CFEI take additional experience to obtain and significant continuing education to maintain. Fire Investigation Part One and Part Two classes are only designed to provide basic training in the pursuit of additional training, experience, and continuing education to conduct fire investigations that will be likely to withstand legal scrutiny.

For those that have taken the old Basic Fire Investigation class in the last five years, there will be no need to start over in the new Part One class. We will provide a "bridge session" in the Part Two that will get these students brought up to date.

Watch the [SFMD website](#) for the posting of the part One and Part Two classes in the near future, where you can also register for them. Click on Training, then click on Fire Marshal Course Registration System. If you have questions, feel free to contact Kevin Mahle at 612-718-8448 or Kevin.mahle@state.mn.us.

Fire Service Specialists

Fire Training Props

Recently the SFMD took delivery of five new training prop trailers that each have a car fire prop, BBQ grill prop, and an LP tank prop. The trailers and props are available for rent to all fire departments and training institutions in Minnesota that have a member who has attended one of our "Train-the-Operator" sessions.

The FSS have completed the comprehensive “Train-the-Operator” sessions in each of the 15 MSFDA regions. If your department was unable to send someone to this training, you can still use the training props by contacting your local training provider.

In addition to these five new training prop trailers, we currently have the three fire vent trailers that were purchased in 2015 and are also available for rent to all fire departments and training institutions in Minnesota.

There is now a "SFMD Props" tab at the top of the mbfte.org website that will bring you to an interactive map showing the location of all the SFMD training props, contact information to schedule trailer rental, and rental requirements for the trailers. As the trailers are rented the schedule for the trailers will also be posted on the MBFTE calendar. Departments will be able to see where the trailers are scheduled to be used and can contact that department if they would like to participate in the training.



Service Planning Grants

The Service Planning Grant Program is the former Shared Services Grant Program. The FSS have been traveling the state assisting communities with the Service Planning Grants. We have had eight departments expressing interest and are currently working with six communities. The application deadline is Jan. 31. This program requires the assistance of your FSS. If you're interested in the grant, please go to the SFMD website or contact your FSS. The Service Planning Grant Review Committee will meet Feb. 15-16 to review the applications and make award determinations.

Here is a quick recap of what the Service Planning Grant funds are used for. These funds are to be used to pay for (but are not limited to solely paying for) a third-party feasibility study that addresses the study requirements listed below and the options for service planning, including (but not limited to) those provided in “[A Blueprint for Shared Services](#).” A prerequisite could also be from a group's independent study done to show that implementation will benefit all groups involved and improve service.

Study Requirements

The study will include:

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

The study should also take into account:

- Geographic area, population density and other factors that encourage communities' and fire service providers' voluntary participation.
- Funding sources for the project if implemented.

- Cooperative training among departments and equipment procurement among departments.
- Employment issues associated with combining existing agencies and entities into a regional or multi-jurisdictional entity for consolidation projects.
- An analysis of best practices in the creation and functioning of public-safety-related service planning delivery models.
- A preliminary set of operating procedures for cooperative shared fire and rescue service systems.

More information on the Service Planning Grant Program can be found on the [SFMD website](#).

Northrop Grain Elevator Incident

All three FSS, along with one of our investigators, played key roles in assisting the Northrop Fire Department with this incident. From the initial stages through the end of the incident nearly 78 hours later, the FSS assisted the command staff with requesting resources, developing incident action plans, and documenting fire departments and firefighters at the scene. It is large-scale incidents such as these that truly define the cooperation of the Minnesota fire service. There were 59 fire departments from the four southern MSFDA regions, including five departments from Iowa that responded to the scene and assisted with numerous apparatus and firefighters. Despite the bone-chilling temperatures during the incident and the seemingly insurmountable task at hand, the cooperation among departments was outstanding, and something the Minnesota fire service should be proud of!

FSS Collaboration

In the past year the FSS have traveled the state extensively meeting with key stakeholders in the Minnesota fire service, including the Office of State Auditor, the League of Minnesota Cities, the Minnesota Association of Townships, the Public Employees Retirement Association of Minnesota, the State Board of Investments, and the USDA, all in an effort to further assist the fire departments in the state with the wide range of topics that are presented to them on a regular basis.

Did You Know?

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development is committed to building stronger, more vibrant rural communities throughout Minnesota. Access to essential community facilities, such as hospitals and clinics or public safety buildings, are key to the continued sustainability and quality of life in rural communities.

Low-interest loan and grant financing is currently available through USDA Rural Development's Community Facilities program. Eligible applicants include public entities such as municipalities, counties, and special-purpose districts, along with nonprofit corporations and Indian tribes.

Funds may be used for clinics and hospitals, fire halls, ambulance/rescue vehicles, storm warning systems and equipment necessary for the operation of these facilities.

For more information, [find](#) and contact your local area office.

Looking Ahead to 2018

Without a doubt, 2018 will be another busy year for the FSS as they travel the state assisting fire departments. Here are just some of the goals the FSS have set for this year.

- Assisting fire departments with the implementation of their Service Planning Grants.
- Developing a three year Assistance to Firefighters Grant plan to assist with fire training needs in the state.

- Reviewing and implementing changes for the SFMD's Staging Manager Program.
- Successfully planning and hosting the 2018 North American Fire Training Directors Conference.
- Continuing and expand the collaboration between private, local, state and federal agencies to further meet the needs of the Minnesota fire service.

Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education (MBFTE)

The MBFTE is currently updating their website. Margaret Koele has been working with the website designer to ensure that the upgrades will provide greater efficiencies to the increasing number of our website users, while at the same time creating a new design that isn't foreign enough to distract them in their site visit.

