



Robert L. Quinn
Commissioner

State of New Hampshire

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY

Division of Fire Safety

Office of the State Fire Marshal

Office: 110 Smokey Bear Boulevard, Concord, NH 03301

Mailing Address: 33 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03305

Telephone: 603-223-4289 • **Fax:** 603-223-4294

www.nh.gov/firesafety



Paul J. Parisi
State Fire Marshal

NH State Fire Marshal's Office – August 2020 Report

(For the period of July 1 through July 31, 2020)

ADMINISTRATION:

The State of NH is preparing for the possibility of a significant revenue shortfall for the 2021 fiscal year. These plans will impact all facets of state government, the State Fire Marshal's Office being no exception. In order to facilitate what is going to be a 25% reduction in force for us, we have reorganized our bureaus to focus our resources on what we are required to do by statute. Unless the situation changes, we will not be filling the following full time positions: Fire Investigator, Hazardous Materials Coordinator, and Building Safety and Construction Supervisor. Also, we will not be filling the following part time positions: Public Educational Specialist, Hazardous Materials Specialist, and three (3) inspectors in Building Safety. In other words, four of the eight positions that have been defunded are from the Bureau of Building Safety and Construction. The significance of the shift in resources will be felt by the Bureau of Planning and Support Services which is taking over responsibility of the Mechanical Safety and Licensing Unit. In addition, the Aerial Tramway unit has been reassigned to the Assistant Director. A reduction in our ability to offer services and our resources to municipalities will be impacted, but we will do our best. Fire and death investigation requests will be responded to immediately, within our existing protocols. Areas that we will have a reduced capacity in will be public education, hazardous materials, routine state building inspection program, and fireworks. We will do our best to answer municipal inquiries as they come in, but please understand that they may be delayed. We appreciate your patience and understanding. If you have any questions or are running into a problem, please do not hesitate to contact FM Parisi directly at (603) 931-9538.

The FMO continues with its COVID-19 Reconstitution Plan. The plan provides an ongoing, carefully planned, return to normal operations with employee and customer safety considerations addressed. Deputy Rodenhiser remained assigned to the state emergency operations center to oversee the health and safety branch for the Department of Safety for the month of July. Starting in August, he returns to his position in the Bureau of Investigations and District Chief Stacey Dubois will be able to return to her field supervisor assignment. Deputy Danielle Cole has been continuing to oversee SEOC ESF-4 desk operations. This emergency support function is dedicated to supporting first responders in providing the most up to date unprotected exposure information, member testing location information, transportation of specimens, alternative lodging requests and inquiries of specimens at the Public Health Lab.

Since the beginning of the state of emergency, the ESF-4 (Firefighting) desk has:

- Answered 716 calls for assistance
- Assisted 255 front line workers with alternative lodging accommodations

- Provided 773 front line workers with exposure/quarantine/testing guidance
- Documented 1490 activities performed in WebEOC. These activities include, fulfilling requests for PPE from first responders, answering questions related to exposures, quarantine, housing, code related questions and more
- Produced and distributed (16) first responder informational documents

On July 20, an updated protocol was rolled out regarding Covid specimen testing due to high wait times through the private laboratories contracted by Convenient MD and ClearChoice. The NH Public Health Lab (PHL) agreed to once again provide testing for first responder specimens collected from private health care facilities. Two important changes to this protocol include using the correct PHL requisition form (with Dr. Joey Scollon from the NH Department of Safety listed as the primary physician) and providing our own transportation from the facility to the PHL (they no longer have a courier service). Guidance for this protocol, including step-by-step instructions and a map (with pictures) can be found in WebEOC.

Don't forget: the ESF-4 desk phone number is (603) 223-3718 and is answered 24/7/365 by a Deputy State Fire Marshal during the State of Emergency. Please call with ANY questions.

2020 Legislation:

HB 1234 was vetoed by Governor Sununu on July 28th. HB 1234 was one of the omnibus bills that included the following:

- Ratifies certain amendments to the state building code and state fire code. (HB 1714)
- Allows alcohol and drug free recovery houses to be granted an exemption by the state fire marshal for requirements of the state fire code and local amendments. (HB 311)

HB 1245 was signed by Governor Sununu on July 29th. HB 1245 was one of the omnibus bills that included the following:

