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Commissioner

State of New Hampshire

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY

Division of Fire Safety

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Paul J. Parisi
State Fire Marshal

NH State Fire Marshal's Office – March 2020 Report

(For the period of February 1 through February 29, 2020)

ADMINISTRATION:

- **Recovery Residences:** Recovery residences (Sober Houses) continue to be challenge on the forefront of our agenda. HB 311 was retained by the House. A subcommittee has been established and is meeting to discuss how to move forward in 2020. A statewide solution is needed. We will continue to engage the fire service, the building officials, NH Coalition for Recovery Residences (NHCORR) and the Attorney General's office in proposed solutions. We are working on an Informational Bulletin for Recovery Residences to include a process for accommodations.
- **Short-term rental housing:** Short-term rentals (Air BnB, Home Away, etc.), and the proper application of the fire code is an issue across our state. SB 458 was filed by Senator Jeb Bradley (r-wolfeboro) regarding the definition of a STR, and some fire safety and zoning requirements. We have worked with Senator Bradley, some affected Chiefs, and the Chiefs Association to strengthen the fire safety language. An amendment will be submitted March 11 that addresses fire inspections, defines proper egress, defines 1&2 family dwelling, and gives the Chief the authority to take action if violations are found to be dangerous to life and health. In the meantime, bear in mind the following:
 - Each multi-unit dwelling and rental unit shall be equipped with automatic fire warning devices in accordance with the NFPA 101 Life Safety Code and the NFPA 72 National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code and carbon monoxide detection devices in accordance with the NFPA 720 Standard for the Installation of Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detection and Warning Equipment; provided that a carbon monoxide detection device shall not be required in a multi-unit dwelling or rental unit that does not have an attached garage and does not contain an appliance or device that uses a combustion method of burning solid, liquid, or gas fuel. If a garage or combustion fuel appliance or device is later added to the dwelling or rental unit, a carbon monoxide detection device shall be required.

- IX-a. "Rental unit" means any residential unit in a building or single family dwelling which provides permanent or transient living facilities for one or more persons, which is occupied by tenants on a rental basis. This term shall include but not be limited to: hotels, motels, dormitories, apartments, duplex units, rooms rented out of the home of another, and single family dwellings, so long as they are rented.

- **2020 Legislation:**
Several bills have been filed (or carried over) that will be of interest to the fire service. They are as follows:
 - SB 113 (relative to municipalities adopting amendments to the state fire and building codes.
 - HB 311 and SB 633 (relative to recovery residences)
 - SB 432 (relative to the FMO's ability to issue POA permits)
 - HB 1514 (relative to FD having a presence at display fireworks shows)
 - SB 458 (relative to FD ability to inspect short-term rentals,)

- **Administrative Rules:**
The Saf-C 6000 rules (formerly known as the state fire code rules and now known as the fire and life safety rules) are being updated. A public hearing was held on March 4th at the Department of Safety to address any public comment. There was no public comment so the next step is that written comments will be accepted until March 11th at 4 p.m.

The Saf-C 1200 rules (voluntary Certification of Fire Protection Equipment Technicians) are set to expire. We have contacted stakeholders and the consensus is to sunset them out. We will seek legislation either this term (through a non-germane amendment) or next to eliminate the statute that requires the commissioner to require rules for a program.

- **Personnel:**
Planning and Support Services: We have hired Jessica Nichols as the part-time NFIRS Coordinator. Jessica will be working under the Community Risk Reduction Section coordinating with Public Education.
Building Safety and Construction: We have hired Cyndel Donoghue as Program Assistant II / Building Permit Coordinator. She will be working 29.5 hours per week in Concord.

Open positions:

Building Safety and Construction: We have a current opening for a full-time Building Inspection Program Supervisor/District Chief (Supervisor VI). The position is 37.5 hours per week in Concord. The position oversees inspections and plan review.

Building Safety and Construction: We have a current opening for a part-time Program Specialist III / Fire Protection Specialist. The position is 29.5 hours per week in Concord.

Building Safety and Construction: We have a current opening for a part-time Program Specialist III / State Building Inspector. The position is 29.5 hours per week in Concord.

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Planning and Support Services: We have a current opening for a part-time Public Education Specialist. The position is 29.5 hours per week in Concord, as well as possible remote opportunities.

