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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 2023 Report

(For the period of September 1 through September 30, 2023)

ADMINISTRATION:

Personnel:

We currently have 2 full-time vacancies and 1 part-time vacancy. The following openings are those that we are actively recruiting for at this time:

Full-time Fire Protection Specialist

Full-time Administrative Assistant

Part-time Building Code Review Board Administrative Secretary

We welcome the following new staff to our office:

- Austin Wakefield joins our staff in a full-time position as Fire Protection Specialist on October 20th

Legislation:

The process of submitting legislative service requests (LSR's) begins in the House & Senate begins this month. We will work to evaluate the LSR's and share information as it becomes available.

Board of Fire Control:

The Board of Fire Control held a public meeting in September to address proposed amendments to move the 2021 editions of NFPA 1 and NFPA 101 into the legislative process.

- Proposed amendments:
 - Maintain current sprinkler protection requirements for new restaurants and bars
 - Maintain current sprinkler protection requirements for new daycare facilities
 - Amend NFPA 1 to allow portable generators to be spaced at 5' (current requirement) instead of 20' as proposed
 - Modified the sprinkler requirements for existing residential buildings up to 4 dwelling units
 - Readopt with some clean-up the current Saf-FMO 300 rules

Foam Take-back Program:

The contract for the foam take-back program was approved by the Governor & Executive Council at the end of June. DES has advised the project has been delayed to later this fall due to trucking issues with the subcontractor. Additional information will be released as the details are finalized.

Residential Sprinklers in 3 & 4 family dwellings:

Following stakeholder meetings, a proposed code amendment was introduced at the Board of Fire Control during the September meeting to allow existing residential buildings with up to 4 dwelling units to omit sprinkler protection as long as certain conditions existed. This amendment passed and is headed through the legislative process. We also know of one LSR relative to discussion. A similar amendment will be heard at the October Building Code Review Board meeting.

BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIONS:

In the month of September, we received 12 incident notifications resulting in 2 scene responses. The Bureau of Investigations currently has 23 open arson or suspected arson investigations.

New cases (synopsis of some of our cases are listed below):

- On September 14, Investigators responded to a structure fire in Bradford. The investigation is ongoing and the fire is considered to be incendiary.
- On September 24, an investigator and K9 responded to Nashua to assist the Nashua Fire Department with a residential house fire. The fire is under investigation by NFD.

Ignitable Liquid Detection Canine Teams:

- There was one IGL canine deployment in September.

Youth Firesetter:

- There was one youth fire setter assessment and one inquiry in September.

Court:

- FMO personnel were prepared to testify in one court hearing in September, but the suspect failed to appear again (same suspect and case as in August). A warrant was issued for that person's arrest for failing to appear in court.

FMO investigators are available to assist agencies day or night with investigations involving fire, carbon monoxide releases and building collapse. Depending on the type of investigation, it may be as simple as contacting the on-call supervisor and providing a consult over the phone. In other instances, it may be necessary to send out a team of investigators to assist with the origin and cause investigation. Please do not hesitate to reach out to our office for assistance. The on-call supervisor can be reached at the FMO Office during normal business hours at 603-223-4289 or NH State Police Communications after hours and on weekends at 603-223-4381.

Fire Investigations (NH RSA 154:7-a) states, "The fire officer in charge or designee shall investigate the cause and origin of fires, including the taking of evidence relative to the cause and origin of fires...."

Report of Causes and Origins of All Fires (NH RSA 153:11) states, "When the cause, origin and circumstances of any fire occurring in any city, town, village, district or precinct in this state indicates that such fire was the result of design, or of suspicious origin, the fire chief shall immediately notify the state fire marshal."

Investigations (NH RSA 153:18) states, “Any fire, building collapse, or release of carbon monoxide other than from a motor vehicle occurring where death results shall be reported immediately to the office of the state fire marshal by the fire chief, and the office of the state fire marshal shall investigate the fire, building collapse, or release of carbon monoxide within 48 hours after receiving said report.”

See the attached updated Fire Investigation District and Regions Map

BUREAU OF BUILDING SAFETY & CONSTRUCTION:

State Building Permit System:

We processed the following permits in the month of September:

- Building: 14
- Electrical: 17
- Plumbing: 1
- Mechanical Fuel Gas: 4
- Mechanical Non-Fuel Gas: 0
- Fire Protection: 3
- Fire Alarm: 6

Technical Assistance, Educational & Healthcare Reviews:

We initiated 8 educational and 13 healthcare plan reviews, completed 202 inspections and 141 technical consults in the month of September.

Variance Requests:

We processed 6 variance requests in the month of September.

Modular Building Program

We completed 22 modular building inspections 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.

In the month of September, our Hazardous Materials Coordinator provided air monitoring and respiratory protection training to members of our Bureau of Investigations. He also provided a presentation to the Central NH REPC on Tier II reporting and participated in the Manchester Fire and Southeastern NH Haz Mat Team containment booming exercise at Lake Massabesic. He also worked with NH DES on updating their Area Rae Air Monitoring System.

In the month of September, our Hazardous Materials Coordinator attended the Hazardous Materials Collaborative meeting, the DHSS Chempack working group meeting, and the monthly PEAC software training.

Electric Vehicles and Lithium-Ion Batteries

We have held two meetings to discuss the challenges of electric vehicle fires and lithium-ion batteries. The meetings have included representatives from the State Fire Marshal's Office, Fire Academy, HSEM, State Police, DMV, DES, DOT, Tow Association, Auto Dealers Association, Clean Energy NH, NH Chiefs of Police and the NH Association of Fire Chiefs.