- Permits a municipality that has a local enforcement mechanism for the state building code to request that the state fire marshal issue the building permit, conduct the inspection, and issue the certificate of occupancy, for a project that requires the specialized knowledge of the fire marshal or due to staffing limitations of the municipality. (SB 632)
- Provides that, under the state board of fire control and for purposes of enforcement of the state fire code, a health care facility means a facility licensed under RSA 151 (SB 740)
- This bill replaces references to "alcohol and drug free housing" with "recovery housing." The bill also requires the department of health and human services to adopt rules relative to the voluntary certification of recovery housing. This bill also establishes a committee to study state and municipal authority governing recovery housing. (SB 633)
- This bill amends the membership and duties of the child fatality review committee and removes the exemption of the child fatality review committee from RSA 91-A:3, relative to nonpublic sessions of public bodies. (SB 430)

Personnel:

Open positions:

Public Education Specialist Sheryl Nielsen has tendered her resignation after 8 years at the FMO to pursue a full time position with DHHS. We appreciate all of her work in providing fire safety education in NH, especially with youth fire setters and developing age appropriate fire safety curriculum.

As earlier indicated, all open positions have been defunded and will not be filled in the foreseeable future until/unless the budget crisis is averted.

BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIONS:

New/Active cases: 19 Calls for Service in the month of July; our 6 investigators and 2 district chiefs are actively working 25 Criminal Cases.

- On 7/21/20, an investigator assisted the Pembroke Police Department with processing a vehicle that had been involved in a fire. We aided in sifting through fire debris in an attempt to locate evidence, not related to the crime of arson.
- During the month of July, investigators assisted the Lebanon Fire Department with fire and life safety inspections, and code enforcement, of several properties controlled by the same person.

Court Action: All court proceedings have been interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of our cases had hearings scheduled for this month; however, all of these hearings have been rescheduled. The BOI has begun meeting with prosecutors in preparation for when Grand Juries start to sit again.

Accelerant Detection Canine Teams: Our two Accelerant Detection Canine (ADC) Teams were deployed twice in the month of July. One demonstration was performed to the Stratford Fire Department while we assisted them at their fire scene. The three NH ADC teams conducted a group training at a location in Franklin, focusing on building and evidence sniffs.

Training: BOI members attended a virtual training on fire investigation safety sponsored by the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI). This is part of a live monthly training series that started in May and runs through November and touches upon various aspects of fire investigations to include: NFPA 921 updates, fire patterns, safety, cause determination/classification, physical evidence/K9 handler teams and basic methodology/basic fire science. If anybody is interested in attending these trainings the information can be found at www.firearson.com. There is a nominal fee associated with each class and they can be taken as tested or untested. The modules that have already been delivered can be taken, just not in a live setting.

Investigators also attended the following training: Video Surveillance Techniques, in-service/refresher training on Fire House software and Fire Scene Health and Safety Considerations in the Post-Fire Environment (NASP/IAAI).

BUREAU OF BUILDING SAFETY AND CONSTRUCTION:

State Building Permit System: We processed 39 permit applications in the month of July.

Technical Assistance, Educational & Healthcare Reviews: Our staff remains available for technical code assistance. We initiated 3 educational plan reviews and 6 healthcare plan reviews in the month of July.

Variance Requests: We processed 2 variance requests in the month of July.

Rules Update: The Saf-C 6000 rules have been approved by the Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules (JLCAR). The updated rules will be posted on our website shortly.

Code Amendments: The Board of Fire Control held a public hearing on the following code amendment petitions at their July meeting:

1. Add NFPA 855, Standard for the Installation of Stationary Energy Storage Systems to the referenced codes in NFPA 1- **TABLED**
2. Amend CSST requirements in NFPA 54- **DENIED**
3. Move and update oil burner inspection requirements from Saf-C 6000 to Saf-FMO 300- **APPROVED**

BUREAU OF PLANNING AND SUPPORT SERVICES:

Hazardous Materials: Hazardous Materials coordination and coverage remains a priority despite the state of emergency and personnel are ready to deploy if needed and may be contacted through the on-call FMO supervisor for consultation purposes.

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. There is currently an MOU that is being prepared that addresses this.

Public Education: At this time and for the foreseeable future, we have suspended public education efforts and diverted those resources to other essential functions in the division.

Fireworks: Fireworks shows continue to be down substantially from last year in response to the restrictions on public gatherings. Some shows are beginning to be scheduled again and we have seen an increase in this as we get further into the summer season. Firework stores have been opened for a short time now and they have been seasonably busy as many customers are looking to enjoy fireworks during this time of year even if the usual events don't occur. The state also continues to see drought-like conditions recently and we remain concerned about the dangers in using fireworks in these dry times. Unsafe fireworks usage can result in injury, death, property damage and wildland fires. Be sure to check out our website where we have provided information and safety tips about fireworks usage.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to reach out to me at (603) 931-9538. Be careful out there.

Yours in Fire and Life Safety,



Paul J. Parisi
State Fire Marshal