Bureau of Investigations: We have two investigator positions open. The BOI is currently recruiting for two (2) open Fire Investigator positions in the Northern Hillsborough, Eastern Merrimack, and Grafton County areas.

Building Safety and Construction - New Positions: We are in the process of finalizing job descriptions for two new positions for codes administration. These positions will be located in Concord. One is Administrative and will be responsible for Board communications, postings and website updates. The other position will be responsible for gathering information on local code amendments and other work for the Board and will assist with building/fire code inspections and issues as needed.

BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIONS:

New/Active cases: 23 Calls for Service in the month of February; our 5 investigators and 2 district chiefs are actively working 23 Criminal Cases.

☐ Investigators assisted the South Hampton FD with an explosives incident that caused serious bodily injury to an individual. A resident of the home discovered a device in his basement and brought it outside to set it off and it exploded in his hands, resulting in debilitating injuries to his hands and face.

☐ Investigators responded to Nelson to assist the Nelson FD with an investigation into a motor vehicle fire. The fire occurred in a Ford E350 commercial work van that had been previously stolen out of Portland, ME and also used in a burglary in Keene, NH. The joint investigation is ongoing with members of the Nelson Fire Department and the Keene Police Department.

☐ Investigators responded to the Hooksett Toll Booth to assist the NHSP with a single motor vehicle crash with fire. One fatality was confirmed as a result of traumatic injuries received during the accident.

- Fatal CO incident/CO incidents: Investigators responded to a residence in Candia for a single fatality related to carbon monoxide. A neighbor discovered the resident of the home deceased in the garage after a power outage in the area the night prior and a generator in close proximity to the victim that appeared to have been recently operating in the garage. Investigators were also notified of two near misses in Nashua and Salem. In all instances, no working CO alarms were discovered by responding personnel.
- Court Action: The individual that had been arrested in January 2020 for Unlicensed Gas Fitting (Class B Misdemeanor) has pled guilty and has been ordered to pay a fine of \$1000 with \$500 suspended on condition of one year of good behavior. This case was from an explosion that occurred in a rental unit at a Henniker campground in May 2019 where two individuals sustained injuries.
- Accelerant Detection Canine Teams: Our two Accelerant Detection Canine Teams conducted three canine demonstrations throughout the state at various schools and fire departments.
- Training: During the month of February one of our fire investigators attended the ten-day Fire Investigation: Essentials training at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Command staff attended a Department of Safety day long training at Primex in Concord on Creating & Maintaining a Positive Workplace Culture. Investigators provided educational training in conjunction with the Maine FMO and the ATF on fire flow paths, case studies and Line of Duty Death Investigations at the Seacoast Fire Chief's monthly training.

BUREAU OF BUILDING SAFETY AND CONSTRUCTION:

- One and Two Family Dwellings: There has been some question recently regarding the application of NFPA 1 on one and two family dwellings. We are, in conjunction with the NH Department of Justice, Attorney General's Office,

conducting a legislative review of this issue to clarify our authority. We will keep you updated as this process moves forward.

- Training: Gas inspection training is being held at the Hopkinton Fire Department on April 15, 2020 at 6:00 pm. Lakes Region is hosting an inspector training series at the New Hampton Fire Department on March 26th and April 23rd from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm. The topics will be tents and fireworks. We will be scheduling trainings on the Seacoast in the near future.

BUREAU OF PLANNING AND SUPPORT SERVICES:

- Hazardous Materials: We are continuing to meet with the all the NH stakeholders regarding the FMO Hazmat Coordinator Position. We will be compiling this feedback in an effort to evaluate the state's current needs and future direction.
- North Country Hazardous Materials Coverage: Our part time Hazardous Materials Coordinator will be available in a response capacity to advise the North Country area chiefs should there be an incident. In the event that an asset response is required in that area the FMO on-duty supervisor will contact an established team to respond. The FMO will cover the cost of the response.
- Side-by-side Sprinkler Prop: We have procured the side-by-side residential sprinkler prop for the state from the NH Fire Prevention Society. This educational display will be available to reserve in the Spring of 2020. There is a process involved to both reserve and then utilize the prop for the public.
- FMO Public Education Videos: The public education section has created a YouTube Channel and has been filming short educational videos. If your department would like to partner with the FMO about a specific safety topic, please contact our Public Education Section.