The recent update of NFPA 1403, Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions, has prompted some updates to the MBFTE Live Burn Instructor and Instructor In-Charge training program. MBFTE's executive director and the three fire service specialists have been reviewing the updates to the standard and incorporating them into the MBFTE's program. The updated information will be made available to the fire training providers in early 2018, and also to the fire service at various fire schools and conferences throughout the year.

The executive director has been in the process of updating the MBFTE's Qualified Instructor program and will be bringing the proposed changes to the Board at their meeting in February for discussion and input. The intent of the changes to the existing program is to ensure that the MBFTE's Qualified Instructor program is both current and credible.

Sectional Fire Schools

Here is the listing of the 2018 Minnesota State sectional fire schools schedule to date:

- Alexandria: Feb. 24-25, 2018
- North Mankato: March 3-4, 2018
- Detroit Lakes: March 10-11, 2018
- Rochester: April 7-8, 2018

School Inspection Team

The year 2017 has come and gone, and the preliminary numbers are showing the School Inspection Team having completed approximately 530 public school building inspections for the year, with around 2,500 fire code violations identified. The good news is, that's 2,500 violations that will be (and in many cases have already been) corrected, increasing the level of fire and life safety in Minnesota's public schools. An additional 26 inspections were also completed for school-based, state licensed child care programs. And during the last year, we were also able to develop a new document outlining recommended strategies for the evacuation of mobility-impaired students in school buildings.

For 2018, the School Inspection Team is looking forward to additional goals above and beyond their assigned inspections, including our continuing effort to provide fire code and fire safety training to key school district personnel. Additionally, with the national model fire codes adopting new mandates for emergency planning and preparedness (especially in school facilities), our plan is to create new information sheets, as well as revise existing ones, in order to provide schools with the information and guidance necessary for effective emergency planning, including:

- Fire safety and evacuation plan content
- Lockdown planning
- Crowd managers for large events

- Seating plans for assemblies
- Fire protection system impairment procedures

Residential Team Update

The Residential Care and Lodging Team has been very busy making sure all hotel inspections are completed on schedule throughout the state leading up to the Super Bowl as well as keeping DHS licensing inspections current.

A major accomplishment for the RC&L Team over the past few months was to finally have a formal interpretation on VRBO's (Vacation Rentals by Owners) and other such transient lodging buildings. The interpretation by the Fire Marshal Code Advisory Panel determined that these type of occupancies are still dwellings, even though they may be rented for transient lodging, provided they are rented as a unit. These buildings do not fall within the SFMD's mandatory inspection requirements. The interpretation is posted on the SFMD's website.

Moving forward, the RC&L Team will be working on re-inventing the licenser and inspector training for DHS-licensed facilities. Even though the class reviews have been very positive, the team feels the training needs to be updated and improvements made. The requests for this training have been coming in and classes are in the process of being scheduled starting in March.

The team will be working hard to improve consistency in inspection services they provide throughout the state. The goal is to collaborate with local jurisdictions in an effort to encourage this consistency across jurisdictions.

Minnesota State Fire Department Association Conference

It is never too early to plan to attend the 2018 MSFDA conference. This year the conference will be held April 26-28, 2018, in Alexandria. The Alexandria Fire Department has been planning the conference for two years, and they have many exciting training sessions planned and events for the whole family to attend. All the MSFDA Board members have been encouraging their regional members to support and attend the 2018 MSFDA conference. Registration information will be mailed to all Minnesota fire departments in early February.

Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety's 2018 Priorities

Pipeline Safety Inspections

- MNOPS will conduct annual inspections of pipeline operators throughout Minnesota. MNOPS conducts annual inspections of all intrastate pipeline companies. Inspections focus on review of company maintenance, operations, procedures, emergency response and training for compliance with regulations. Enforcement is used as necessary to address regulatory noncompliance issues.
- MNOPS will conduct investigations of pipeline incidents to determine cause and prevent recurrence of similar incidents.

Underground Damage Prevention

MNOPS will carry out education, investigation and enforcement to ensure contractors, utility operators and the public are safe when working with and around underground utilities.

Federal Grant Submissions and Program Evaluation

MNOPS will operate its pipeline safety program within applicable federal grant guidelines and participate in annual grant reporting and program evaluation. Federal pipeline safety grants fund MNOPS up to 80 percent.

MNOPS Database Upgrades

MNOPS will continue to upgrade and enhance its Pipeline Safety Program Database. The system is vital for tracking inspection, investigation and educational activities. The system is used by all MNOPS staff to efficiently carry out the role of MNOPS throughout Minnesota.

MNCAER Pipeline Safety Awareness Training

Minnesota Pipeline Community Awareness Emergency Response (MNCAER) serves to collectively provide pipeline safety information to Minnesota emergency officials, including local fire, law enforcement and others, through the enhanced awareness of pipeline emergencies, availability of member resources, and emergency response capabilities. In addition, CAER pipeline and distribution operators and members jointly support efforts to increase awareness of pipeline damage prevention to excavators and public officials.

The 2018 MNCAER Coordinated Response Exercise training sessions have been scheduled for 26 different locations across the state. I encourage you to sign up for this excellent training and an opportunity to work with other first responders from your region. You can view the training schedule and sign up for this free training [here](#).

2017 Fire Fatalities

Last year was a very tragic for fire fatalities, with 61 in comparison to 43 for all of 2016. This is a preliminary fire fatality number for 2017, because unfortunately some fire injuries may become fatalities as complications from their injuries may cause death. Once again, it appears careless smoking will be the leading cause of fire-related deaths in Minnesota. 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.