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Commissioner

# State of New Hampshire

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY

*Division of Fire Safety*

*Office of the State Fire Marshal*

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Sean P. Toomey  
State Fire Marshal

## **NH State Fire Marshal's Office – October 2022 Report**

*(For the period of September 1 through September 30, 2022)*

### **ADMINISTRATION:**

#### **Personnel:**

We currently have 7 full-time vacancies and 2 part-time vacancies. The following openings are those that we are actively recruiting for at this time:

Full-time Fire Investigator (2 positions)- background in process

Full-time State Building Inspector- background in progress

Full-time Hazmat Coordinator

Part time State Building Inspector

Part-time Building Code Review Board Administrative Secretary

Kyla Ludwig joined our staff as a part-time Education & Outreach Specialist.

#### **School Safety:**

A reminder that annual school inspections are required pursuant to RSA 153:14. These inspections are required while school is in session. Fire Chiefs shall submit a written report to the State Fire Marshal no later than December 15<sup>th</sup>.

The Fire Marshal's Office is working with several partners on school safety practices. All of the school safety documents have been updated to the 2018 editions of the State Fire Code. Many school safety resources are available on the following website:

[NH School Safety Resources https://schoolsafetyresources.nh.gov/](https://schoolsafetyresources.nh.gov/)

#### **State Fire Code:**

Governor Sununu signed HB 1681 into law on July 1, 2022 which updates the state building and fire codes. This bill is effective immediately. There is a six month grace period for building permits to allow projects in queue to follow the 2015 or 2018 code. This means the State Fire Code as defined in RSA 153 will be the 2018 editions of NFPA 1 and NFPA 101 with amendments. The amendments are reflected in Saf-FMO 300. Please reach out with any challenges with the 2018 codes. Please save the date for code update classes at the Fire Academy in Concord on November 15<sup>th</sup> and the Burton Fire Training Facility in Bethlehem on November 16<sup>th</sup>. Each day will include an afternoon and evening session.

## **BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIONS:**

In the month of September, we received sixteen incident notifications resulting in eleven responses. We continue to investigate seven open arson cases from previous months and added three new arson cases in September. The Bureau of Investigations currently has ten active arson or suspected arson investigations.

### **New/Active cases (synopsis of our cases are listed below):**

- On September 3, 2022, investigators responded to Berlin to investigate a structure fire at 231 Madison Avenue. This investigation is ongoing.
- On September 4, 2022, investigators assisted with an investigation of a multi-vehicle crash and fire in Rollinsford that resulted in four fatalities later determined to be due to the crash, not fire.
- On September 6, 2022, an IGL K9 team assisted the Portsmouth Police and Fire Departments with a motor vehicle fire investigation. They collected evidence samples and submitted them to the NHSP Forensic Laboratory. The investigation is ongoing and laboratory results are pending at this time.
- On September 11, 2022, investigators responded to 238 South Barnstead Road in Barnstead for an outside fire involving a trailer. The cause of the fire appeared to be related to the storage of electric vehicle batteries.
- On September 14, 2022, investigators responded to 1 Hale Spring Rd., Plaistow, to assist with a fire investigation. They determined that this fire was caused by accident.
- On September 14, 2022, investigators responded to 916 Old Route 25 in Rumney for a structure fire. This fire destroyed the house, preventing the identification of an area or areas of origin. The cause is undetermined.
- On September 18, 2022, investigators responded to 33 Dove Road in Newport for a structure fire at a vacant house. The cause is undetermined at this time and investigation is ongoing.
- On September 19, 2022, investigators responded to 758 Forest Road in Greenfield to investigate a structure fire. This cause is undetermined but not believed to be arson.
- On September 21, 2022, a fire occurred at 536 Warwick Rd, Winchester, believed to be from an electrical issue and the FMO did not investigate it. Private fire investigators notified the FMO that they determined it was not electrically-caused and there were multiple areas of fire origin in the building. An FMO Investigator conducted a scene examination on September 27, 2022, and determined that the fire cause was incendiary. The investigation is currently ongoing.
- On September 23, 2022, investigators responded to 24 Mechanic St., Farmington for an abandoned building fire. They determined that the cause classification of the fire was incendiary. The investigation is ongoing.
- On September 28, 2022, an investigator responded to 4761 Dartmouth College Hwy., in Haverhill to investigate a structure fire. They determined that the fire was unintentionally caused by juveniles. A youth firesetter assessment has been scheduled.

### **Fatal Fire:**

On September 28, 2022, a fatal fire occurred at 1 Skyline Ave., in Hooksett. The cause of the fire is under investigation, but believed to be electrical. The cause of death for the 81-year-old female was smoke inhalation and the manner was accidental.

**Ignitable Liquid Detection Canine Teams:**

Our two IGL Canine Teams were deployed five times in the month of September and conducted eight demonstrations.

**Public Outreach:**

- On September 12, 2022, investigators taught the fire marshal block of instruction to the 190<sup>th</sup> Police Recruit Academy at PSTC.
- On September 22, 2022, an FMO Investigator presented “Catching a Serial Arsonist” a case study, in Jaffrey for approximately 15 attendees.
- Investigators taught “Fire Investigation for First Responders” in Canterbury on September 26, 2022.
- An investigator presented “Arson 101 for Prosecuting Attorneys” on September 26, 2022.
- An investigator attended the Plymouth State College criminal justice job fair on September 27, 2022.
- Two youth firesetter assessments were scheduled during the month of September.
- An investigator assisted with FT recruit firearms instructor training at the PSTC for a day.

**Court Proceedings:**

On September 15, 2022, Andrew Hale was indicted for arson by a grand jury.