The International Code Council has established an ad-hoc group to evaluate building and fire code impacts from electric vehicles and lithium-ion batteries. The National Fire Protection Association Research Foundation is conducting a study. UL's Fire Safety Research Institute is also conducting a study.

Regional Outreach/Chief's Roundtables:

We continue to partner with the Commissioner's Office, other Department of Safety Leadership and the NHAFC to conduct regional outreach/Chief's Roundtables. The next meeting is scheduled in conjunction with the Seacoast Chiefs on November 2nd.

Incident Reporting:

If you don't already have an account to securely transfer to and receive files from the SFMO, please register for free today! More info included in this link: [SFTP2020bulletin.pdf \(nh.gov\)](#).

2023 is quickly coming to a close and we still have 40 departments that have yet to submit any data for the year. We ask that you do so as soon as possible so we can close out the year in a timely fashion. Your commitment to ensuring we have great data to accurately show the fire problem in NH is greatly appreciated! If you are having difficulty sending your data or need assistance, please reach out to our team.

Have you looked at your .err files lately? These are important files that you likely receive on a monthly basis that contain invalid incidents, a.k.a. error messages. We can help you through the process so that you can resubmit any invalid incidents and receive full credit. Please contact us at nhfirs@dos.nh.gov.

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 having a presentation on the program or would like to request one, please email NHESR@dos.nh.gov.

In May, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) announced their effort to launch a new fire information and analytics platform, known as the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS), for the American fire and emergency services. Please find more information here: [Media Advisory: USFA Announces New Fire Information Platform \(fema.gov\)](#). Once NERIS is developed and operational, USFA will work to migrate fire and emergency services departments onto the new platform. The legacy NFIRS will remain operational throughout the transition process so all fire and emergency services departments should continue to use the current NFIRS data system and maintain status quo until migrated to the new platform. For more information, please check out this on demand webinar:

[Now Available: On Demand Access to Modernizing the U.S. Fire Data System - An Introduction to the National Emergency Response Information System | UL's FSRI – Fire Safety Research Institute](#)

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.

Outreach Events:

On the evening of September 20th, members of the SFMO attended the Bedford Fire Department Open House. Members staffed a fire safety table and canine demonstrations were provided by Deputy Fire Marshal Adam Fanjoy and his K9 partner Anthem.

On September 21st, Sparky and members of the SFMO attended the annual Campus Night Out at Keene State College. Members staffed a fire safety table and handed out fire safety education materials. Canine demonstrations by Deputy Fire Marshal Adam Fanjoy and his K9 partner Anthem were also a huge hit.



On September 27th, members of the SFMO attended the Somersworth Fire Department Open House. Members staffed our Public Education Incident Command Trailer for guests to visit and learn and practice fire safety education. Investigator Solomon Rosman and his K9 partner Reeves were also present and provided a canine demonstration to attendees.



On September 28th, Investigator Solomon Rosman and his K9 partner Reeves performed a canine demonstration for the students in the Fire Investigator course currently being held at the NH Fire Academy.

On September 30th, members of the SFMO attended the Plymouth Fire Department Open House. Members staffed a fire safety table and tested Fire Prevention Week fire safety knowledge with our trivia wheel. Canine demonstrations were also provided by Deputy Fire Marshal Adam Fanjoy and his K9 partner Anthem.

Saving lives and property through education, engineering and enforcement

Public Education:

Fire Prevention Week is here! The theme this year, which runs from October 8th to 14th, is “Cooking safety starts with YOU. Pay attention to fire prevention™.” The goal will be to educate everyone about the simple but important actions they can take to keep themselves and those around them safe when cooking. Find materials and resources to support your department’s efforts here: www.firepreventionweek.org. We are excited to be partnering with many departments around the state for their FPW festivities!



Are you familiar with the USFA's Fire and Life Safety Communicators Initiative? This initiative is a collaboration among the fire and emergency medical services to speak with "one voice" on fire and life safety. They believe in working together to present consistent messages. The theme for 2023 is "Step Up for Fire Safety" and takes a #BeKnowDo approach. As no surprise, the monthly theme for October is Fire Prevention Week's Theme – Cooking Safety Starts with YOU. Pay attention to fire prevention. For more information on this initiative, or to find outreach materials on the monthly topics (examples below), please visit: [Fire and Life Safety Communicators Initiative \(fema.gov\)](https://www.fema.gov)



Training Opportunities:

Have you visited the FM Global Fire Service Learning Network online? FM Global has a longstanding, deep commitment to assisting the fire service through training, education, and grant funding in fire prevention, fighting fire in sprinklered buildings, fire response to commercial/industrial properties, ignitable liquids and gases, pre-incident planning, and fire protection systems. As part of this commitment, FM Global provides the FM Global Fire Service Learning Network to deliver critical training for the fire service in FM Global's focus areas, including fire protection in commercial and industrial properties. The network offers online training programs, including FM Global's popular "Fighting Fire in Sprinklered Buildings" course, and fire service resources. Available resources include FM Global Data Sheets, pocket guides, and pre-incident planning materials guide. All training and resources are free. Create an account and log in to access the fire service training and resources here: [Fighting Fire In Sprinklered Buildings | Fire Service Learning Network \(fmglobalfireserviceresources.com\)](https://www.fmglobalfireserviceresources.com)

Additional SFMO programs are in the works for this fall. A big thank you to all the departments that participated in our training topic request survey. Your feedback was helpful! Keep an eye out soon for class offerings relative to oil burners, furnaces and gas appliances and heating systems, as well as scenario-based training that will build off of the NFPA code classes previously offered.

Please reach out to Deputy Stacey Dubois at stacey.l.dubois@dos.nh.gov if you are interested in hosting a program or would like to suggest a future training topic.