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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 – May 2023 Report

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

ADMINISTRATION:

Personnel:

We currently have 5 full-time vacancies and 3 part-time vacancies. The following openings are those that we are actively recruiting for at this time:

- Full-time Fire Investigator (2 positions, conditional offers extended for both positions)
- Full-time State Building Inspector
- Full-time State Building/Mechanical Inspector
- Full-time Hazmat Coordinator
- Part time State Building Inspector
- Part-time Outreach & Education Specialist
- Part-time Building Code Review Board Administrative Secretary

We welcome the following new staff to our office:

- John Mahoney joined our staff as a part-time Fire Protection Specialist
- Lorrinda Estabrook joined our staff as a part-time NFIRS Coordinator
- Bert Ledoux joined our staff as a part-time Fire Protection Specialist

Legislation:

Below are some of the bills we are watching:

- HB 265 relative to municipal property tax relief for installation of fire suppression systems
Status: ITL
- HB 296 relative to local authority for granting driveway permits
Status: Passed House & Senate, waiting on Governor's signature
- HB 564 relative to ratification of amendments to the state building code and state fire code
Status: Passed House & Senate, waiting on Governor's signature
- HB 477 To Prohibit Municipal Inspections Of Owner-occupied Units Of Multi-unit Housing.
Municipalities
Status: ITL
- SB 54 permitting the use of certain refrigerants that are in compliance with the Clean Air Act
Status: Passed Senate with Amendment, In House Committee
Removes authority of state building code to allow new refrigerants not currently covered in the code.
- SB 170 relative to small group child day care centers
Status: Passed Senate with Amendment

Saving lives and property through education, engineering and enforcement

Board of Fire Control:

The Board of Fire Control and the SFMO staff have started the review of the 2021 editions of NFPA 1 and NFPA 101. The goal is to have a package ready for legislative action in 2024.

Foam Take-back Program:

We continue to work with DES to launch the foam take-back program. Due to contracting and permitting challenges the launch of this program project for late spring/early summer 2023. An important consideration in the program is the best and safest disposal methods to destroy the PFAS chemicals. The latest inventory is approximately 9,600 gallons. We are working with DES to identify collection points in each county.

BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIONS:

In the month of April, we received 27 incident notifications resulting in 14 scene responses. The Bureau of Investigations currently has 16 open arson or suspected arson investigations.

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

- On April 1, investigators responded to New London for two condominium fires suspected to be arson. This investigation is ongoing.
- On April 4, investigators responded to Plymouth for a suspicious fire later determined to be accidental.
- On April 10, investigators responded to assist Manchester Fire Department with a house fire resulting in serious injury. The cause of the fire is undetermined but believed to be accidental.
- On April 11, investigators responded to Epsom for a second fire at a vacant house that was previously set on fire in January. Both fires are considered to be arson.
- On April 15, investigators responded to Raymond for a house fire. The cause was undetermined but likely accidental.
- On April 20, an investigator responded to Barrington to assist with a fire investigation for a house under construction. The cause was likely accidental.
- On April 23, investigators responded to Weare for a house fire. The cause was accidental.
- On April 23, an investigator assisted Merrimack Fire Department with interviews related to an accidental house fire.
- On April 24, an investigator responded to Winchester for two motor-vehicle fires. The cause was undetermined but likely accidental.
- On April 26, investigators responded to Sunapee for a vehicle and structure fire. The cause is undetermined but suspected to be arson due to criminal circumstances involving the theft of the truck.
- On April 26, investigators also responded to Campton for a structure fire. One subject admitted to setting the fire and was arrested by Campton Police.
- On May 1, an investigator responded to Litchfield to investigate a structure fire that occurred on April 30. The cause was likely accidental.

Fatal Fire/CO Incidents:

- There were 2 fatal fire incidents in April and one non-fire fatality that the BOI investigated.
 - A man died in Chester on April 10 in proximity to an outside brush fire. His death was determined to be natural and not related to the fire.
 - A man died from injuries sustained in a house fire in Meredith on April 17. The FMO responded to the scene to investigate. The cause of the fire was undetermined but not suspected to be arson.
 - A man died from injuries sustained in a motor vehicle fire in Rollinsford on April 27. The FMO investigated the fire and determined it was the result of a crash and accidental.

Ignitable Liquid Detection Canine Teams:

- There were 3 IGL canine deployments in April.
- IGL canine teams performed demonstrations in Jaffrey, Plymouth, Northumberland, Warner and Concord.
- Both IGL canine teams were in the process of completing their annual recertification.