**BUREAU OF BUILDING SAFETY & CONSTRUCTION:**

**State Building Permit System:**

We processed 17 building permit applications in the month of September.

**Technical Assistance, Educational & Healthcare Reviews:**

We initiated 10 educational and 1 healthcare plan reviews, completed 116 inspections and 131 technical consults in the month of September.

**Variance Requests:**

We processed 2 variance requests in the month of September.

## **BUREAU OF OUTREACH & EDUCATION:**

### **Hazardous Materials:**

Hazardous Materials response, coordination and consultation is available through the on-call FMO supervisor. Our Hazardous Materials Coordinator is available for PEAC Software training for fire departments. PEAC is used for documentation of Tier II facilities and chemical storage.

Our Hazardous Materials Coordinator participated in the NH DES Piscataqua River Spill Response exercise. This was a multi-state, multi-jurisdictional exercise involving several local, state and federal agencies. He also attended a Rail Car Incident Response for Crude, Ethanol & Flammable Liquids training.

Our Hazardous Materials Coordinator worked with the Regional Haz Mat Teams to coordinate the upgrade of their Air Monitoring Software. He also assisted with the Hazardous Materials Response Teams Conference, which provided two days of training on various topics including Battery Emergencies, Haz Mat Rapid Intervention Teams, PEAC Software and Emerging Threats in Hazardous Materials.

### **Swiftwater Rescue Working Group:**

Further discussions and work is ongoing to evaluate the swiftwater problem and funding sources. A grant funding opportunity was released to the swiftwater teams in the month of July.

### **Regional Outreach/Chief's Roundtables:**

We continue to partner with Director Cutting and staff and the NHAFC to conduct regional outreach/Chief's Roundtables.

### **Incident Reporting:**

If you don't have an account already to securely transfer and receive files with the NHFMO, please register for free today!

We continue to work with the team at the Fire Academy as departments implement the NHESR program, available free of charge, for incident reporting. If you are interested in giving a presentation on the program or would like to request one, please email [NHESR@dos.nh.gov](mailto:NHESR@dos.nh.gov).

If you have questions or you are having difficulties, please reach out to the NHFIRS data team using the following email: [NHFIRS@dos.nh.gov](mailto:NHFIRS@dos.nh.gov).

### **Public Education:**

Fire Prevention Week is here! Running October 9-15, 2022, this year's theme is "Fire Won't Wait. Plan Your Escape," which draws attention to the fact that fire is faster and deadlier than ever, making the need for planning and practicing fire escape all the more critical. The public education team would like to thank all of the departments and organizations that asked us to join them in their upcoming FPW community events. We will be participating in over twenty events throughout the state.

If you have an event this month that you would like us to promote via social media, please don't hesitate to email it to us and we will be happy to spread the word through our channels.



We are honored that Governor Sununu signed New Hampshire's 2022 Fire Prevention Week proclamation, which we have attached below.



We are running a month-long contest related to fire prevention, beginning October 10, 2022. "Chalk It Up to Fire Safety," encourages people to make chalk drawings about three fire safety themes: Smoke Alarms Save Lives; Fire Won't Wait – Plan Your Escape; and Stay Away From Things That Are Hot. Please check out our Facebook and Twitter for more information and help us spread the word in your communities. #nhfmo



Thank you for all you do to keep your communities safe!

### **Community Outreach:**

On September 22, 2022, one of our Public Education Specialists presented on classroom fire prevention outreach strategies at the Massachusetts Fire & Life Safety Conference in Southbridge, MA.

Also on September 22, 2022, members of the FMO and Sparky attended Keene State College's Campus Night Out. The event was well attended and we were able to provide campus and cooking fire safety information to many students throughout the evening.

On September 23, 2022, Fire Marshal Toomey and members of the FMO attended NH Day at the Big E! in Springfield, MA with our side by side sprinkler demonstration trailer. The demonstration allowed fair goers to observe the benefits of home fire sprinklers firsthand. We collaborated with the VT State Fire Marshal's Office for this presentation.

### **Training Opportunities:**

In the month of September, we delivered one *A Practical Guide to Field Inspections (Educational & Healthcare)* class at the Southwestern NH District Fire Mutual Aid in Keene on September 15, 2022.

On October 12, 2022, we will be offering an *Inspection Essentials: Part I* class at the Wilton Fire Department from 6:30-9:00PM. This session is designed to assist the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) with an understanding of where your authority comes from, the essentials of constructing an inspection report and exploring frequently asked questions and common violations encountered in NFPA 1.

On October 19, 2022, we will be offering a *Display Fireworks Emergency Response Training* class. Participants will begin at the NHFA at 8:00AM for the classroom portion and then move to a site in Loudon for the practical exercises. We have partnered with industry professionals to bring a hands on training with topics such as assembling a display, equipment inspections, product handling/loading, product malfunctions, etc. The class will be limited to 65 students.

If you would like to register for these classes, please email [stacey.l.dubois@dos.nh.gov](mailto:stacey.l.dubois@dos.nh.gov). Additional programs are in the works. Please reach out if you are interested in hosting a program or would like to suggest a future training topic.

We are pleased to share an additional educational opportunity with you, as the Northeast Carbon Monoxide Alliance gears up for its 7<sup>th</sup> annual Fire Safety and Carbon Monoxide Summit, taking place on October 27, 2022. The topic is timely, falling directly after Fire Prevention Week and as the home heating season approaches. New Hampshire fire departments respond to an average of nearly 2,500 carbon monoxide calls per year across the state. Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/7th-annual-carbon-monoxide-awareness-fire-safety-summit-tickets-399516072327>