Youth Firesetter:

- There were no youth fire setter assessments in April; however, two potential YFS cases were reported that we will investigate.

Arrests:

- FMO assisted the Campton Fire and Police by performing a fire investigation after their arrest of Jonas Gurrera for arson on April 26.

Court:

- An investigator testified in a deposition for a 2021 arson case from Webster.
- The Merrimack County Attorney's Office reached a plea deal for an incident where an investigator was scheduled to testify, involving a youth being burned at a campfire.

Training/Committees:

- Two investigators attended the International Association of Arson Investigators' (IAAI) International Training Conference in North Carolina.
- Two investigators are currently in the fire academy recruit school.

BUREAU OF BUILDING SAFETY & CONSTRUCTION:

State Building Permit System:

We processed the following permits in the month of April:

- Building: 26
- Electrical: 15
- Plumbing: 4
- Mechanical Fuel Gas: 3
- Mechanical Non-Fuel Gas: 7
- Fire Protection: 6
- Fire Alarm: 21

Technical Assistance, Educational & Healthcare Reviews:

We initiated 24 educational and 11 healthcare plan reviews, completed 95 inspections and 166 technical consults in the month of April.

Variance Requests:

We processed 10 variance requests in the month of April.

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 April, our Hazardous Materials Coordinator continued to attend the regional Haz Mat team trainings to offer support and provide updates regarding statewide Haz Mat response. He also continued to work with the regional Haz Mat teams and HSEM on planning a Wide Area Monitoring Exercise for this spring.

We continue to work on Tier II reporting and associated follow-ups when deficiencies are identified.

Our Hazardous Materials Coordinator attended the National Association of State Title Three Program Officials Conference. This conference focuses on the Emergency Preparedness and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA), including Tier II reporting by facilities and operations of State Emergency Response Commissions and Local Emergency Planning Committees.

Further discussions and work are ongoing to evaluate the hazmat problem and funding sources.

Swiftwater Rescue Working Group:

Further discussions and work is ongoing to evaluate the swiftwater problem and funding sources.

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. We held a North Country Roundtable at the Burton Fire & EMS Training Facility on April 20th. We have scheduled a Souhegan Area Roundtable for September 13th in Mont Vernon.

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 \(nh.gov\)](#).

We are asking that fire departments please submit their 2022 NFIRS data as soon as possible so we can close out the year in a timely fashion. The deadline is fast approaching!

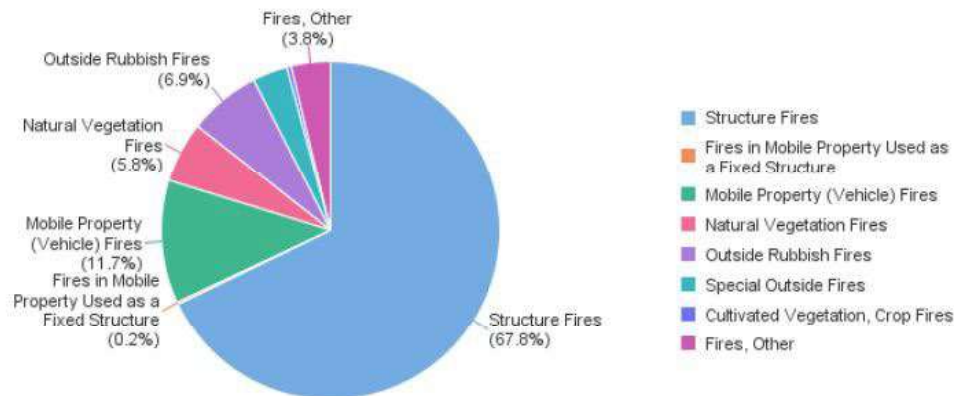
Have you looked at your .err files lately? These are important files that you likely receive on a monthly basis that contain invalid incidents, a.k.a. error messages. We can help you through the process so that you can resubmit any invalid incidents and receive full credit. Please contact us at nhfirs@dos.nh.gov.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

We are monitoring changes proposed by the USFA to the NFIRS system. We understand a substantial redo of the system as we know it is in the works. We anticipate more details will be available in late spring 2023.

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.

NH Fire Incidents Reported YTD 2023:

Fire Incident Type Category Summary

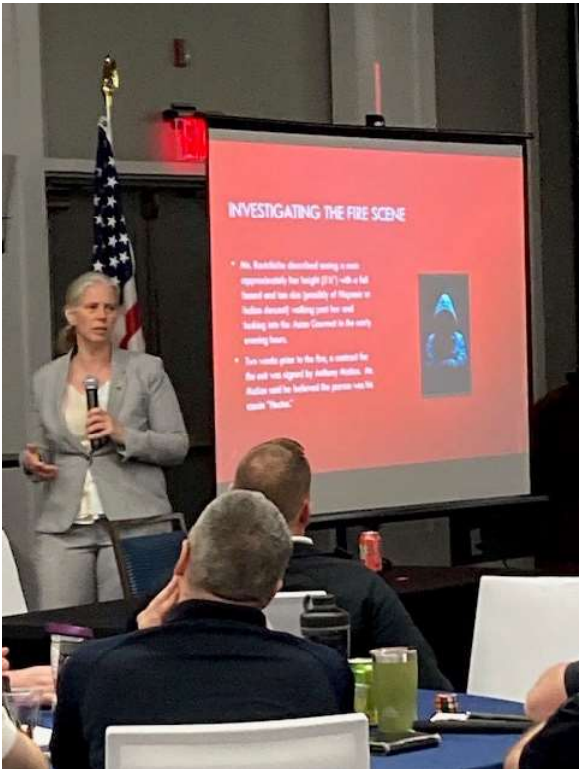


Outreach Events:

On April 8, 2023 members of the NHFMO and Sparky attended the Annual State House Easter Egg Hunt in Concord. Sparky enjoyed meeting everyone who attended and handing out easter eggs to lots of children in attendance!



On April 13, 2023 District Chief Shana Clark presented a Bureau of Investigations case study at the Connecticut Fire Marshal's Association Conference in Waterbury, CT.



On April 21, 2023 Deputy Adam Fanjoy & K9 Anthem did a brief overview of the office and the Bureau of Investigations and a canine demonstration for the NH Association of Insurance Agents.

Members of the NHFMO also attended four career and internship fairs at Groveton High School, Conant High School, the University of New Hampshire and Plymouth State University in the month of April.



Public Education:

Arson Awareness Week is May 7-13, 2023. The theme this year is Understanding and Mitigating Youth Firesetting Issues. Youth firesetting is a problem throughout the United States and around the world. Fire misuse behaviors in children may be attributed to issues such as curiosity or experimentation, underlying struggles with impulse control, emotional regulation, social/interpersonal skills, childhood trauma or other behavioral health conditions. Children observe adults using matches and lighters but may not be taught about important fire safety practices. They may also observe unsafe uses of fire in media, videos and gaming.



Please see the following links for additional information:

National Fire Academy Youth Firesetting Prevention Courses

<https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/nfacourses/catalog/search?&forget=1&courseKeywords=firesetting>

Prevent Youth Firesetting World Flyer

https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/prevent_youth_firesetting_flyer.pdf

Youth Firesetting.....What Can You Do? Brochure

https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa_332b.pdf

Training Opportunities:

The NHFMO provided three trainings in the month of April. Please see the below upcoming training opportunities for the month of May:

Fire Investigation for the First Responder

This seminar familiarizes students (fire, police and EMS) with the roles and responsibilities of first responders and how they relate to the basic principles of arson detection and the proper procedures for scene security, evidence preservation and documentation.

May 18, 2023

Jaffrey Fire Department

6:00-8:30PM

Registration Link: <https://forms.office.com/g/BSXjQRb7mK>

2020 National Electric Code with NH Changes

In this class we will review the newly adopted 2020 National Electrical Code (NEC) NFPA 70, including the 19 New Hampshire changes. This training will also include the basic electrical inspection concerns seen in existing and new buildings.

May 25, 2023

Raymond S. Burton Training Facility, Bethlehem

6:00-9:00PM

Registration Link: <https://forms.office.com/g/BSXjQRb7mK>

Fire Investigation for the First Responder (Limited to 50 attendees)

This seminar familiarizes students (fire, police and EMS) with the roles and responsibilities of first responders and how they relate to the basic principles of arson detection and the proper procedures for scene security, evidence preservation and documentation.

May 30, 2023

New Castle Recreation Center, 301 Wentworth Rd., New Castle

6:00-8:30PM

Registration Link: <https://forms.office.com/g/BSXjQRb7mK>

Additional programs are in the works. 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.